

A New Foreign Area Officer Paradigm

Meta-Leadership and Security Cooperation

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The dusty dogmas of the past are insufficient to confront our stormy present. As our world is new, we must think anew.

—President Abraham Lincoln

Ask Army foreign area officers (FAO) what their core competencies are, and the most likely answers will be language proficiency, cross-cultural communication, and regional expertise. Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, lists language proficiency and regional proficiency as unique FAO skills and in-depth regional cultural and military expertise as unique knowledge.¹ However, core competencies are the unique set of specific skills that make a significant contribution to the customer and are difficult for competitors to imitate.² How can those be the *unique* core competencies of FAOs when DA Pam 600-3 also lists regional knowledge, cross-cultural communications, and language as the unique skills of the Special Forces, civil affairs, psychological operations, and information operations officers?³ Moreover, DA Pam 600-3 also states that the leader competencies for all Army officers will expand to include cross-cultural communications and language.⁴ Unique is, by definition, the only one of its kind.⁵ As such, language, cross-cultural communications, and regional skills cannot simultaneously be the core competencies of FAOs, four other branches, and eventually of all officers. Language proficiency is the core competency of a linguist; cross-cultural communication is the competency of an interpreter; and regional expertise is the competency of a regional studies professor. While these are critical enabling skills for FAOs, they should not be considered core competencies. Doing so creates a time and resources imbalance in the functional area's (FA) accession, training pipeline, and skill sustainment. So, what are a FAO's unique core competencies? The introduction to chapter 27 in DA Pam 600-3 asserts that FAOs are "commissioned officers deliberately accessed, trained, educated, and developed to provide leadership and expertise in diverse

organizations in Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational (JIIM) environments."⁶ Further, FAOs are "central to the Shape component of the Army's 'Prevent, Shape, and Win' strategy" by working to "build partner capacity in support of U.S. goals and objectives."⁷ Those shape functions define security cooperation. These two qualities, JIIM leadership and security cooperation, allow FAOs to provide value to their customers in the Army, combatant commands, embassy country teams, and partner nations. FAOs serve as cross-cultural experts but for more than just "foreign" cultures; FAOs are experts in interagency cultures.

As such, the Army and other services must develop a new framework that rebalances FAO accession and training resources to focus on building these two core competencies. The word rebalance is key. This is not a call to eliminate language and cultural training because they are critical enablers. Instead, this article argues for prioritizing JIIM leadership and security cooperation as FAO core competencies over the enabling skills.

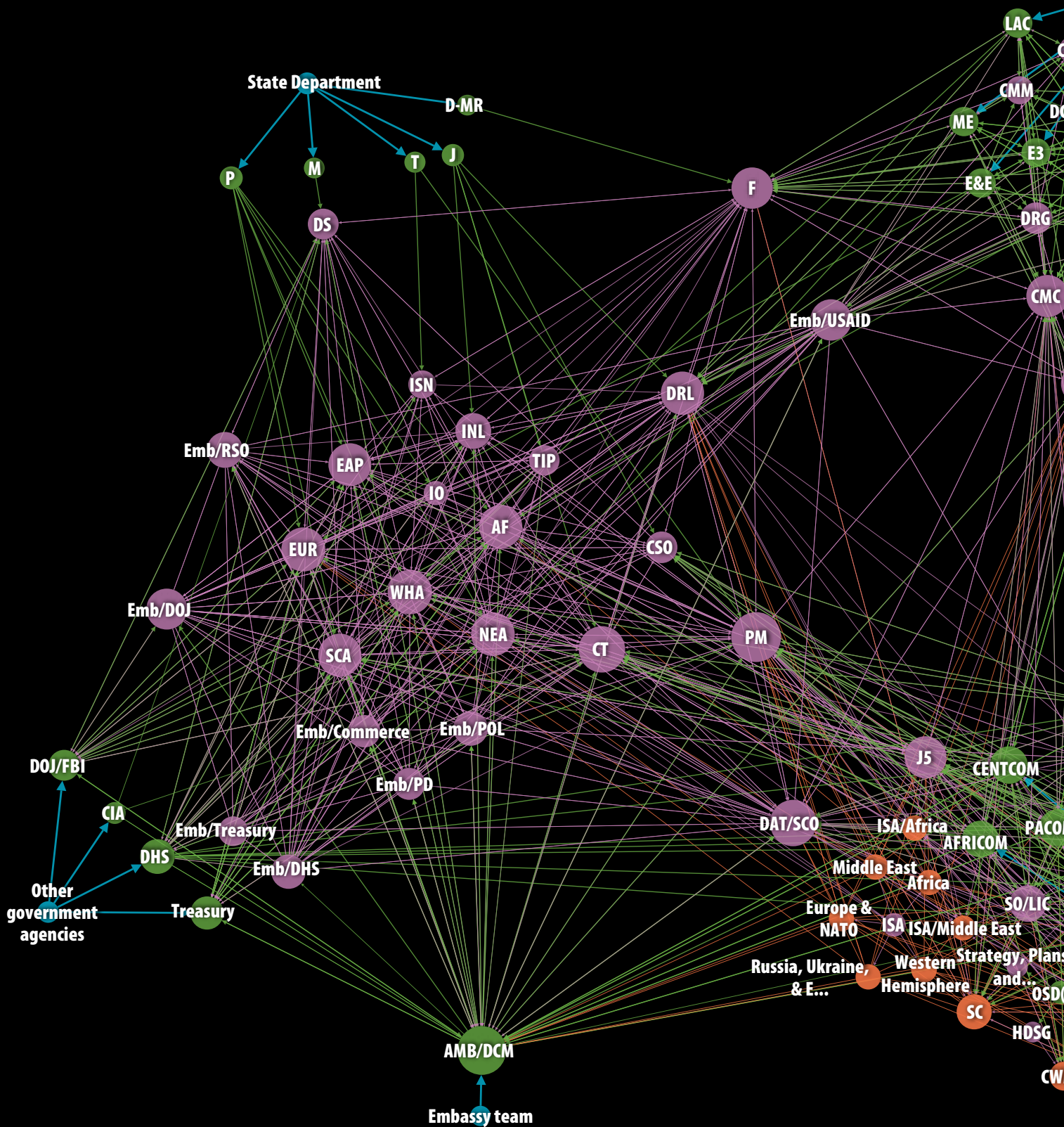
JIIM Leadership: FAOs as Security Cooperation Meta-Leaders

