

SIGAR

**Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction**

SIGAR 14-33 Audit Report

Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts



**FEBRUARY
2014**

SIGAR

Special Inspector General for
Afghanistan Reconstruction

WHAT SIGAR REVIEWED

Since 2005, Congress has appropriated almost \$53 billion for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund—the single largest U.S. fund for the reconstruction of Afghanistan—to train, equip, and sustain the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The process of transferring security responsibility to the Afghans is expected to be completed by the end of 2014, which will coincide with the completion of the current drawdown of U.S. and coalition forces. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s Strategic Plan for Afghanistan calls for the Afghan army and police to achieve a combined surge strength of 352,000 personnel by the end of 2013, and to remain at that level through at least 2015, to allow for continued progress toward a sustainable, secure environment in Afghanistan. SIGAR’s prior work and the work of others have expressed concern with the reliability and consistency of ANSF assessments. Reliable measures of the ANSF’s progress toward becoming a self-sustaining force that is capable of assuming full security responsibility for Afghanistan are critical as the ANSF assume increasing responsibility for their country’s security from U.S. and coalition forces.

The objectives of this audit were to assess the extent to which (1) the International Security Assistance Force’s (ISAF) tool for evaluating the manning, training, and equipping capacity of the ANSF—the Commander’s Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT)—was consistently applied to assess ANSF units, and (2) ISAF is taking steps to plan for the continued collection, validation, analysis, and reporting of ANSF capacity assessments during the military drawdown and the transition of security responsibility to the Afghan government.

February 2014

Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Plans for Sustaining Capability Assessment Efforts

SIGAR 14-33 AUDIT REPORT

WHAT SIGAR FOUND

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 directs the Department of Defense (DOD) to report on its assessment of the operational readiness of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) units. Specifically, the Act requires DOD to report on the number of ANSF units that are capable of conducting operations independently, units that are capable of conducting operations with U.S. and coalition support, and units that are not ready to conduct operations. To help meet this requirement, from April 2010 through July 2013, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Joint Command (IJC) used the Commander’s Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) as a key tool for assessing and reporting on the ANSF’s manning, training, and equipping capacity. The CUAT was a two-part assessment of ANSF units. The first part consisted of quantitative data, such as the total number of assigned personnel and equipment on-hand. IJC advisor teams then used this data to inform their qualitative evaluations, the second portion of the CUAT, which consisted of one overall assessment and an assessment of 14 component assessment areas. Based on their assessment findings, advisor teams assigned one of six color-coded rating definition levels to the ANSF units in each area and provided narrative comments to justify the assigned rating definition levels. From August 2011 to July 2013, these rating definition levels were (1) independent with advisors, (2) effective with advisors, (3) effective with partners, (4) developing with partners, (5) established, and (6) not assessed. CUAT assessments, combined with battlefield reporting, informal commander’s assessments, and other data, served as the basis for DOD’s and ISAF’s overall assessment of the ANSF’s operational effectiveness and readiness during this time.

CUAT rating definition levels for ANSF units assessed from January 2012 to July 2013 show that there has been some improvement in the ANSF’s capacity to man, train, and equip its forces. For example, the number of ANA units rated as “independent with advisors” increased from 20 to 93 between January 2012 and July 2013. However, the number of ANA and ANP units not assessed also increased during this time due to the drawdown of coalition forces.

Between April 2010 and August 2011, IJC changed the CUAT rating definition level titles four times. Despite these changes, SIGAR’s analysis of the standards supporting each level shows that the standards for the overall assessment generally remained consistent from change to change. However, the thresholds included in the standards for some of the component assessment areas changed in some cases. For example, under the September 2010 revision, an ANA unit could achieve a rating definition level of “effective with advisors” for equipment if its level of critical equipment was greater than 85 percent of its authorized equipment level. Under the August 2011 revision, an ANA unit could achieve that same rating definition with “greater than or equal to” 75 percent of its authorized equipment level.

The CUAT Standard Operating Procedure outlined requirements for advisor

teams completing the qualitative evaluation, and encouraged advisor teams to use their judgment when assessing ANSF units to assign rating definition levels and provide comments within the assessment areas. However, the CUAT Standard Operating Procedure did not provide clear guidance on the level of detail that is necessary to support a team’s rating or what the team’s subjective assessments should contain. This unclear guidance led to disparities in the quantity and quality of information across CUAT assessments and inconsistencies in the evaluations of ANSF units’ capacity to man, train, and equip its forces.

In July 2013, IJC replaced the CUAT with the Regional ANSF Status Report (RASR). IJC officials stated the command replaced the system because ISAF senior leadership found the CUAT to be difficult to read, inconsistently applied, and not useful. In addition, IJC officials expect that the RASR will simplify, streamline, and improve assessments of the ANSF by allowing the command to better track the extent to which ANSF units’ are able to employ their manning, equipping, and training capacity, which were the focus of the CUAT, to successfully engage the enemy in combat. The RASR uses six color-coded rating definition levels—(1) fully capable, (2) capable, (3) partially capable, (4) developing, (5) established, and (6) not assessed—to evaluate ANSF units at the brigade and regional levels each month. In addition, the RASR focuses on assessing specific components of the units, such as infantry and communications, against one overall and five targeted categories: combined arms, command and control, leadership, sustainment, and training. These five targeted categories replace the one overall assessment and 14 component assessment areas previously used in the CUAT.

