

IDA

INSIGHTS

on Institutional Capacity
Building in Africa



IDA

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Institutional Capacity Building in Africa

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INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING IN AFRICA

Developing and maintaining strong relationships with political allies and security partners has been a pillar of U.S. national defense strategies for the last two decades. Congress expanded the toolkit for sustaining these relationships through the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, which authorized increased Department of Defense spending and expanded authorities for security cooperation programs and activities with friendly foreign countries. By tying investment to the commitment to work with these countries and help them build the capacity of their defense institutions, Congress ensured that planning, budgeting, and personnel management would not be ignored.

Many African security partners understand that these long-term investments for better institutions will lead to greater success over time. However, those same institutions are faced with real-time security threats such as violent extremist activity, illegal trafficking, and piracy. On January 30, 2020, General Stephen Townsend, Commander of Africa Command (AFRICOM), provided testimony on the 2020 AFRICOM Posture Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee. He emphasized the need for the United States to be thoughtful and dedicated in its security partnerships with African states:

We are committed to optimizing the effectiveness of our security cooperation assistance and activities and we must be innovative in how we use our assets in support of our strategic objectives. Honest assessments and prudent investments ensure the U.S. maximizes the impact of every taxpayer dollar while remaining the premier security partner for priority African governments.

The Department of Defense, in coordination with the Department of State, provides the security assistance Townsend described through training and equipment, professional military education programs, and help with building the capacity of partner military and government institutions. The goal of these programs is not only to ensure the long-term sustainment of U.S. security assistance, but also to help partners develop and manage their own security institutions, thereby advancing their economic growth and development.

In this issue of *IDA Insights*, we take a closer look at IDA's activities in support of the United States and its partners in their efforts to help build institutional capacity in African militaries.

BUILDING AN AIR FORCE IN THE SAHEL: CHALLENGES AND PATHS FORWARD

The Sahel is a biogeographic region of Africa that separates the Sahara Desert to the north and Sudan's tropical savanna to the south. IDA staff members have participated in defense institutional capacity building projects across the Sahel since 2015 to help establish more effective, affordable, and accountable defense institutions in the region. IDA's experience suggests that creating an air force often impinges on building other security capabilities since the high cost of operating and maintaining air capabilities is rarely considered.

Security challenges in the Sahel—encompassing Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Mali, and Sudan—are dynamic and interlinked. The primary **drivers of insecurity in the region** range from intercommunal conflict, organized crime, and terrorism to migration and climate change. These threats persist against **a backdrop** of widespread poverty, political instability, and humanitarian crises. Compared to the rest of the world, **Sahelian states rank among the lowest** in terms of human development indicators and **among the highest** in scores of public corruption. U.S. involvement in the region is rooted in a desire to counter **transnational threats and malign actors**, particularly violent extremist organizations (VEOs) that are expanding their reach across Africa. The United States and its allies also **aim to build the capabilities** of its African partners' militaries to defeat such actors.

Historical grievances also have the potential to combine with transnational threats to **trigger new conflicts**. Subsequently, partner nations find themselves consumed by the need to respond to immediate challenges. When building air forces, they often focus on immediate operational capabilities for use in today's fight, rather than creating the systems to effectively maintain and sustain those capabilities.



Challenges with Building an Air Force

Three air capabilities are particularly valuable in the wide expanse of the Sahel—lift; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); and strike.

- *Lift* allows states to deploy and support forces over the vastness of their territory.
- *ISR* collects information that, after exploitation, can be disseminated rapidly to operational commanders for situational awareness or targeting.
- *Strike* includes close air support to troops in contact with enemy forces and provides those friendly troops with essential overmatch in firepower at critical moments.

Developing these capabilities can be challenging. For one thing, weak or absent institutional capacity for strategic planning prevents a full understanding of how a capability will meet operational needs. A variety of considerations outside a rigorous requirements-based planning process influence decision-making on new capabilities, including the desire for prestigious end items possessed by rival countries. For instance, consider the C-130 Hercules transport aircraft that some Sahelian states operate today or aspire to operate in the future. The C-130 can traverse vast terrain to resupply remote locations. According to the aircraft's manufacturer, Lockheed Martin Corporation, **70 countries across the globe** operate this aircraft. However, relative to other equipment in the inventories of Sahelian air forces, a C-130 is an expensive, sophisticated capability that is difficult to operate and maintain. The life-cycle costs of a C-130 has a significant effect on managing current capabilities for different missions, which is often not factored into the decision-making—costs are critical to sustainment and maintenance. Life-cycle costs are **defined as** the cost to the government of a program over its full life from research and development, testing and production, operations and maintenance, personnel, environmental compliance, and disposal. This also includes enduring and underemphasized costs—spares, support equipment, facilities, training, depot maintenance, aerial ports, and more. The aircraft on the ramp is not a capability without the crew, fuel, maintainers, and spare parts necessary to keep it operational.