I measure the achievement of success by three indicators: networking in the embassy; productivity; and evidence of teamwork.

—Col. Robert A. Wagner⁸

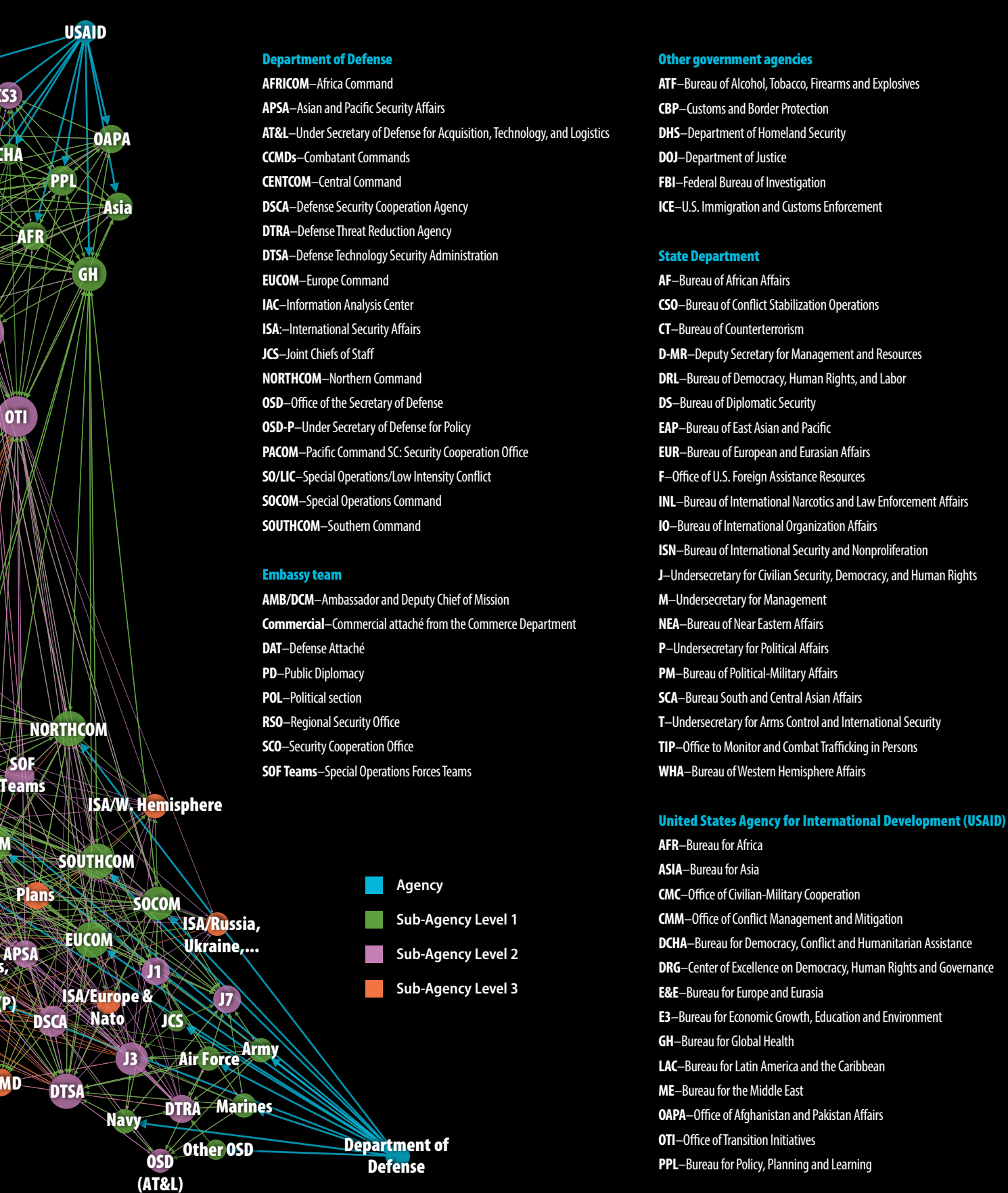
Interviews with retired ambassadors and senior military and national security leaders revealed different answers to the question of what the most important skills and attributes are that make FAOs successful as members of country teams or as senior military advisors.⁹ The answers included competence in the profession of arms, empathy, negotiation and mediation, knowledge of the cultures of other departments and agencies, knowledge of resources and programs, openness and tolerance, teamwork, ability to integrate with the embassy country team, and language aptitude. Only one retired ambassador mentioned regional knowledge. Anyone would be hard-pressed to find a