As coalition forces draw down and fewer advisor teams are assigned to ANSF units, IJC officials stated they will have less insight into the ANSF’s capabilities and will rely more on the ANSF for assessment data. Officials stated this will decrease their overall confidence in ANSF assessments as a whole. IJC, in coordination with the Afghan government, is taking steps to improve the ANSF’s internal assessment capabilities and discussing ways to mitigate the risks of declining presence and reduced coalition oversight of the ANSF. For example, in July and August 2013, the Ministry of Interior selected nearly 100 ANP candidates to send to Turkey to learn assessment methodology and develop a new police assessment tool that would standardize assessments across the ANP. Despite these efforts, ISAF has not developed a plan that details how it will (1) ensure the continued collection, analysis, validation, and reporting of ANSF capability assessments as coalition forces drawdown and (2) address the challenges associated with having fewer advisor teams available to conduct assessments and relying on the ANSF’s processes for conducting its own internal assessments. Without such a plan, ISAF may not be able to obtain an accurate understanding of ANSF units’ capability—information that feeds into broader assessment reports on the ANSF’s overall effectiveness and readiness.

WHAT SIGAR RECOMMENDS

SIGAR is making one recommendation. Specifically, SIGAR recommends that the ISAF Commander develop and implement a plan for collecting, validating, analyzing, and reporting ANSF capability assessments that details how ISAF will assess the ANSF’s capability with fewer advisors to conduct the assessments and mitigate the challenges associated with the ANSF reporting on its own assessment results.

In providing comments on a draft of this report, U.S. Force-Afghanistan stated that it “concur[s] with the overall” recommendations,” but “non-concurs with some specific recommendations.” SIGAR deleted one recommendation based on information provided in U.S. Forces-Afghanistan’s comments. These comments, along with SIGAR’s responses, are reproduced in appendix IV.

History of ANSF Assessment Rating Definition Levels, 2010 to Present					
CUAT					RASR
April 2010	July 2010	September 2010	October 2010	August 2011	July 2013
Effective with Advisors	Independent	Independent	Independent	Independent with Advisors	Fully Capable
Effective with Assistance	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Capable
Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Partners	Partially Capable
Barely Effective	Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Developing	Developing with Partners	Developing
Ineffective	Ineffective	Ineffective	Established	Established	Established
Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed

Note: IJC color coded the CUAT and RASR rating definition levels titles. This table reflects the command’s color scheme.

Source: IJC response to SIGAR data call, 12/20/2012; IJC meeting with SIGAR, 4/12/13.



SIGAR | Office of the Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

February 5, 2014

The Honorable Charles T. Hagel
Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Dr. James N. Miller
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

General Lloyd J. Austin III
Commander, U.S. Central Command

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.
Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan, and
Commander, International Security Assistance Forces

Lieutenant General Mark A. Milley
Commander, International Security Assistance Forces
Joint Command

This report discusses the results of SIGAR's audit to determine if the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) consistently applied its tools for evaluating the manning, training, and equipping capacity of the ANSF, specifically the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool. It also discusses the steps ISAF is taking to plan for the continued collection, validation, analysis, and reporting of ANSF capacity assessments during the military drawdown and the transition of security responsibility to the Afghan government. It includes one recommendation to the ISAF Commander to develop and implement a plan for collecting, validating, analyzing, and reporting ANSF capability assessments that details how ISAF will assess the ANSF's capability with fewer advisors to conduct the assessments and mitigate the challenges associated with the ANSF reporting on its own assessment results.

U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) provided comments on a draft of this report. In its response, USFOR-A stated that it "concur[s] with the overall recommendations," but "non-concur[s] with some specific recommendations." We deleted one recommendation from our final report based on information USFOR-A provided in its comments. USFOR-A's comments, along with our responses, are reproduced in appendix IV.

SIGAR conducted this work under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Sopko".

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
CM	Capability Milestone
CUAT	Commander's Unit Assessment Tool
DOD	Department of Defense
IJC	ISAF Joint Command
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
RASR	Regional ANSF Status Report
USFOR-A	U.S. Forces-Afghanistan

Since 2005, Congress has appropriated approximately \$52.75 billion for the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund—the single largest U.S. funding resource for the reconstruction of Afghanistan—to train, equip, and sustain the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).¹ For fiscal year 2013, Congress appropriated \$5.1 billion for the fund. The process of transferring security responsibility to the Afghans began in July 2011, and is expected to be completed by the end of 2014. Concurrent with this transition of security responsibility to the Afghans, since 2011, U.S. and coalition forces have been decreasing their military forces in Afghanistan and plan to complete this drawdown process in December 2014.² Under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)³ Strategic Plan for Afghanistan, agreed upon at the Chicago Summit in May 2012, NATO announced its vision for a new mission to train, advise, and assist the ANSF after 2014, and a political commitment to provide funding for the ANSF. NATO’s plan calls for the Afghan army and police to achieve a combined strength of 352,000 personnel by the end of 2013—and to remain at that level through at least 2015—to allow for continued progress toward a sustainable, secure environment in Afghanistan.

