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Adapting to improve: the Odyssey of the operational mentoring and liaison teams of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium
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Adapting to Improve:

The Odyssey of the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium

1. The nature of Security Force Assistance is in principle the same as general force generation. The character of SFA, however, differs to such an extent that specialisation for this role should be considered.
2. Successful Security Force Assistance depends on the institutional learning capacity of the receiving entity. As such, the provider should invest in organisational learning rather than only focusing at improving the soldiering skills of individuals, starting at the mission design stage.
3. The key difference between the case studies is the amount of emulation the Belgian Army was willing to implement using best practices of other participating states.
4. Despite the professed importance of building the Afghan Security Forces at the onset of the British and Dutch campaigns, the respective OMLTs were afterthoughts regarding institutional support, attention and resources.
5. In contemporary conflict, Security Force Assistance has rapidly become a major foreign policy tool and therefore warrants a strategic appreciation concerning its use.
6. With the current increased salience of strategic competition, Security Force Assistance-programs will proliferate.
7. Serious investments into one's Armed Forces should be ensured in order to be considered a reference force.
8. A fundamental risk of SFA is that the sponsor is trying to help build an organisation that mimics the providing institution rather than one grounded in the society that should sustain it.
9. The deterrent value of SFA is limited when not explicitly communicated as such.
10. The agency of the recipients of external assistance is often overlooked, thereby hampering the assistance's effectiveness.