Previous page: Lt. Col. Jason Morales (left), a U.S. Army foreign area officer, and Colombian Navy Rear Adm. Juan Ricardo Rozo Obregón discuss the arrival of the U.S. Army Runnymede-class large landing craft U.S. Army Vessel *Chickahominy* with 130 tons of supplies and equipment for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction efforts 1 December 2020 on the island of Providencia, Colombia, following the destruction caused by Hurricane Iota. (Photo courtesy of the Colombian National Navy)



This image represents the lines of contact and coordination between the different offices, bureaus, agencies, or other entities with official responsibility for security sector assistance. It visualizes the tangled web that makes up the United States Security Sector Assistance (SSA) system. Each node represents a distinct entity. The colors represent hierarchy within each institution. Blue represents the agency level, and green, purple, and orange respectively represent a further step down in hierarchy. The larger a node, the greater the number of its connections to other entities. The closer it is to the middle of the diagram, the more connections it has to parts of the SSA system outside of its own agency. The Political-Military Affairs Bureau is the single

greatest point of contact within the SSA system, followed closely by the Counterterrorism Bureau, making them the largest and most central nodes. The dense clustering of Department of Defense entities speaks to the complexity of the intra-agency connections at the Pentagon. The isolation of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) offices suggests it is less integrated than other parts of the SSA system. The USAID embassy representation, is the most interconnected part of USAID, which is why it floats up toward the USAID headquarter offices and away from the embassy itself. Finally, the offices responsible for democracy, governance, and human rights (DRL, DCHA, DRG) are the least connected of the enterprise.



(Figure from *Untangling the Web: A Blueprint for Reforming American Security Sector Assistance*. Used with permission by Rose Jackson)

Figure 1. U.S. Security Sector Assistance Network Map

U.S. ambassador or senior leader who turns to a FAO and asks how international relations theory impacts policy. FAOs are not assigned to country teams to replace foreign service officers. FAOs serve a different purpose. Senior leaders expect FAOs to understand how to speak “across the aisle” and generate consensus among a team. Senior leaders expect FAOs to deliver what a partner nation requires to facilitate Department of Defense (DOD) support to the interagency team. For example, the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 served as a major structural shift in how the United States provided military and development aid to partner nations. Notably, though, the FAA specifies that the executive branch may assign members of the Armed Forces to support State Department posts overseas to support the implementation of military assistance programs.¹⁰ Here, the core competencies of security cooperation such as acquisitions, contracting, and fiscal processes are designed to support the interagency team. The DOD is not the lead for foreign assistance; rather, FAOs lead DOD support to the State Department and

the interagency and as such are the DOD’s cross-cultural experts.

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According to the Army’s leadership manual, leadership is “the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.”¹¹ Service regulations and various legal statutes codify the authority that military leaders wield in certain positions, notably as commanders. For FAOs, the pinnacle leadership position is that of senior defense official/defense attaché (SDO/DATT) at a U.S. embassy. Yet, the position comes with little organizational authority under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice and an implied mandate to answer to three different bosses who may have competing priorities: the geographic combatant commander, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the U.S. ambassador. Case in point, the SDO/DATT is often not even in the rating chain of many of his or her subordinates in the organization. Additionally, FAOs operate within a tangled system of U.S. security cooperation and foreign military assistance (see figure 1, page 94–95).¹²

The figure depicts the “lines of contact and coordination between the different offices, bureaus, agencies, or other entities with official responsibility for security sector assistance.”¹³ But FAOs, assigned to various billets in different organizations throughout the system, can break barriers down through “meta-leadership.” Meta-leadership refers “to guidance, direction, and momentum across organizational lines that develop into a shared course of action and a commonality of purpose among people and agencies.”¹⁴ In other words, a meta-leader “connects the purposes and the work of different organizations.”¹⁵ In light of this, and with a lack of traditional command authority through the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, FAOs placed within this complex, interdependent system must exert power and influence through a balance of relationships, networks, and an astute knowledge of the interagency environment. Lacking these traits, a FAO will ultimately fail, no matter his or her language or history skills or proficiency in “traditional” core competencies. Accordingly, effective FAOs view DOD Directive 5205.75, *DOD Operations at U.S. Embassies*, which gives the SDO/DATT coordinating authority over all DOD elements under chief of mission authority, not as a limitation but as all empowering.¹⁶ Moreover, the very best FAOs, on country teams and on staff, move past the consolidation of leadership within DOD and exercise all facets of meta-leadership by “leading up to the people to whom (they) are accountable; leading across to other



Marine Corps foreign area personnel and members of the Djiboutian military conduct a maritime operations center ground force integration tabletop exercise October 2019 in Djibouti as part of exercise Cutlass Express 19.2. The Cutlass Express exercise is designed to assess and improve combined maritime law enforcement capacity and promote national and regional security in East Africa and to increase interoperability between the U.S., African, and international partners. (Photo courtesy of the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group)

intra-organizational entities; and leading beyond to inter-organizational entities.”¹⁷

Accession: Choosing Attributes Over Skills

It’s really more about the attributes you possess.