From 2005 to 2010, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) used the Capability Milestone (CM) tool to monitor and report on progress in developing a self-sustaining and capable ANSF by evaluating units in areas such as personnel, equipment, training, and facilities. In April 2010, ISAF implemented the Commander’s Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT) to assess the manning,⁴ training, and equipping capacity of the ANSF on a quarterly basis, the results of which contributed to overall assessments of the forces’ operational effectiveness and readiness.

Reliable measures of the ANSF’s progress toward becoming a self-sustaining force that is capable of assuming full security responsibility for Afghanistan are critical as the ANSF assumes increasing responsibility for its country’s security from U.S. and coalition forces. Further, having reliable and consistent measures of the ANSF’s capacity to man, train, and equip its forces is key to ensuring that decision makers in the United States and other coalition countries have a clear understanding of the extent to which progress is being made in developing the forces. Our prior work and the work of others have expressed concern with the reliability and consistency of ANSF assessments.⁵

The objectives of this audit were to assess the extent to which:

1. ISAF’s tool for evaluating the manning, training, and equipping capacity of the ANSF—the CUAT—was consistently applied to assess ANSF units, and
2. ISAF is taking steps to plan for the continued collection, validation, analysis, and reporting of ANSF capacity assessments during the military drawdown and the transition of security responsibility to the Afghan government.⁶

We did not conduct an independent assessment of the ANSF’s capacity to man, train, and equip its forces. Rather, we determined whether the tool ISAF used to assess the ANSF’s capacity to man, train, and equip its forces—the CUAT—provided users with sufficient information to inform decision making.

To accomplish our objectives, we reviewed key Department of Defense (DOD) and ISAF policies and documents, such as mandated reports and relevant standard operating procedures for conducting ANSF

¹ The ANSF consists of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP). Currently, the authorized strength of the ANSF is 352,000. In September 2013, the ANA had an assigned force level of 192,595, including 6,778 personnel assigned to the air force, and the ANP had an assigned force level of 152,336.

² U.S. and coalition nations plan to end their combat role in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, which will involve the withdrawal of a significant number of military forces and resources.

³ The United States is one of 28 member countries of NATO.

⁴ Manning refers to an inventory of personnel at an activity in terms of numbers, grades, and occupations.

⁵ SIGAR Audit 10-11, *Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments*, June 29, 2010; U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Afghanistan: Key Oversight Issues*, GAO-13-218SP, February 11, 2013; DOD Inspector General, *Assessment of the U.S. Government Efforts to Train, Equip, and Mentor the Expanded Afghan National Police*, SPO-2011-003, March 3, 2011.

⁶ In a separate review, we are examining the methods and tools used to determine ANSF personnel strength and plan to issue a report in the first half of 2014.

capacity assessments, with a focus on the CUAT. We reviewed data on CUAT results conducted from April 2011 through July 2013, and analyzed CUAT rating definition levels from April 2010 through July 2013. We interviewed officials from each of these organizations representing several offices, including ISAF Joint Command's (IJC) Campaign Transition Assessment Group. We visited select locations in Kandahar, Helmand, and Kabul provinces in Afghanistan to meet with coalition advisor teams; observe capacity assessment data collection, analysis, and verification processes; and review capacity assessment documents, which are classified. We conducted our work in Kabul, Helmand, and Kandahar provinces in Afghanistan, and Washington, D.C., from February 2013 to February 2014, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. A more detailed discussion of our scope and methodology is in appendix I.

BACKGROUND

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 directs DOD to, among other things, report on its assessment of the operational readiness of ANSF units.⁷ Specifically, the Act calls for DOD to report on a comprehensive set of performance indicators and measures of progress toward sustainable long-term security and stability in Afghanistan, including the operational readiness status of ANSF units that are (1) capable of conducting operations independently; (2) capable of conducting operations with the support of the United States, NATO ISAF forces, or other coalition forces; (3) or not ready to conduct operations. Further, the Act requires DOD to include in its report a description of:

“a comprehensive and effective long-term strategy and budget, with defined objectives, for activities relating to strengthening the resources, capabilities, and effectiveness of the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) of the ANSF, with the goal of ensuring that a strong and fully-capable ANSF is able to independently and effectively conduct operations and maintain security and stability in Afghanistan.”

To comply with the Act, DOD provides Congress with its semiannual *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*.⁸

NATO's transition strategy rests on supporting an ANSF that is sustainable, of sufficient size, and capable of securing Afghanistan. A capable and sustainable ANSF will help guarantee that hard-fought security gains in the country will be preserved. The NATO-led ISAF's main effort is to facilitate the conditions under which the ANSF can successfully assume full security responsibility for Afghanistan. As such, NATO is shifting ISAF's main efforts from partnering and engaging in combat to advising using teams that train and assist the ANSF at the tactical and operational levels until Afghan forces are able to conduct operations independently.⁹ As ANSF capabilities improve, ISAF plans to adjust its support levels, allowing the ANSF to move into the operational lead.