Another impediment is insufficient staff capacity. The officer corps in many Sahelian militaries includes competent, capable leaders, but there are not enough officers to conduct the long-term planning necessary to sustain capabilities and grow the future force. This dearth of planning staffs is exacerbated in the Sahelian air forces that rely on donor nations such as the United States to help them with personnel development, ranging from initial qualification of aircrew to professional military education of senior staff. For these Sahelian states, greater control over staff development than they feel they have or can afford is necessary to write doctrine, advance broad policies for air-ground integration, analyze capability alternatives, and undertake other long-term planning activities.

Finally, the organizational structure of the military can be a limitation in implementing appropriate air capabilities. In the Sahelian military structure, the air force is often subordinate to the army. Though this practice is not inherently adverse, the disproportionate per capita, per platform cost of operating and

maintaining an air force is sometimes overlooked by army leaders—to be addressed only when aircraft are grounded for lack of spare parts, lack of aircrew, or some other predictable shortcoming.

These three challenges emphasize the need for the U.S. to support partner's institutional capabilities through integrated planning, life-cycle cost estimating, and stronger coordination to ensure complementary efforts among donor partners.



Addressing These Challenges

Steps that both partner and donor nations might take to address challenges with building, maintaining, and sustaining air forces in the Sahel follow:

- *Develop a more comprehensive approach to strategic planning.* Whenever possible, partner nations should designate full-time staff to conduct strategic planning, including assessing capability requirements and gaps and developing solutions that account for life-cycle costs.
- *Conduct capability-based planning.* As donor nations work with partners to close gaps, planning must recognize their willingness to build capabilities and their capacity to employ, maintain, and sustain them.
- *Develop life-cycle cost estimates.* Donor nations should assist partners in institutionalizing the practice of developing life-cycle cost estimates, implementation timelines, and descriptions for the sustainment of the assistance effort, as the [FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act](#) mandates.
- *Coordinate with allied countries.* When possible, donor nations should coordinate security assistance efforts through increased information sharing to tailor assistance to the needs of the Sahel region.

These recommendations—born from international best practices in defense institutional capacity building—involve integrated efforts such as capability-based planning and life-cycle cost estimation. Helping partner nations build effective, affordable air forces is an important element of the defense-institution building needed in this region of the world.

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For more information on the topic of IDA's work on defense institution building in Africa, see A. Neese-Bybee, P. Clarke, and A. Noyes, "[Adapting to Adaptive Adversaries: Defense Institution Building in Africa](#)," *Parameters* 50, no. 1: 65–70. The article was published internally as IDA Document NS D-9280 in September 2018.



DEFENSE INSTITUTION BUILDING IN TUNISIA, LIBERIA, AND GUINEA

The Department of Defense defines defense institution building (also called institutional capacity building) as: “Security cooperation activities that empower partner nation defense institutions to establish or re-orient their policies and structures to make their defense sector more transparent, accountable, effective, affordable, and responsive to civilian control.” Defense institution building has become a key component of U.S. security cooperation programming, particularly since the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act required that “defense institution capacity building” accompany all significant U.S. security cooperation initiatives. IDA’s experiences in Tunisia, Liberia, and Guinea exemplify the unique challenges and opportunities associated with defense institution building.

Implementing the Security Governance Initiative in Tunisia

Since 2016, IDA researchers have supported defense reform projects in several African states. The defense element of the SGI program in Tunisia ran for only one year, but the effort demonstrated the challenges of attempting to foster interministerial cooperation where the host nation environment is not ready for such collaboration.

Tunisia was the birthplace of the Arab Spring in 2010, and the country's autocratic regime was replaced with a democratically elected government in 2011. That same year the Libyan government collapsed, unleashing elements from violent extremist groups al Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) that soon threatened neighboring Tunisia. Terrorists attacked the Bardo Museum and Sousse Beach in 2015, decimating the tourist sector and exacerbating an economic downturn. In the wake of these developments, the United States designated Tunisia as a major non-NATO ally—which provides benefits in defense, trade, and security cooperation—and subsequently increased foreign military financing from \$17 million in FY 2011 to \$88 million in FY 2017. The challenges IDA encountered in implementing this program are helpful lessons to “meet your partners where they are,” and to scope these institutional capacity building efforts appropriately to the context.

SGI activities

President Barack Obama established the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) in 2014 to help six African nations develop systems, processes, and institutions to reinforce democratic security and justice sector governance. It was designed as an interagency and interministerial program for the U.S. and its African partners. IDA led the defense line of effort for Tunisia, sponsored by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency's Institute for Security Governance (ISG) in partnership with U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Tunisia's SGI program ran from February 2016 to May 2017, beginning with U.S. experts (including

IDA) negotiating a Joint Country Action Plan with Tunisian officials. Under the broad category of border management, participants identified three potential lines of effort for partnership: (1) border security strategy, (2) threat assessment, and (3) human resources. IDA primarily supported the development of a border security strategy.

Engagement under SGI included a total of four coordinating visits and three workshops, the imbalance between preparation and execution reflecting the challenges of implementing the SGI program in Tunisia. IDA presented two workshops to support implementation planning for the border security strategy, but U.S. Customs and Border Protection did not have funds available to support this effort. The SGI program counts among its accomplishments:

- Demonstrated U.S. commitment to Tunisia at the peak of Tunisia's security challenges;
- Informed both Tunisian and U.S. officials on ICB concepts and practices;
- Introduced the ICB team members to the unique Tunisian historical context; and
- Created a bridge to other ICB work focused only on defense.