—Lt. Gen. James Slife¹⁸

How can the Army increase FAOs in the force that are able to exercise meta-leadership? Currently, the Army assesses new FAOs through the Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program based on enabling skills and not the attributes that make great meta-leaders. “The process ... is managed by HRC [Human Resources Command] to balance inventories with Army requirements and to leverage individual officer preferences and demonstrated abilities ... VTIP [Voluntary Transfer Incentive

Program] allows HRC to identify and target officers with critical skills early in their development, allowing them to get additional training and experience to bring those skills to bear as quickly as possible.”¹⁹ Additionally, the FAO FA [functional area] seeks officers with demonstrated language skills, graduate study experience, and regional/international professional experience as a civilian, student, or Soldier. Officers who have previously received master’s degrees in a regional or international discipline and have shown, through a Defense Language Proficiency Test or Defense Language Aptitude Battery an ability to learn a foreign language will be given special consideration during the accessions process.²⁰

This methodology is in direct contrast with the approach of the joint special operations community and

the Army's new Battalion Commander Assessment Program (BCAP). The Air Force Special Operations Command, for example, is "moving ... increasingly away from an assessment and selection program that's based on performance and more toward one based on attributes," according to Lt. Gen. James Slife.²¹ Similarly, the Army's BCAP was designed by the Army Talent Management Task Force to "assess each officer's fitness for command and strategic leadership potential" through a "series of cognitive, non-cognitive, and physical assessments in addition to a panel interview."²² In both cases, the objective is to find the officers that best fit, rather than those with the best skills or performance.

For FAOs, this type of approach would mean focusing less on the Defense Language Proficiency Test and the Defense Language Aptitude Battery scores or possession of certain master's degrees and more on the attributes that make great meta-leaders. This would require a shift toward a selection process that includes personality tests and interviews. While these types of selection processes, such as BCAP, Special Forces Assessment and Selection, or the Ranger Assessment and Selection Program require high initial investments, the reward is also high. The Army implemented BCAP to "change the culture of the Army officer corps to one that deeply values the abilities most needed by tomorrow's strategic leaders, such as critical and innovative thinking, effective oral and written communication, strategic temperament, and an authentic respect for subordinates and peers."²³ In other words, BCAP looks for all the qualities that make FAOs effective meta-leaders in the complex web of interagency security cooperation. A FAO assessment and selection program need not be as long or robust as BCAP. In fact, it could be done remotely, but the personality test and interviews would go a long way in ensuring those coming into the FAO have the attributes required of meta-leaders. As the Army transitions to a new talent management process, it would serve the FAO branch well to seek new methods for identifying the right talent we need in FAOs.

Train as You Fight

The question is exactly what—and how to acquire those skills and put them to good use.

—Richard Haass²⁴

The Army requires FAOs to understand legislative processes, DOD acquisitions and contracting, fiscal

law and policy, State Department regulations, and the foundations of U.S. foreign assistance, but FAO training does not address these areas. On an Army Service Component Command (ASCC), geographic combatant commands (GCC), or other joint or interagency staff, the Army FAO helps translate policy, State Department regulations and guidance, and other interagency communications. This is the unique operating environment that FAOs should be prepared to work in. Army officers who spend most of their careers at the division level and below do not know how to speak this language when assigned to an ASCC or GCC staff and are required to plan a multinational exercise that stretches the seam between two different commands. This is where the FAO operates and provides meta-leadership. The FAO is DOD to the core, equipped not to translate but to interpret between DOD and the interagency.

To illustrate this point, one need only look to retired Lt. Gen. Charles Hooper, a former director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and a senior Army FAO. Hooper provided a two-sided "What is important as a SCO (Security Cooperation Office) and FAO?" card to students that went through the Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies Security Cooperation Management-Overseas (recently replaced by SCO-201 Security Cooperation Office) course (see figure 2, page 99). The card contains a total of twenty-nine bullets yet makes only one reference to linguistic expertise. Conversely, the card does mention U.S. interests; the corridors of Congress, the Pentagon hallways, and State Department cafeteria; learning to work with the interagency; and networking, among others. Hooper has served as SDO/DATT in two different GCCs, as a deputy director of Strategy, Plans, and Policies (J-5) for one and as J-5 director for another. He is also a proponent of cross-GCC assignments. As recently as June 2020, Hooper, as Defense Security Cooperation Agency director, told a group of Latin American FAOs that "language is a tool" to enable relationships that further *National Defense Strategy (NDS)* objectives.²⁵ He also stated that human relationships within the embassy country team, with the interagency in Washington, D.C., and with Congress were equally, if not more, important.²⁶

The March 2020 FAO newsletter highlights that Army senior leadership is increasingly emphasizing generalization vice specialization in career management.²⁷ Nevertheless, Army FAOs remain regionally trained

despite being globally staffed. Thus, the program is out of balance. The pipeline is inverted with respect to the amount of time spent learning enabling skills instead of the core competencies of meta-leadership and security cooperation.