From 2005 to 2010, ISAF used the CM tool to monitor and report on progress in developing a self-sustaining and capable ANSF by evaluating units in areas such as personnel, equipment, training, and facilities, with variations in assessment areas between the ANA and ANP. In June 2010, we reported that the CM rating system created a disincentive for units to achieve the highest rating, CM1, which indicated that the unit was capable of operating independently.¹⁰ When an ANSF unit attained a CM1 rating, coalition forces withdrew assistance, such as force protection, supplies, and expertise. As a result, there was an incentive for the unit to report that it was less capable of operating independently in order maintain coalition assistance. We also

⁷ Pub. L. No. 110-181, §1230, 122 Stat. 3, 385-90 (2008) (amended 2013).

⁸ DOD, *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, November 2013.

⁹ According to IJC, the tactical level is concerned with the execution of battles and engagements, such as the Corps, brigade, or kandak. At the operational level military forces attain strategic objectives through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations, such as National Coordination Centers and Ground Forces Command.

¹⁰ See SIGAR Audit-10-11.

noted in this audit that the CM rating system often overstated unit ratings by relying on misleading quantitative measures, such as the number of supplies or assigned personnel, and failing to take disparities into account. For example, some units had a full supply of vehicles but few trained drivers. We also found a lack of quality control as assessment ratings were reviewed through the chain of command. For instance, ANSF capability ratings regularly used out-dated information, and high-ranking personnel did not have access to the underlying assessment reports used to generate the summary rating reports.

In April 2010, IJC introduced the CUAT as its primary tool for specifically assessing the manning, training, and equipping capacity of ANA and ANP units at the operational level.¹¹ The CUAT was a two-part assessment of ANSF units. The first portion of the assessment consisted of quantitative data that ANSF units provided directly to IJC's Security Force Assistance Advisor Teams. This quantitative data included the total number of personnel authorized, assigned, and present-for-duty; equipment authorized, on-hand, and operational; and required and completed training.¹² IJC's advisor teams then used this data to inform their qualitative evaluations—the second portion of the CUAT, which consisted of one overall assessment and 14 component assessment areas. The qualitative evaluations were the advisor teams' subjective assessments of the unit's capacities in several areas, such as communications, leadership, logistics, operations, and personnel.¹³ For example, when assessing a unit's leadership, advisor teams were required to comment on leadership's competence, unit morale, and whether the ANSF unit's leaders were present and actively participated in planning and execution of operations. IJC officials told us this evaluation also allowed coalition advisors to describe the challenges, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats ANSF units face.¹⁴

Based on their assessment findings, the advisor teams assigned one of six color-coded rating definition levels to the ANSF units in each area and provided narrative comments to justify the assigned rating definition levels. From August 2011 to July 2013, these rating definition levels were (1) independent with advisors (green), (2) effective with advisors (yellow), (3) effective with partners (orange), (4) developing with partners (red), (5) established (gray), and (6) not assessed (no color).¹⁵

IJC scheduled CUAT assessments on a quarterly basis. The CUAT assessments helped inform ISAF and the Regional Commands of current issues regarding the development and sustainment of the ANSF. Military officials also used these assessments to determine where to place coalition advisor teams. In addition, IJC used the results of CUAT assessments along with other information, such as battlefield reporting, informal commander's assessments, and ISAF's assessments of the Ministries of Defense and Interior—the ministries that oversee the ANA and ANP, respectively—to develop an overall assessment of the ANSF's operational effectiveness and readiness. This overall assessment was intended to provide stakeholders with a regular update on the ANSF's overall progress toward becoming a self-sustaining force that is capable of assuming full security responsibility for Afghanistan at the end of 2014. NATO and ISAF compiled and reported the results of these assessments to a wide range of stakeholders, such as the White House, DOD, Congress and NATO, to inform decision making. Figure 1 demonstrates the process for collecting and reporting ANSF assessments.

¹¹ IJC officials indicated that the strategic level is concerned with national or, in specific cases, alliance or coalition objectives, and includes the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, and the ANA General Staff.

¹² This audit focused on the qualitative portion of the CUAT. However, during the course of the audit, we identified several weaknesses affecting the reliability of the quantitative data the ANSF provides ISAF, such as issues associated with manual reporting and low levels of literacy and numeracy within the ANSF. We plan to issue a subsequent audit report on the reliability of ANSF-provided data, with a focus on personnel data.

¹³ See appendix II for a list of the assessment areas and topics included in the qualitative portion of the CUAT.

¹⁴ Individual CUAT assessments and ratings are classified.

¹⁵ See appendix III for a detailed description of the overall CUAT rating definition level standards implemented in August 2011.

Figure 1 - Flow of ANSF Assessment Data



Note: CUAT data was typically compiled with other information, such as battlefield reporting and commander’s assessments, to develop an overall assessment of the ANSF.

Source: SIGAR analysis of IJC documents.

ALTHOUGH CUAT RESULTS SHOW THAT ANSF CAPACITY HAS IMPROVED, UNCLEAR GUIDANCE RESULTED IN INCONSISTENCIES IN THE QUALITY OF DATA SUPPORTING ASSIGNED RATING DEFINITION LEVELS

CUAT Assessment Results Have Shown that ANSF Capacity Has Improved

CUAT rating definition levels for ANSF units assessed from January 2012 to July 2013 show that there has been some improvement in the ANSF’s capacity to man, train, and equip its forces. Specifically, the number of ANA units rated as “independent with advisors” increased from 20 to 93 between January 2012 and July 2013. The number of units “not assessed,” however, also increased from 4 to 121 during that time as coalition forces have drawn down. The number of ANP units rated as “independent with advisors” has decreased by 1 between January 2012 and July 2013, and, similar to the ANA, the number of units “not

assessed” also increased from 24 to 401. Tables 1 and 2 show a breakdown of the CUAT ratings for ANA and ANP units assessed from January 2012 to July 2012.