Outcomes and lessons learned

The SGI concept is particularly well-suited to support the whole-of-government approach required to fight transnational threats, which is Tunisia's challenge, yet Tunisia was not ready in 2015 to ramp up interministerial cooperation. Timing was the major challenge for SGI in Tunisia. After the revolution in 2010–2011, the new government was eager to engage with the U.S.,

but legal and procedural matters were still in flux in 2015 as governmental ministries determined their respective roles. For example, at the start of SGI engagements, the Ministry of Interior had authority over border security issues. This authority was transferred to the Ministry of Defense, which then had to develop new policies and coordination procedures, thus delaying engagement in SGI. At this time too, the Ministry of Defense was taking on new assets and training, while the Ministry of Interior, which had been the dominant service during the ousted autocracy regime, was finding a new role for itself in Tunisian society. Expecting collaboration between these ministries was not practical at that time. When SGI's constraints in Tunisia became evident, ISG moved toward the more promising path of engaging directly with the Ministry of Defense.

In addition, the U.S. has its own interagency challenges. The agencies involved in developing a border security strategy (the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security) had different funding mechanisms, which stymied efforts to implement SGI activities in Tunisia, since the Department of Defense had the flexibility to support programs when the opportunity arose, while the Department of Homeland Security did not. Future efforts to implement interagency activities should ensure U.S. agencies have funding dedicated to the specific initiative being executed.

Where there is an existing culture of interministerial cooperation, the SGI approach should have resonance. By assessing the current state of interministerial cooperation and the potential for deeper collaboration, planners

should scope the objectives of institutional capacity building activities to that context. To that end, the U.S. should look to improve security sector programs by:

- Drafting common terminology and analytical frameworks between agencies for providing defense and security assistance;
- Creating formal coordinating and legal processes between U.S. agencies to facilitate U.S. interagency work;
- Synchronizing SGI concepts of interagency cooperation practices into the Department of Defense's security cooperation efforts;
- Increasing the methodology and training of how to design and conduct interagency defense and security programs; and
- Identifying best practices for coordinating security assistance with non-U.S. contributors.

Conclusion

Although the SGI in Tunisia had only modest success, the concept is worthy of continued development, particularly for partners that face transnational challenges like Tunisia. Success will follow only if partner institutions are able to collaborate.

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A Surprising Way to Build Institutional Capacity in Liberia...Payroll Reform

A little effort can go a long way in building trust, even when the effort involves something outside a program's intended purpose. That's what a group of IDA researchers discovered soon after beginning a defense institution building project with the Liberian Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia. Faced with systemic delays in paying the country's soldiers, Liberian defense leaders were concerned that their soldiers' deteriorating morale would lead to a strike. IDA researchers helped them improve the way payroll was calculated and documented payroll procedures. In the process, IDA learned a lot about how to affect institutional change.

In early 2016, IDA researchers met with Liberian defense officials and members of the U.S. Embassy to identify ways to assist Liberia to reform and strengthen its defense institutions. A brutal civil war (1989–2003) had destroyed existing institutions and led to an exodus of the most qualified people in the labor force. Core skills of conceptualizing, developing, and implementing public policy existed in limited capacity across all government organizations. IDA's initial plan was to work with the Liberian Armed Forces to develop a model of Liberia's force structure, estimate recurring annual costs, and create defensible budget submissions.

Instead, conversations turned to the subject of payroll. The ministry's deputy of administration asked IDA to review a Microsoft Excel workbook he had developed to calculate monthly payroll for the armed forces—a system riddled with delays that threatened morale. Using an approach based on the staged capacity-building model (SCBM) developed by the Australian Agency for International Development, IDA was able to determine what was needed.

Problems identified

We found their existing system didn't link daily timekeeping to individual calculations and monthly deposits. They also needed to record, aggregate, verify, and report rank, time served, skills, and other personnel data for their pay calculations to be accurate. But improving the payroll tool would not be enough to solve their payroll problem; they also needed to fully document their policies

and procedures. Documentation consisted of bits of information taped or tacked to the wall. Individuals were competent in their particular areas of responsibility, but didn't know how their work contributed to getting service members paid. No one involved understood the entire process, so if a person responsible for a particular task was away, the entire workflow stalled until that person returned.

Outcomes and lessons learned

To improve the payroll calculator, we reviewed their workbook's internal logic and algorithms and streamlined data entry and calculations. Our focus was on improvements that reflected the practices and capabilities of staff in the comptroller's office. Once the ministry, administration, and comptroller staffs understood the logic of the algorithms and the design of the Excel workbook, they deployed a new tool. During initial use, both the original payroll tool and the new tool were run in parallel. The new tool was less cumbersome, more accurate, and faster, reducing the time to calculate from five to two days. The improved payroll tool led them to examine alternative capability packages and their associated costs. By using data from the tool, they could create simple spreadsheets to analyze proposals to recruit more soldiers, increase the number of promotions, or add a company of engineers. The new design would also support development of a payroll database in the future.