Initial FAO training includes five phases: the Joint FAO Course (Phase I), basic language training, in-region training (IRT), advanced civilian schooling, and the Intermediate Level Education (ILE) Common Core Course.²⁸ Initial training requires thirty-three to forty-two months to complete the five phases, varying by area of concentration and language. Of the five, only the one-week Joint FAO Course and fourteen-week ILE Common Core address the JIIM environment. Taken

together, JFAOC and ILE are just shy of four months that develop core competencies of a minimum thirty-three-month training experience. Moreover, the Joint FAO Course is only an introduction to the FA and not designed to provide depth on JIIM leadership. While ILE Common Core follows a curriculum that achieves Military Education Level 4 qualification, FAOs conduct the course with other Army FA officers at a satellite

- We exist to serve the direct, naked interest of the United States of America. Period!
- Loyalty, Honesty, Integrity, Discretion, Respect, Courtesy, Dignity, Common Sense, Humility
- Keep Me Informed. No surprises. Bad news and Good news right away. . . Be on time. Keep me on time.
- "Plans are useless, planning is EVERYTHING" —GEN Eisenhower
- BLUF; "Sir, the mission/purpose is. . ."; Answer "yes or no"; First, answer the question you are asked.
- Speak truth to power always (me). If you don't tell me it's broken, I can't fix it. . .
- Relevance, relevance, relevance to DOD/DSCA mission in everything we say and do.
- Strive to be the best. Who is the world's second fastest man? Who cares?
- Keep doctrinally current and "talk the talk"; Read!
- Don't play games. Be honest. What goes around comes around.
- The truth is in the corridors of Congress, the Pentagon hallways, the State Department cafeteria, not the office.
- If you are reading it in the *Washington Post*, it is already old news.
- Not enough to work hard. Work hard and work smart.
- Leadership and polite candor are the currencies of our profession; disagree without being disagreeable. . .
- Do your homework, know your audience, and speak their "language."
- You are only a few Google keystrokes away from what you need to know.
- Stay on message. Exercise discipline.
- Be an expert oral and written communicator.
- Know Yourself and Be Yourself.
- Learn to work with the Interagency.
- The COCOM and the services are run by war fighters, never forget that.
- Everyone wants everything "yesterday"; if we can't deliver, at least tell them why.
- Social functions are enablers and opportunities, not a way of life. Prioritize!
- Network, network, network with your counterparts.
- Linguistic expertise is telling a joke that makes people laugh or knowing a proverb.
- Have a sense of humor—I do.
- Take care of yourself and your comrades.
- Take care of your family.
- Have fun.

(Figure by retired Lt. Gen. Charles Hooper, former director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and a senior Army foreign area officer)

Figure 2. Lt. Gen. Hooper's "What Is Important as a Security Cooperation Office and a Foreign Area Officer?" Card

course or through distance learning. Army FAOs get a JIIM curriculum in ILE but not necessarily JIIM experience. Given that Army officers access into FAO between four and seven years of service, the likelihood is that they possess little JIIM experience as they enter the FA.

Among the seven objectives of IRT, DA Pam 600-3 lists the following JIIM and security cooperation related knowledge areas: U.S. policy goals and formulation;



security assistance activities, combatant command priorities, and combined operations and exercises; embassy offices and administration; and the JIIM environment.²⁹ Younger FAOs typically report higher levels of satisfaction, as well as greater understanding of both the JIIM environment and security cooperation, when given the opportunity to serve as deputy Army section chiefs or operations officers during IRT.³⁰ However, the IRT experience for each FAO varies by location and the senior FAO placed in charge of the program. In addition, the conglomeration of FAOs conducting IRT in just a few of the larger countries reduces the opportunities to serve in key positions that provide valuable on-the-job training and experiential learning. Consequently, more FAOs revert to language immersion and in-depth understanding of the region as their primary goals during IRT. As a result, whether purposefully or not, the IRT experience again prioritizes enabling skills over core competencies. IRT should be further standardized and formalized to ensure the opposite.³¹

Security cooperation is an inherently interagency function that requires close collaboration between

Lt. Col. Tim Mitchell (*left*), a U.S. Army foreign area officer at the National Defense University, and Lt. Gen. Mohammed Zeggaoui, inspector general of armor for Morocco, socialize 11 May 2017 during the African Land Forces Summit in Lilongwe, Malawi. The summit is an annual, weeklong seminar that brings together land force chiefs from across Africa for candid dialog on cooperative solutions to regional and transregional challenges and threats. (Photo by Sgt. Paige Behringer, U.S. Army)

various departments within the executive branch and oversight by the legislative branch. It is at this nexus that FAOs serve to apply the breadth of their knowledge and skills, tactfully navigating through the interagency bureaucracy and leveraging meta-leadership to implement the vision set forth in numerous strategic documents. Yet, nothing in the nearly three-year initial training pipeline addresses security cooperation writ large and as a result, the interagency process. Without a doubt, the FAO pipeline produces a highly educated, language-enabled, regionally astute officer. However, FAOs do not receive any further training or education in “core competencies” until they are assigned to an overseas location.