Table 1 - CUAT Rating Definition Levels for ANA Units Assessed from January 2012 to July 2013

Cycle	Rating Definition Level					
	Independent with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Partners	Developing with Partners	Established	Not Assessed
Cycle 14 (Jan–Apr 2012)	20	118	49	10	3	4
Cycle 15 (Apr–Jul 2012)	30	135	39	11	1	51
Cycle 16 (Jul–Oct 2012)	41	127	35	7	1	81
Cycle 17 (Oct 2012–Jan 2013)	40	134	19	7	2	100
Cycle 18 (Jan–Apr 2013)	67	108	17	4	1	115
Cycle 19 (Apr–Jul 2013)	93	89	8	2	3	121

Note: This data reflects the CUAT rating definition levels implemented in August 2011.

Source: SIGAR analysis of IJC data.

Table 2 - CUAT Rating Definition Levels for ANP Units Assessed from January 2012 to July 2013

Cycle	Rating Definition Level					
	Independent with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Partners	Developing with Partners	Established	Not Assessed
Cycle 14 (Jan–Apr 2012)	65	168	81	23	5	24
Cycle 15 (Apr–Jul 2012)	49	130	61	31	6	131
Cycle 16 (Jul–Oct 2012)	71	101	45	15	3	301
Cycle 17 (Oct 2012–Jan 2013)	43	86	26	3	2	347
Cycle 18 (Jan–Apr 2013)	57	80	14	0	1	363
Cycle 19 (Apr–Jul 2013)	64	43	8	1	0	401

Note: This data reflects the CUAT rating definition levels implemented in August 2011.

Source: SIGAR analysis of IJC data.

CUAT Rating Definition Levels Changed Four Times, but the Standards for Each Level Generally Stayed Consistent

Since the CUAT's inception in 2010, IJC has changed the CUAT rating definition levels four times. According to IJC officials, the changes were necessary because, over time, rating definition levels had become artificially inflated, and officials conducting the assessments had a limited understanding of the differences between rating definition levels. Officials stated the new levels would better enable IJC to determine when a particular ANSF unit no longer needs coalition assistance, allowing the command to reassign advisor teams to less developed or newly formed units. Table 3 shows the changes to the CUAT rating definition level titles from April 2010 to August 2011.

Table 3 - History of Changes to CUAT Rating Definition Level Titles, April 2010 to August 2011

CUAT				
April 2010	July 2010	September 2010	October 2010	August 2011
Effective with Advisors	Independent	Independent	Independent	Independent with Advisors
Effective with Assistance	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors	Effective with Advisors
Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Assistance	Effective with Partners
Barely Effective	Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Dependent on Coalition Forces for Success	Developing	Developing with Partners
Ineffective	Ineffective	Ineffective	Established	Established
Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	Not Assessed

Note: IJC color coded the CUAT rating definition level titles. This table reflects the command's color scheme as it changed those titles.

Source: IJC response to SIGAR data call, 12/20/2012; IJC meeting with SIGAR, 4/12/13.

Our analysis of the CUAT rating definition levels showed that although IJC used four different rating definition level titles—the September 2010 change maintained the July 2010 rating definition levels, but changed the color coding—the standards supporting each level for the overall assessment generally remained consistent from change to change. However, the thresholds included in the standards for the 14 component assessment areas changed in some cases. For example, under the September 2010 revision, an ANA unit could achieve a rating definition level of “effective with advisors” for equipment if its level of critical equipment was greater than 85 percent of its authorized equipment level. Under the August 2011 revision, an ANA unit could achieve that same rating definition with “greater than or equal to” 75 percent of its authorized equipment level, representing a decrease in the amount of equipment required. In other cases, the thresholds increased. For example under the April 2010 rating definition levels, an ANP unit could achieve a rating definition level of “dependent on coalition forces for success”—the third highest rating definition level—for training if greater than 33 percent of personnel had undergone basic training. Under the subsequent revision in July 2010, this unit would have had to have at least 50 percent of personnel complete basic training to maintain a third tier rating definition level, which had changed to “effective with assistance.”