IDA introduced several best practices to a working group established to document procedures. The group discovered, among other things, that

the payroll roster wasn't being certified before submission for disbursement. This discovery provided an opening to impress upon the group the importance of oversight in deterring fraud. Perhaps the biggest challenge for working group members was adjusting to a system where roles, responsibilities, and authorities were assigned to organizations rather than individuals. But they realized documented procedures would enable accurate and timely payroll—a goal they had readily embraced. Not only did the exercise improve organizational performance, it revealed other areas that could be similarly improved. Soon Liberia was looking at ways to standardize petty cash management for its armed forces.

Conclusion

Any approach to building institutional capacity must be matched to the abilities of those who

work in the institution. In this case, it helped that our goals were modest, and our approach allowed people with limited reading and writing skills to contribute. We found that whiteboards and flip charts were effective where slides and presentations were not. Furthermore, understanding the payroll process allowed us to gauge the relative maturity of Liberia's defense institution. A proxy measure of institutional capacity could be determined by asking necessary questions about the payroll process. How many people are in service? Are there rules in place to define pay and allowances? Are processes and procedures documented and discoverable? Focusing on the seemingly simple problem of paying soldiers was easier to manage than tackling a more conceptual problem like force planning. In the process, we managed to build trust and instill awareness of the foundations of force and budget planning and budget proposals.

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Developing Capability-Based Planning in Guinea

IDA practitioners have adapted the concept of capability-based planning (CBP) to a broad range of militaries. In the Republic of Guinea, we applied the concept to a low-capacity military that was trying to re-establish its operational capability after several years of reduced operations and internal strife, demonstrating that institutionalization is possible even for the lowest capacity partners.

The Republic of Guinea's founding president, Ahmed Sékou Touré, led a one-party state from 1958, when Guinea gained independence from France, until 1984. During that time, the Guinean military, supported by the Soviet Bloc, became a small, competent force that supported regional peacekeeping. Colonel Lansana Conté seized power after Touré died, leading a military dictatorship that eventually fell into factionalism, corruption, and unruliness.

After Conté died in 2008, the successor military regime, led by Dadis Camara, descended into brutality, and when Dadis Camara was shot by a bodyguard, the United Nations (UN) and regional players persuaded the interim Guinean leadership to embark on a process of reform. The end of military rule led to an internationally sponsored security sector reform (SSR) program and U.S.-authorized support to the military, including institutional capacity building (ICB) efforts.

IDA researchers were the core of the U.S. ICB team that worked with Guinean officials from April 2013 to April 2015 to support SSR. The mandate was to develop a national defense strategy, which could lead to a CBP process to translate defense strategy into required capabilities. At the time of the team's arrival, the military had been removed from power and was essentially nonoperational as a fighting force. The national defense strategy effort was intended to build on foundational SSR efforts to identify core missions, while the CBP initiative was intended to assist the military in re-establishing core competences in order to fulfill its legal role in society.

Challenges and opportunities

The ICB team found significant challenges in Guinea. Many leaders had limited operational experience, primarily because the armed forces had essentially been restricted from operations since 2009, and some military members did not understand the role, function, and operation of a defense institution. Nonetheless, the effort produced a national defense strategy that matched SSR efforts and met international best practices. Implementing CBP proved more challenging, since the military lacked the data and analytical tools to perform the analysis required. Readiness levels could not be determined, since data were either not available or inconsistently maintained, so a baseline force assessment was not possible. The solution was to strip the CBP methodology to the task of identifying basic operational-level gaps and crafting low-cost, no-cost solutions to restore the military to the most basic of operational capability. In addition, the ICB team supported efforts to recreate Guinea's modest peacekeeping capability, a goal that resonated with the political leadership as well as the international community. So, while Guinea was unable to perform basic military functions, there was enough will and experience to envision a traditional military role and began to use ICB tools to build toward that vision.

Despite these challenges, several contextual elements enhanced the ICB work. The ICB team was fortunate in that the SSR effort had already introduced some of the concepts developed further by CBP. In addition, the principal Guinean sponsor, who served as Chief of Defense Forces from 2010 to 2019, understood what the ICB team was proposing, the need to engage with the United States, and the power of moving reform forward.

The principal Guinean cohort in these efforts was the Technical Committee for Security/Defense. Headed by a brigadier general, the committee had been created to support the SSR process and served as a credible ICB partner. Further, the U.S. Embassy was interested in the ICB team's work. The U.S. contractor who advised Guinea on SSR was vital in connecting the ICB team to major players.

Lesson learned

IDA's experience in Guinea demonstrated that ICB concepts could be successfully applied in low-capacity countries. Our success derived from three maxims:

- **Work with what you have.** Access to data is a problem in many nations. In Guinea's case, the available data were not centrally located or managed. To address this, the ICB team worked with the Guineans to establish an auxiliary group of junior officers and non-commissioned officers to gather the data that was available by visiting various military offices. We found that assembling information from disparate sources (logistics, personnel, and budget, for example) resulted in unit insights that were previously unknown. This was key to executing the limited CBP task of gap analysis and solution development.
- **Look for collaborative opportunities.** The UN SSR process was underway in Guinea when the ICB team arrived. During the ICB work, we discovered some complementary aspects of the SSR process and the ICB work. For example, the SSR process

identified the need to move large numbers of soldiers out of the capital city for security reasons, which reinforced CBP findings.