FAOs receive their introduction and certification to conduct security cooperation through the newly minted Defense Security Cooperation University (DSCU; formerly the Defense Institute for Security Cooperation Studies). Prior to an assignment to a security cooperation office within a country team, service members, regardless of rank or branch of service, must complete a twenty-day orientation course that focuses on the fundamentals of managing security cooperation programs overseas.³² Officially coined “SCO 201,” the course ranges from learning about the structure of embassy country teams (“the ambassador is the chief of mission”) to the foreign military sales process. The course provides a foundation to the multilayered bureaucracy that stems from the Arms Export Control Act and the FAA. Moving beyond the fundamentals of security cooperation, the course requires students to become familiar with various financial or technical systems that they may never again use after departing the schoolhouse. However, the course is not tailored to FAOs, and after nearly three years of training and one assignment on a country team through IRT, SCO 201 does not serve to increase a FAOs comprehension of the interagency world. In fact, portions of DSCU training focus on regional orientation and familiarization for which FAOs should already be fully qualified.

To better function in the JIIM environment and better serve the Army and the joint force as standard-bearers for security cooperation professionals, there should be a formal security cooperation certification for FAOs. Similarly, FA59 strategists are required to undergo a fourteen-week Basic Strategic Art Program in addition to earning a master’s degree as part of their transition into the functional career field. This course is an essential component of “creating” the FA59 officer. In contrast, Army FAOs are not “certified” as security cooperation professionals at the end of their initial training pipeline, thus creating disparity throughout the FAO community between those with security cooperation training and experience, and those without. A “Security Cooperation Management for FAOs” course will allow FAOs to deep dive into DOD acquisitions, the Arms Export Control Act, and security cooperation legislation. Security cooperation is more than simply creating a letter of request on the so-called napkin for a partner-nation acquisition, asking the partner nation to sign a letter of offer and acceptance, and filing surface discrepancy reports. Security cooperation requires a deep understanding of the impacts of the National Defense

Authorization Act and the legislative process for allocating grant assistance. A security cooperation course for FAOs should address critical areas of the defense acquisition systems. Since the foreign military sales process uses similar contracting and acquisition systems that DOD uses to equip U.S. forces, an in-depth understanding of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System may enhance FAOs as they prepare to operate abroad. Not only would this allow FAOs to better address the needs of partner nations through a holistic approach of military assistance, but it would also benefit in engagements with senior leaders and enable FAOs to provide timely and accurate advice regarding substantial acquisitions of defense articles.

A New Model

Do not be held back by conventional thinking ... break some glass.

—Maj. Gen. Peter Bayer³³

The challenge, above all, is timing. How does one create something substantial while still allowing for language training, IRT, and graduate school? First, the increased focus on great-power competition in the NDS and push for generalization by senior Army leadership calls into question the value of a regionally focused master’s degree. However, research suggests that policy makers desire background knowledge for context in order to make policy decisions, not necessarily policy advice.³⁴ The survey of national security decision-makers thus reinforces the need for regional studies. Meanwhile, the most critical national security threats continue to be transnational and transregional, whether it is competition with China or Russia, or transnational criminal organizations, nuclear proliferation, or global pandemics, as recently illuminated by COVID-19. A true FAO certification program modeled along the lines of the previously discussed FA59 program would allow FAOs to pursue regional master’s degrees with a complimentary graduate certificate in national security studies or vice versa. This would transform FAOs away from their role as cultural linguists and toward the regional strategists the Army requires. The blending of a master’s degree with a graduate certificate would allow FAOs to deep dive into their assigned area of concentration while understanding how regional plans, issues, and

threats nest within the larger context of the *NDS* and *National Security Strategy*.

Second, to better gain efficiencies in the training pipeline and to accommodate a multiweek certification course, the Army's FAO Proponent Office should advocate for a hybrid course layout for ILE. Currently, the general FAO population competes for attendance at satellite ILE or completes distance ILE in lieu of residential courses. FAOs generally complete ILE after advanced civil schooling and prior to their first assignment out of the training pipeline, creating longer gaps to place the right officer in the right place at the right time. As an alternative, and to better certify FAOs as security cooperation and interagency experts, or "regional strategists," all FAOs should seek to complete phase 1 of the Command and General Staff Officers' Course Common Core via distance learning during IRT. This would provide time and space in the training pipeline to accommodate greater FAO-specific training to build core competencies for interagency meta-leadership of FAOs. Upon completion of advanced civil schooling, FAO trainees would complete phase 2 of ILE, which would provide added emphasis on joint doctrine, interagency coordination, security cooperation, defense acquisitions, and legislative affairs. This begins to shape the aforementioned "Security Cooperation Management for FAOs" course.