IJC Did Not Provide Advisor Teams with Guidance on the Level of Detail Required To Support ANSF Unit Rating Definition Levels Assigned Using the CUAT

As previously noted, the CUAT was a two-part assessment of ANSF units that consisted of quantitative data that ANSF units provided directly to IJC's advisor teams and the advisor teams' qualitative evaluations of the units on one overall assessment and 14 component assessment areas. The CUAT Standard Operating Procedure outlined requirements for advisor teams completing the qualitative evaluation, and encouraged advisor teams to use their military judgment when assessing ANSF units to assign rating definition levels and provide comments within the assessment areas. However, the CUAT Standard Operating Procedure did not provide specific criteria defining the level of detail that was necessary to support a unit's assigned rating definition level or what these subjective portions of the assessment should contain. In addition, the fragmentary orders¹⁶—issued at the beginning of each CUAT cycle to provide advisor teams with timelines for conducting the assessments and submitting their reports—did not clearly describe the level of detail for advisor teams to include in the comments supporting their assigned rating definition levels.¹⁷ Further, some regional commands interpreted the CUAT Standard Operating Procedure for completing the qualitative portion of the CUAT differently. This lack of clear guidance led to inconsistencies in the narrative comments included in the qualitative evaluations of ANSF units. For example, IJC officials told us that advisors in Regional Command-North commonly provided succinct responses, such as a “yes” or “no,” to the qualitative topics without additional details. In contrast, advisors in Regional Command-West provided detailed responses that sometimes did not address the individual topics. Further, IJC officials stated that some advisor teams' comments only partially responded to the assessment topics.

IJC officials also stated there was a tendency for new advisor teams to rate ANSF units lower than their immediate predecessors. Officials told us this was because new teams approached assessments without access to the observations the prior teams had made over time, resulting in varying rating definition levels. To address this issue, some regional commanders took it upon themselves to review assessments before approving the results, in order to avoid decreases in unit rating definition levels that were not supported with appropriate justification. As an additional control, officials told us IJC reviewed all unit assessments that resulted in a change in rating definition level. As part of this review, the command examined the justification in the narratives to ensure it supported the rating change. If the justification did not support the rating change or was not clear to the reviewer, IJC solicited additional information from the responsible advisor team. IJC officials stated that in cases in which a unit's ratings were not changed, they did not review the assessments due to limited manpower and the volume of assessments submitted each cycle.

IJC Replaced the CUAT with a New Assessment System in July 2013

The IJC replaced the CUAT with a new monthly assessment system, known as the Regional ANSF Status Report (RASR), in July 2013.¹⁸ According to IJC's Commanding General, the CUAT was replaced because it was inconsistent and not useful to leadership. The RASR is intended to improve upon the CUAT by allowing IJC to, for example, (1) better track the extent to which ANSF units are able to employ their capacity—manning, equipping, and training, which were the focus of the CUAT—to successfully engage the enemy in combat in an effort to measure the capability of those units; (2) adapt advisor teams to resource constraints; and (3) better assess the varying branches of the ANSF. The RASR uses six color-coded rating definition levels—(1) independent with advisors (green), (2) effective with advisors (yellow), (3) effective with partners (orange), (4) developing with partners (red), (5) established (gray), and (6) not assessed (no color)—to assess ANSF unit

¹⁶ A fragmentary order is a military order used to send timely changes of existing orders to subordinate and supporting commanders while providing notification to higher and other applicable commands.

¹⁷ The fragmentary orders issued for each CUAT reporting cycle are classified. Therefore, we could not report on the specific contents of the orders.

¹⁸ With the exception of what we are reporting, much of the information on the RASR is currently classified. Therefore, we could not report specific data and guidance at the time we completed our review.

capabilities at the brigade and regional levels on a monthly basis.¹⁹ In addition, the RASR will focus on assessing specific ANA and ANP components, such as infantry and communications, against one overall and five targeted categories—combined arms, command and control, leadership, sustainment, and training—depending on the individual component, rather than the one overall assessment and 14 component assessment areas in the CUAT’s qualitative evaluation. IJC officials stated the RASR is more focused than the CUAT because it targets fewer units with greater consistency by assessing the same units each month. This approach, IJC officials stated, allows the command to better identify trends in unit capabilities, in contrast with the CUAT, with which advisor teams assessed units on a quarterly cycle but did not necessarily assess every unit each quarter. In addition, according to U.S. Forces-Afghanistan’s (USFOR-A) comments on a draft version of this report, IJC issued a fragmentary order on September 30, 2013, with specific instructions on the information advisor units are to include in the comments supporting their assigned rating in each category for the assessed unit. USFOR-A’s comments also noted that IJC conducts a quality control check of every narrative to ensure adequate information is provided.

DOD LACKS A PLAN FOR COLLECTING, VALIDATING, ANALYZING, AND REPORTING ON ANSF ASSESSMENTS DURING THE DRAWDOWN

As noted, IJC has shifted its ANSF unit-level assessment from focusing on capacity, as was done under the CUAT, to focusing on units’ capabilities under the RASR. Although ISAF is taking some steps to mitigate the risks associated with decreased insight into the ANSF’s capability as the military drawdown continues, ISAF has not developed a formal plan that details how it will ensure the continued collection, validation, analysis, and reporting of accurate, reliable, and useful ANSF assessment data during this time. IJC plans to assign fewer advisor teams to the kandak-level of the ANA, focusing instead on advising at the higher brigade and corps levels.²⁰ Similarly, IJC will be assigning fewer advisor teams at the ANP provincial headquarters, instead planning to focus its advising efforts on the regional headquarters level.²¹ Thus, the ANSF will have a steadily decreasing number of advised units, which will result in a reduction in the number of assessments conducted.