- **Take advantage of openings.** The Ebola outbreak of 2014–2016 increased the credibility of the ICB team because we continued to work despite the conditions. The ICB team also had an opportunity during the outbreak to provide a demonstration of the Incident Command System. This simple UN-approved tool for coordinating interagency operations during emergency responses was later adopted by the government of Guinea.

Conclusion

A decade after the end of its military dictatorship, Guinea's military has mostly been absent from politics, even as reforms have modestly transformed the military, bringing it in line with traditional roles, and Guinea rejoined regional peacekeeping operations, losing three peacekeepers in Mali in 2017. The Guinean military deserves credit for this progress. The experience demonstrates that ICB tools can be applied to militaries with limited operational capacity and malfunctioning institutions to some measure of success.

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Lessons Learned from Intelligence-Focused Engagements in Cameroon and Chad



In May 2018, the United States provided the central African states of Cameroon and Chad with their first dedicated airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capability, intended to support counterterrorism operations against violent extremist organizations (VEO) in the Lake Chad Basin and Sahel regions. Each country received two Cessna 208 aircraft outfitted with cameras to collect imagery of ground targets. This new technology represented a huge leap in military capability. The Defense Security Cooperation Agency's Institute for Security Governance (ISG) dispatched IDA teams to help the two countries integrate new military intelligence capabilities and professionalize their intelligence cadres.

Accomplishments and Challenges

Cameroon

For more than two years, IDA helped Cameroon develop intelligence architecture concepts. Notably, this architecture required the establishment of a Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Center in Garoua (northern Cameroon), a command subordinate to the Director of Military Intelligence, not the Air Force. In July 2020, Cameroon approved a joint ISR concept of operations (CONOP), including authority to

establish the Joint ISR Center. Due in part to IDA's efforts, Cameroon has successfully employed intelligence processes against VEOs in the Extreme North and Sahel.



In June 2020, the U.S. unilaterally terminated its work to professionalize Cameroon's intelligence cadre, and two months later canceled all intelligence-related security cooperation to Cameroon. This was not entirely a surprise; it reflected a downward trend in U.S.-Cameroon relations since early 2019, especially in security assistance, due largely to alleged military human rights abuses against Anglophone separatists.

IDA's work in Cameroon was challenging for several reasons:

- The downturn in relations between the U.S. and Cameroon and the termination of security assistance projects made it more difficult for IDA to professionalize Cameroon's intelligence cadre.
- IDA was challenged to convince ground forces of the value of ISR. As Cameroon's largest military branch, the Army was often engaged in operations vis-à-vis VEOs; yet ground commanders seemed to view airborne ISR as the domain of the Air Force rather than a capability to make ground operations more effective.
- From the start, Cameroon's air force viewed the Cessna as a stand-alone platform rather than a joint system of systems. IDA worked especially hard to convince senior officers to focus on data/information flow rather than the aircraft per se.

Chad

In Chad, ISR-focused interlocutors were open to IDA's assistance. Our relationship with the ISR Fusion Center, which operated Cessna aircraft, was warm and engaging from the start. Developing fruitful relationships with members of the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DGRM) took more time. At IDA's first meeting with the DGRM, its senior officer commented that anyone observing the discussion on how to use intelligence would conclude the group was plotting a coup. Indeed, before that, discussions on intelligence process improvement with a foreign partner had been rare. IDA also developed a close relationship with senior officers from Chad's Special Operations Command to break down institutional barriers between intelligence and operations.

Regarding integration of new military intelligence capabilities, by August 2019, the ISR Fusion Center had developed a CONOP based on IDA briefings and discussions, and had it signed by the Minister of Defense. This was a huge achievement for a country that almost never produces documents of this kind. The document's letter of transmittal credited "les Américains" for being the driving force behind the concept's development.

Numerous IDA briefings on joint ISR concepts enabled the ISR Fusion Center to plan real-world missions. IDA-facilitated tabletop exercises with operational staffs enabled successful intelligence-driven missions against Boko Haram using "Find, Fix, Finish" kill chain doctrine. Such missions had never before been executed in Chad.

Professionalizing Chad's intelligence body is a work in progress. The DGRM committed in writing to enhancing human resources, especially training. More scoping, however, is required to answer key questions. IDA has worked assiduously with U.S. Africa Command to develop and offer regional intelligence training opportunities to several Sahelian countries, including Chad, in fiscal years 2021 and 2022.

IDA's work in Chad was less challenging than in Cameroon. Chadian President Déby's keen personal interest in the ISR Fusion Center ensured it was adequately resourced. His decision to change subordination multiple times, however, deflected energy and focus of intelligence officers with whom IDA worked.



