

Department of War Strategic Evaluation

Department of War
DEFENSE OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

Strategic Evaluation Public Summary: Afghanistan Security Forces Fund Security Cooperation Activities

The Department of War (DoW) sponsors strategic evaluations of security cooperation (SC) programs and activities pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 383 and Department of Defense Instruction 5132.14, *Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy for the Security Cooperation Enterprise*. The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Security Cooperation initiated a strategic evaluation of the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF).

In fiscal year 2020, the DoW commissioned the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), an independent, Federally Funded Research and Development Center, to conduct this evaluation, entitled “*Evaluation of Afghanistan Security Forces Fund Security Cooperation Activities*.” This summary provides an unclassified overview of CNA’s report.

The evaluation focused on three questions:

1. Has the United States achieved, or has it made progress toward, its Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF)-related strategic objective?
2. To what degree did ASFF-funded SC efforts contribute to any progress toward achieving this objective?
3. What factors influenced the effectiveness of ASFF-funded SC activities and their outcomes in achieving this objective?

Evaluation scope and methodology. To address these questions, CNA scoped its evaluation to four capability areas of ASFF-funded SC activities: the Afghan Air Force, ground vehicles, communications, and personnel systems, and scoped the evaluation period to 2015-2019. To conduct the evaluation, CNA combined two integrative, epistemological synthesis methods. First, for each capability area, CNA created a case study that identified ideal short-term and long-term outcomes for the SC activities. CNA then conducted a comparative analysis of ideal versus actual inputs and outputs of SC activities, examined to what extent any observed progress was the result of ASFF funding, and identified factors that affected the degree of progress made. Second, CNA conducted a group cross-case analysis to synthesize the results of the four case studies in the context of a logic model aligned to the U.S. strategic objective for the ANDSF.

Findings and conclusions. Key findings focused on capability requirements, procurement, and sustainment, such as:

- The ANDSF had an identified, significant deficit for each capability at the start of the evaluation period.
- Procurements were successful in fielding some new platforms or systems for each capability.
- The outputs of SC activities were difficult to disaggregate from broader program outcome data.
- Some procured equipment was ill-suited for use, maintenance, or sustainment by the ANDSF.

- Some SC initiatives emphasized increasing operational effectiveness over sustainability, which adversely affected the latter.

From these findings, CNA concluded the United States had made some progress toward the ANDSF-related strategic objective and that ASFF-funded SC activities were at least partially responsible for progress toward the ANDSF strategic objective, but that challenges persisted in SC initiative coordination, transition of capabilities to the ANDSF, and monitoring and evaluating SC outcomes.

Recommendations. Based on these conclusions, CNA's recommendations included that the Department: make sustainability an SC priority; ensure that SC activities are informed by rigorous baseline assessments; and that SC activities include a balanced mix of procurement, training, infrastructure, and maintenance and sustainment components, as well as a detailed partner transition plan.