Third, not all FAOs require initial language training.³⁵ As previously discussed, language is an enabler, not a core competency. Initial language training makes sense for areas of concentration (AOCs) with a predominant language (e.g., Spanish for Latin America or Arabic for the Middle East). However, it does not make sense to send a Spanish-speaking officer to the Latin America AOC for Portuguese or French language training not knowing if the officer will ever serve in Brazil or Haiti. The problem is more pronounced when extrapolated to other AOCs with multiple languages, such as Europe, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, where officers might attend initial language training and never serve in a billet that requires them to use that language. The Army should only send a select group of officers to initial language training, based on AOC, and provide the others with language training as required, like the Department of State's Foreign Service program.³⁶ The Army would be better served applying the saved time and resources to developing FAOs' core competencies.

Fourth, the IRT program is the pinnacle of the Army FAO training program, but this phase should be modified to ensure maximum growth for the FAO trainee. IRT can and should serve as the experiential learning of the JIIM environment. Every attempt should be made to assign FAOs to smaller security cooperation offices where they could learn by serving in key billets or managing specific programs while also providing much needed staff alleviation to smaller, overburdened teams. Upon completion of this timeline, the officer is certified and prepared for worldwide assignment.

Finally, the Army should include the Joint Military Attaché School, or at least the foundational aspects of it, as part of FAO certification along with security cooperation. If FAOs received both security cooperation and attaché training upfront, they would be better prepared to serve in embassies overseas and to understand how each office—security cooperation office and attaché—supports the other in advancing *NDS* and regional objectives.

Critics of this model will suggest that FAOs do not need security cooperation training unless they are serving in a security cooperation billet. Moreover, they will argue that some FAOs immediately serve as defense attachés under the administrative control of the Defense Intelligence Agency and do not need additional lengthy training. This is a false dilemma. Whether through international training and education, delivery of defense articles, or large-scale exercises, Department of State and DOD policy manifest through active security cooperation. As such, FAOs serving on the staff at the ASCC or GCCs, or even throughout the joint staff or Defense Intelligence Agency headquarters, must be proficient in security cooperation lexicon. This is also true for defense attachés diplomatically representing the secretary of defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, the services, and GCCs to the partner nation. During key leader and other routine engagements, military assistance is often discussed, and many times, it is FAOs without security cooperation experience or training who are responsible for crafting the message for senior leaders. In fact, untimely events in the media will often draw the ire of legislators and FAOs should be familiar with the impacts of these engagements. These are not items solely relegated to the security cooperation offices but rather to FAOs writ large.



Cmdr. Garry Wright (right), High Speed Vessel *Swift* mission commander, accompanied by U.S. Air Force foreign area officer, Maj. Ivan Acosta, is interviewed by a Peruvian news team 1 February 2012 during their visit to support U.S. Navy Seabees Naval Mobile Construction Battalion and Peruvian combat engineers in their mission to refurbish an elementary school in Zona De Acapulco, Callao, Peru. (Photo by Spc. Jennifer Grier, U.S. Army)

Conclusion

Anytime you stop striving to get better, you're bound to get worse.

—Pat Riley³⁷

The Army FAO training model is widely touted as the best of the four services' by joint FAOs, senior DOD leadership, and independent studies alike.³⁸ However, the core tenets of the program—language, IRT, and graduate school—have remained largely the same since 1947 because it is an effective way of developing regional specialists.³⁹ Still, today's global security environment is too interconnected across regions and domains to maintain the FAO FA core competencies established seventy-three years ago. Ultimately, if FAOs are the Army's security cooperation professionals, then there should be a specific course that certifies them as such. Progress is possible, and to date, DSCU and Defense Acquisition

University have signed a memorandum of agreement to facilitate greater exchange between the two schools. Yet, this still falls short of modifying the FAO training pipeline to accommodate the requirements set forth by the Army to serve as security cooperation professionals. Meta-leadership and security cooperation as core competencies are more important, relevant, and universal to FAOs across all the AOCs than language and regional knowledge, which are enablers. The intent is not to diminish the importance of enabling functions but to balance the FAO pipeline toward core competencies that allow the FAO FA to provide the Army and the joint force with enduring strategic value and competitive advantage. This view of the FAO program necessitates changes to FAO accession and training. The recommendations set forth in this article are meant to do just that, thrusting the FAO FA from a post-World War II model into a new twenty-first-century paradigm. ■

Notes

Epigraph. James G. Stavridis, *Partnership for the Americas: Western Hemisphere Strategy and U.S. Southern Command* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2010), 23.

1. Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, June 2017 [obsolete]), sec. 27-2.b.

2. C. K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel, "The Core Competence of the Corporation," *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1990, 84.

3. DA Pam 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, sec. 17-1, 18-2, 19-1, 20-2.

4. *Ibid.*, sec. 2-1.

5. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, s.v. "unique (*adj.*)," accessed 23 December 2020, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/unique>.

6. DA Pam 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, sec. 27-1.

7. *Ibid.*, sec. 27-1.c.

8. Charles H. Briscoe, "Who's in Charge down Here?," *Veritas* 14, no. 3 (2018): 29.

9. Nicholas J. Lopez, (major, Master of Public Policy candidate, Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs, Princeton, NJ), email interview with author, 13 April 2020, 31 May 2020, and 10 June 2020. Lopez conducted several nonattributable interviews with former ambassadors and retired military and national security professionals for his graduate studies and agreed to contribute their responses for the purposes of this article.

10. Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, Pub. L. No. 87-195 § 503, 22 U.S.C. 2151 *et seq.* (1961).

11. Field Manual 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, October 2006 [obsolete]), 1-2.

12. Rose Jackson, *Untangling the Web: A Blueprint for Reforming American Security Sector Assistance* (Washington, DC: Open Society Foundations, January 2017), 30.

13. *Ibid.*

14. Leonard J. Marcus, Barry C. Dorn, and Joseph M. Henderson, "Meta-Leadership and National Emergency Preparedness: Strategies to Build Government Connectivity" (working paper, National Preparedness Leadership Initiative, Harvard School of Public Health, Cambridge, MA, 2014), 5.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Briscoe, "Who's in Charge Down Here?," 29.

17. Marcus, Dorn, and Henderson, "Meta-Leadership," 19.

18. Meghann Myers, "Special Operations Using Artificial Intelligence, Personality Traits to Recruit and Select," *Military Times*, 13 May 2020, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/05/13/special-operations-using-artificial-intelligence-personality-traits-to-recruit-and-select/>.

19. DA Pam 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, sec. 3-4.b(5)(b).

20. *Ibid.*, sec. 27-3.b(1)(a).

21. Myers, "Special Operations Using Artificial Intelligence."

22. "Battalion Commander Assessment Program," U.S. Army Talent Management, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://talent.army.mil/bcap/>.

23. Everett Spain, "The Army's NFL Combine: The Battalion Commander Assessment Program," Modern War Institute at West Point, 12 January 2020, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://mwi.usma.edu/armys-nfl-combine-battalion-commander-assessment-program/>.

24. Richard N. Haass, *The Bureaucratic Entrepreneur: How to Be Effective In Any Unruly Organization* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 7.

25. Lt. Gen. Charles W. Hooper, remarks to U.S. Army 48B foreign area officers (FAO) during a professional development session on 11 June 2020. During the question-and-answer portion of the engagement, Hooper also expressed support for FAO proponent conducting personality tests and interviews as part of the accession process and exploring a certification program similar to Functional Area 59 while acknowledging that the length of the training pipeline would be difficult to adjust because it cannot be extended much beyond what it is under the current construct.

26. *Ibid.*

27. John Moore, "Message from DAMO-SSF Strategic Leadership Division," message to all FAOs, Foreign Area Officer Branch Update, March 2020, 3.

28. DA Pam 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, sec. 27-3.c.

29. *Ibid.*, sec. 27-3.c(3)(b).

30. Multiple in-person and telephonic interviews with fourteen FAOs who completed in-region training (IRT) or were in IRT at the time of the interview. FAOs who completed IRT did so in 2014 or later. In-person interviews conducted from 25 to 29 March 2019 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, with FAOs who were in IRT at the time.

31. Timothy D. Mitchell Jr., "The Army FAO Training Program: Time to Break More Glass," Strategy Research Project (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2013), 22.

32. "SCO-201, Description," Defense Security Cooperation University, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://www.dscu.mil/pages/academics/CourseInfo0.aspx?id=SCO-201>.

33. Mitchell, "The Army FAO Training Program," 1.

34. Paul C. Avey and Michael C. Desch, "What Do Policymakers Want from Us? Results of a Survey of Current and Former Senior National Security Decision Makers," *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2014): 244.

35. Mitchell, "The Army FAO Training Program," 18.

36. *Ibid.*, 19. For an in-depth look at the issues with FAO language training and recommendations for initial language training, "just in time" language training, and IRT language immersion, see pages 13–20 of Mitchell's Strategy Research Project. We agree with the view and recommendations in Mitchell's paper.

37. Pat Riley, *Winner Within Success* (New York: Putnam, 1993).

38. Mitchell, "The Army FAO Training Program," 9–10.

39. *Ibid.*, 9.

Army Multi-Domain Transformation

Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict

Chief of Staff Paper #1
Unclassified Version



Headquarters, Department of the Army
16 March 2021

In *Army Multi-Domain Transformation: Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict*, U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. James C. McConville lays out concepts to guide the Army's transformation to meet the threats posed by determined adversaries together with the challenge of keeping pace with accelerating technological advances. In it, he asserts that the Army is quickly losing the overmatch capabilities against peer and near-peer adversaries it once took for granted and must effectively transform to prevail in future conflicts characterized by engagements at longer ranges and across all domains, conducted at greatly increased speed. Among the key components of such transformation are a vastly enhanced and reconfigured personnel talent-management system, new weapon systems of much greater sophistication, innovation in organization and doctrine, and major changes in the way the Army trains. He asserts that such bold transformation is essential as the Army adjusts to the necessity of more effectively integrating and coordinating within the joint force construct to ensure it contributes land-force overmatch capabilities required to prevail in future conflicts to achieve national objectives and protect national interests. Among the more ambitious innovations he discusses is the introduction of multi-domain task forces. To view this paper, visit <https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/2021/03/23/eeac3d01/20210319-csa-paper-1-signed-print-version.pdf>.