Lessons Learned

IDA's tenure in Cameroon and Chad demonstrated that institutional capacity building (ICB) work in the domain of intelligence is viable. Successes are noteworthy despite setbacks due to political and external factors. Returns on investment have been measurable by virtue of success in joint, real-world combat operations. Lessons learned are delineated below.

1. **Begin ICB work earlier.** By the time IDA engaged in both countries, staff positions had already solidified regarding ownership of ISR equipment, command relationships, and mission execution. Earlier engagements (at least one year before delivery of the aircraft) would have given IDA time to educate diverse authorities on joint concepts and process flow: the idea that data, information, and intelligence are absolutely essential to ISR; airplanes, less so.
2. **Ensure U.S. intelligence officers lead intelligence capacity building efforts.** IDA's tenure in Cameroon and Chad confirmed the importance of employing former career U.S. intelligence officers to lead this work. They have credibility with counterparts and are more qualified to advise U.S. partners and determine which best practices are most relevant to a particular country.



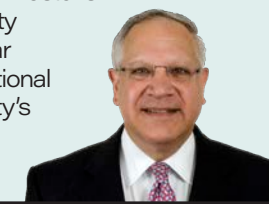
3. **Spend (and accept) more time building trust.** Intelligence is far more sensitive than other ICB subject-matter disciplines like, for example, logistics and resource management. In many developing countries, intelligence organizations report directly to the president, and are used to ensure that a regime survives. It takes much longer to build the kind of trust necessary to make progress on intelligence lines of activity, and overseers should accept this requirement.
4. **Broaden membership of working groups.** In each country, IDA formed Joint Intelligence Working Groups that included the nations' top intelligence leaders. Over time, IDA found it especially important to have non-intelligence experts in the groups, including people knowledgeable about personnel/training, information technology, and communications infrastructure. In addition, intelligence "customers," including senior representatives from joint staff offices, all military branches, and, if possible, operational commands are also essential.
5. **Brief service chiefs early.** Due to a lack of sharing information, service chiefs (other than the Air Force Chief of Staff) do not normally understand why they would be involved in intelligence. It is not easy to convince service chiefs that their forces will be stronger if military intelligence capabilities

are enhanced. Embassy personnel need to set up briefings with service chiefs early in IDA's tenure so that they understand that enhancements in military intelligence are for their service's benefit and designed to make their forces more effective. Embassy personnel should champion these efforts.

These lessons learned should serve as guideposts for future intelligence engagements in other countries, especially given that the United States continues to provide ISR equipment, especially manned and unmanned aviation systems, to enhance partner nation security around the world.

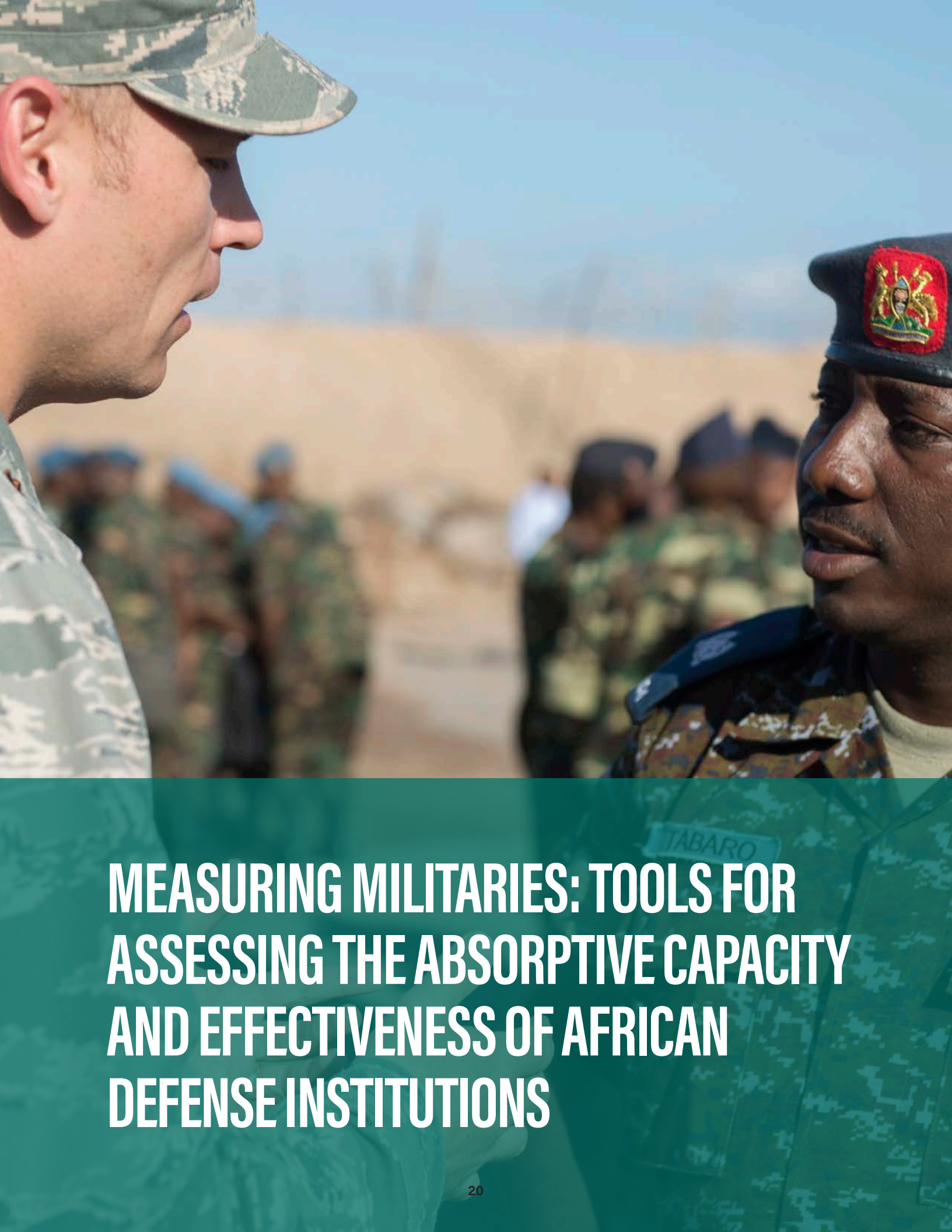
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MEASURING MILITARIES: TOOLS FOR ASSESSING THE ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF AFRICAN DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS

The United States provides security assistance to African countries for a variety of reasons, including to help build professional, capable militaries. But the exact impact of security assistance isn't always easy to measure. As a way of capturing how security assistance can affect recipient militaries, and the risk incurred by investing in a country with limited absorptive capacity, IDA developed two original methodologies, the Defense Institutional Effectiveness tool (DEFINE) and the Absorptive Capacity of African Militaries (ACAM) framework. DEFINE and ACAM provide Department of Defense policy makers with concrete analytics to estimate the effectiveness of African defense institutions and the absorptive capacity of their militaries. A brief summary of each follows.

Defense Institutional Effectiveness (DEFINE)

The FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act requires that defense institution capacity building accompany all significant U.S. security cooperation initiatives.

Most preliminary assessments of prospective security cooperation programs, however, often omit commentary on the effectiveness of defense institutions, partially due to inherent difficulties in systematically and accurately measuring institutional strength. Instead, assessments tend to focus on outputs such as military capabilities or operational success. Yet, aligning security cooperation programs and goals with assessments of institutional strength is a much-needed step.

To that end, IDA has devised a methodology for measuring the effectiveness of defense institutions, specifically looking at their ability to accomplish essential management functions. IDA tested and applied the methodology to a pilot group of 8 countries before applying the tool to additional African countries. DEFINE allows policy makers and planners to estimate the strength and effectiveness of a country's defense institutions, track changes over time, and test assumptions related to the relationship between institutional strength and security outcomes.

The DEFINE methodology takes a functional approach to measuring institutional strength. DEFINE includes data on the following seven primary defense management functions that address key aspects of planning, organizing, and managing defense resources:

1. Acquisition and requirements management—acquiring equipment, facilities, and services in support of a country's armed forces
2. Financial management—planning, organizing, directing, and controlling financial activities
3. Force management—processes for ensuring the appropriate structure, distribution of resources, and capabilities



4. Human resources management—hiring, training, promoting, and relieving personnel
5. Infrastructure management—planning, constructing, and maintaining physical structures and facilities
6. Materiel management—storing, maintaining, and disposing of equipment
7. Strategy and planning—planning for current and future forces, capabilities, and readiness based on national-level strategic guidance

But institutions are more than just documenting procedures, as these functions might suggest. Recognizing that, IDA designed DEFINE to acknowledge the importance of sufficient resourcing for institutions to accomplish their intended purpose. DEFINE includes both procedural and resource allocation indicators within each management function to produce a defense institutional effectiveness rating that considers the types and amount of resources countries put forth to accomplish

these functions. Procedural indicators reflect the processes, rules, and practices that institutions purportedly use to accomplish essential functions. Resource allocation indicators reflect the resources—financial resources, personnel, facilities, and so forth—that institutions use to accomplish essential functions. Because specific personnel numbers or salaries may be sensitive or even impossible to obtain, we selected proxy measures to gauge the availability of sufficient resources to perform each function.

In total, DEFINE is composed of 35 indicators across seven management functions, each verified, where possible, through multiple sources to ensure accuracy of the data collected. The method applies confidence intervals for each indicator, ranging from *low confidence* to *high confidence* based on the reliability of the data source. The scores for all indicators within each defense management function are averaged together to obtain an overall score ranging from 0 to 1. These scores are then combined to calculate

the country's total raw institutional effectiveness score.

Raw scores are further adjusted based on the key national factors identified as adversely affecting institutional strength:

1. Factionalization of the military
2. Politicization of the military
3. Nature of the military's relationship with the population
4. Credible allegations of corruption
5. Adherence to rule of law versus military impunity

Factionalism has been found to decrease the effectiveness of political institutions, and military factionalism in particular is related to increased incidences of coups and regime instability. Politicized militaries can be used to achieve objectives not related to defense, which can undermine institutional effectiveness. The amount of trust that a civilian population has in the armed forces is also a reflection of institutional performance. Government corruption can impact institutional performance by reducing available

resources and compromising decision-making processes, potentially leading to suboptimal outcomes. Finally, military impunity can subvert oversight mechanisms, which may render institutions less effective.