IJC experienced the negative impact of the decrease in the number of IJC advisor teams on the number of ANSF units assessed when it still used the CUAT. From January to April 2012, IJC advisor teams assessed 98 percent of ANA units. During that same time period the following year, advisor teams only assessed 63 percent of ANA units. Table 4 shows the declining number of CUAT assessments completed from January 2012 through July 2013.

¹⁹ When IJC developed these rating definition levels in July 2013, the command initially intended to use them under the CUAT. This would have constituted a fifth change in the CUAT rating definition levels since April 2010. However, the command did not implement this change under the CUAT, instead opting to use these rating definition levels when it introduced the RASR.

²⁰ Combat forces form the basic operational arm of the ANA and are divided into six corps and one division, each responsible for a specific part of Afghanistan. Each ANA corps or division is made up of one to four brigades, and each brigade typically consists of six kandaks. A kandak consists of approximately 800 soldiers and is the Afghan equivalent to a U.S. Army battalion.

²¹ According to IJC, the command will advise the Afghan Uniformed Police at the “Type A” headquarters, which are regional headquarters that recently replaced the zone headquarters structure but reside in the same six provinces as the zone headquarters.

Table 4 - Number of CUAT Assessments Completed during Cycle 14 through Cycle 19 (January 2012 to July 2013)

Cycle Dates	ANA		ANP	
	Assessed Units	% of Total ANA Units	Assessed Units	% of Total ANP Units
Cycle 14 1/2012-4/2012	200	98%	342	93%
Cycle 15 4/2012-7/2012	216	81%	277	68%
Cycle 16 7/2012-10/2012	211	72%	235	44%
Cycle 17 10/2012-1/2013	202	67%	160	32%
Cycle 18 1/2013-4/2013	197	63%	152	30%
Cycle 19 ^a 4/2013-7/2013	195	62%	116	22%

Note: CUAT assessments were conducted on a quarterly basis.

^a Estimated. IJC expects the total number of ANA and ANP units in Cycle 19 to remain the same as Cycle 18 and up to a 10 percent decrease in the number of assessed units, due to a reduction in the number of advisor teams during Cycle 19.

Source: SIGAR analysis of ISAF data.

Further, IJC officials told us that as ISAF continues to draw down and advises a decreasing number of ANSF units, their “overall confidence in the overall assessment of the ANSF as a whole decreases.” According to these officials, as assessment information collected loses fidelity, ISAF’s ability to maintain its current level of insight into the ANSF’s capabilities will decrease, resulting in the need to rely more heavily on the Afghans for both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the assessments.

ISAF is currently working with the ANSF to ensure that timely, accurate, and mutually beneficial information can be collected and transmitted throughout the ANSF command structure. This effort is intended to facilitate the ANSF’s ability to effectively track and manage its own training and readiness status and to assess itself in an effort to ensure that it can sustain these assessments beyond 2014. For example, IJC’s *ANSF Internal Assessment Mechanism* information papers—which provide updates on efforts to improve the quality and reliability of assessments as reporting shifts to the ANSF—report that as coalition forces decline and insight into ANSF units reduces, IJC is working to enhance ANSF internal assessments by October 2014. Enhanced internal assessments will enable IJC to shift from advisor team reporting to ANSF reporting. Internal assessments are not new to the ANSF, as the ANA implemented its Readiness Reporting System in April 2005, and the ANP implemented its Force Readiness Report in December 2010. However, IJC reports that these ANSF readiness systems are complicated, out of date, poor at assessing or measuring effectiveness, and lacking in true measures of literacy, leader qualifications, operational and sustainment systems effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. IJC, the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, and the International Police Coordination Board are coordinating with the ANSF to refine the systems to make them more efficient, user-friendly, and compatible with the reporting needs of the international community.²²

IJC also reports that operational planning teams meet regularly to work to improve effectiveness of these systems. The teams’ goal is for the coalition to be confident in the adequacy of the ANSF reports produced under these systems by October 2014. In addition, IJC’s *ANSF Internal Assessment Mechanism* paper indicates that the command plans to conduct three validation checks of the reliability of the Afghan internal readiness reports by comparing the results ANA’s Readiness Reporting System and the ANP’s Force Readiness Report against the results of the RASR. IJC conducted the first check in August 2013, and plans to conduct the second check in February 2014, and the third check in August 2014. According to IJC officials, the command received the ANSF’s internal assessments data for the August 2013 validation check in October 2013, and plans to complete its analysis of this data by the end of December 2013.

According to officials, because IJC will increasingly rely on the ANSF’s reporting, the command is working with the ANA and ANP to develop the Afghan government’s ability to conduct internal assessments at the

²² The NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan is tasked with overseeing training and equipping of Afghan forces throughout Afghanistan. The International Police Coordination Board acts as the main coordination board for institutional and police reform within Afghanistan.

operational level. For example, IJC officials told us that the ANA created 168 tashkil²³ positions for literate officers to conduct assessment reporting for their own units. In addition, in July and August 2013, the Ministry of Interior selected nearly 100 ANP candidates to send to Turkey to learn assessment methodology and develop a new police assessment tool with the goal of standardizing assessments across the ANP.²⁴