The final adjusted scores are presented as a measure of overall institutional effectiveness based on the national context. Scores range from zero (no institutional capacity) to seven (fully capable defense institutions). The scoring range for the total weighted scores produced an assessment of *low effectiveness*, *moderate effectiveness*, or *high effectiveness*.

DEFINE is an innovative tool for estimating the strength of a country's military institutions. Such estimates can form the basis for dialogue between the United States and international security partners working on institutional capacity building. DEFINE is also an effective way to monitor and evaluate the effect of specific security cooperation programs or to understand the risks associated with undertaking them.

The DEFINE methodology provides a unique and timely method to assess the effectiveness of African defense institutions. With modifications to the indicators and intervening factors to accommodate regional circumstances, the method could be applied to countries outside the African continent to better inform policy makers and planners seeking to assess the sustainability and effect of U.S. security cooperation on institutional effectiveness globally. By functionally assessing institutional strength, the DEFINE methodology produces a

holistic measurement to better guide U.S. security cooperation investment and align with the goals of long-term sustainability and accountability in building defense institutions.

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Absorptive Capacity of African Militaries (ACAM)

There is a limit on how much security assistance a partner nation can absorb, beyond which further U.S. investment yields little to no return. A piece of equipment provided to a partner military does not alone amount to a capability, and its possession does not automatically produce capacity. Investments in capacity-building programs in Africa have failed due to a multitude of factors, including the limited absorptive capacity of many African nations to apply new capabilities in the manner intended and to adapt and apply acquired capabilities to current and future activities. Having a reasonable estimate of a country's "absorptive capacity" (AC) can help to inform the Department's decisions vis-à-vis security cooperation programing.

AC has been defined in many ways depending on the context. The term was originally used in business administration to describe how commercial firms recognize the value of new information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends. A commonly accepted definition today is:

An organization's ability to identify, assimilate, transform, and use external knowledge, research, and practice. In other words, its absorptive capacity is the measure of the rate at which an organization can learn and use scientific, technological or other knowledge that exists outside of the organization itself. It is a measure of an organization's ability to learn.

For IDA to develop a methodology to measure the AC of militaries, it is necessary to adapt this definition to a military context. The ACAM methodology is therefore predicated on the following definition: Absorptive Capacity is the ability of a military organization to receive and field, operate, and sustain U.S.-provided training and equipment.

The method places a U.S. partner's military on an AC spectrum ranging from low, where the military has little to no ability to assimilate training

or equipment of any type, to high, where the military has the ability to assimilate levels of training and equipment afforded to officers and noncommissioned officers.

After developing initial AC assessments for eight countries—Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, and Uganda—IDA shared our findings with U.S. Office of Security Cooperation chiefs and other U.S. officials stationed at embassies in the eight countries. Through a survey and subsequent interviews with these officials, the analysts adjusted, where necessary, each indicator score based on officials' firsthand experience in planning and implementing capacity-building and security-cooperation programs. IDA also incorporated officials' unique insights into the qualitative assessments for each country.

A consistent theme emerged: *AC is as related to the quality of U.S. security-cooperation planning and delivery as it is to the innate ability of a partner nation's military to absorb training and equipment.* Security-cooperation planners who consider a partner's

AC and plan accordingly are likely to experience more positive outcomes. IDA's recommendations include:

- Communicate with partners to fully to understand their fundamental defense needs and providing timely assistance.
- Reinforce successes where a partner has demonstrated capacity to absorb training and equipment. This will likely yield a better outcome than providing new, more sophisticated equipment.
- Provide more in-country English-language training in non-English-speaking countries. Language is an impediment to understanding and efficiently communicating with Americans offering support.
- Provide plans with full package support, which are much more likely to be absorbed effectively by a military with innately low AC. The sustained provision of advisors, spare parts, and other support help a military to receive, field, operate, and sustain training and equipment until such time that the military has developed its own capacity to perform these functions. Admittedly, the U.S. cannot provide full package support indefinitely, but doing so for as long as the capability supports U.S. strategic interests is crucial.

Another theme to arise pertained to the ACAM methodology itself, which

at times produced an assessment more reflective of the general state of the country's development or level of military capability than AC. IDA deduced this occurred because ACAM relied heavily on quantitative data. While qualitative data from DOD officials was invaluable to this research, even more qualitative insights from individuals with deep, direct experience working with partner militaries would improve ACAM's assessment. For example, observations of U.S. Special Operations Forces on training missions or State Partnership Program Bilateral Affairs Officers could tell us how well the partner military operates with the tools the U.S. provides and how well they sustain those capabilities over time. Ultimately, for countries that receive U.S. assistance, an accurate assessment of AC will tell the U.S. Government the appropriate type and level of assistance. But this accurate assessment and meaningful recommendations require much more in-depth understanding of a military than we now have.

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