Despite these efforts, ISAF does not have a formal plan that details how it will ensure the continued collection, validation, analysis, and reporting of accurate, reliable, and useful ANSF capability assessment data as coalition forces drawdown. U.S. Central Command and Joint Staff officials expressed concern over the ability of coalition forces to continue to collect useful ANSF data during and after the drawdown. U.S. Central Command officials told us they meet with ISAF and NATO counterparts biweekly to discuss and mitigate pending assessment challenges, such as resourcing, accountability, and reliability of data that will arise from reduced coalition force levels in Afghanistan. They also informed us that a task list designed to mitigate some of these challenges was developed following a November 2012 Afghanistan Assessments Conference. The task list identifies nine discreet tasks, including developing a plan for collecting data for ANSF assessments and continuing to develop the Ministry of Defense's and the Ministry of Interior's assessment abilities. In addition, IJC officials stated that ISAF is considering alternatives for the continued assessment of ANSF units, such as using advisor teams to conduct spot assessments of particular ANSF units. The use of spot assessments had not been confirmed or documented at the time we completed our review.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, as amended, requires DOD to report on a long-term, detailed plan for sustaining the ANSF. This plan is to include defined objectives and any actions taken to assist the Afghan government in establishing strong ANSF readiness assessment tools and metrics, and the results of these actions.²⁵ DOD's 2010 sustainment plan included actions taken to continue assessment of the ANSF based on recommendations from the Commander of ISAF.²⁶ However, because a drawdown had not been announced at the time of the 2010 plan issuance, that sustainment plan did not consider the possible impact on the ability of coalition forces to collect, analyze, verify, or report ANSF assessments with fewer available resources. DOD and ISAF officials told us they have not developed a successor to the 2010 sustainment plan that addresses the collection, analysis, verification and reporting of ANSF assessments during the drawdown.²⁷

Because ISAF will have fewer available coalition teams and be relying increasingly on ANSF-provided information, it is important for ISAF to have a plan detailing how it will assess the ANSF's capability and address the challenges associated with the ANSF reporting its own assessment results. Without a plan for collecting, validating, analyzing, and reporting on ANSF assessments during the military drawdown, ISAF may not be able to obtain an accurate understanding of ANSF units' capability—information that feeds into broader assessment reports on the ANSF's overall effectiveness and readiness.²⁸

CONCLUSION

As IJC increasingly focuses its efforts on assessing the capability of ANSF units at the brigade and regional levels using its new RASR assessment system in place of the CUAT, it is imperative that IJC develop plans that were lacking under the CUAT in order to better ensure that the RASR will provide consistent and reliable

²³ The tashkil is the Afghan government's official list of required ANA and ANP personnel by position and rank.

²⁴ Candidates for the ANP assessment training course in Turkey will include 30 police officers from the Ministry of Interior as well as an additional 68 police officers—2 from each province.

²⁵ Pub. L. No. 110-181, §1231, 122 Stat. 3, 390-91 (2008) (amended 2013).

²⁶ ISAF ultimately tasked IJC with undertaking these assessments.

²⁷ Although DOD's reports to Congress in April 2012 and November 2013 include reporting on ANSF assessment efforts, DOD and ISAF officials did not identify either of these as a successor to the April 2010 sustainment plan.

²⁸ DOD officials told us that they are awaiting strategic direction from the President regarding the post-2014 Security Force Assistance mission's strength and structure before planning can begin.

reporting of the ANSF's capability. As ISAF forces draw down and transition to a more advisory role—rather than partnering with the ANSF to jointly engage in combat—the United States and its coalition partners will have fewer of their own advisors conducting assessments and will have to rely increasingly on the ANSF to conduct its own assessments. This will introduce new challenges into the assessment process, including more limited ISAF oversight of Afghan capability assessment efforts. With the security transition scheduled to be completed by the end of 2014, there is a narrow window of opportunity for coalition forces to implement a plan that will help enable the continued collection, validation, analysis, and reporting on the status of the ANSF's manning, training, and equipping capability. Without such a plan, decision makers in the United States, other coalition countries, and the Afghan government may not have reasonable assurance that the ANSF is making progress toward becoming a self-sustaining force that is capable of assuming full security responsibility for Afghanistan after the transition is completed in December 2014. Further, without an updated plan DOD may not be able to make fully informed decisions based on ANSF capability

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that assessments of the ANSF continue during and after the drawdown of U.S. and coalition military forces in Afghanistan, we recommend that the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force:

- 1. Develop and implement a formal, written plan for collecting, validating, analyzing, and reporting on ANSF capabilities that details how ISAF will**
 - a. assess the ANSF's capability with fewer advisors to conduct the assessments and**
 - b. mitigate the challenges associated the ANSF reporting its own assessment results.**

AGENCY COMMENTS

U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) provided written comments on a draft of this report, which, along with our responses, are reproduced in appendix IV. USFOR-A concurred with the “overall” recommendations of our audit report, but also stated that it did not concur with “some” specific recommendations. In addition, IJC provided us informal comments on a draft of this report, which we have incorporated, as appropriate.

Our draft report recommended that the Commander of the International Security Assistance Force develop and issue guidance—by the end of April 2014—that provides clear instruction on the level of detail advisor teams are to include in the comments supporting their assigned rating definition levels for the ANSF units they assess. USFOR-A did not concur with this recommendation, calling it “unnecessary.” Specifically, USFOR-A noted that IJC issued a fragmentary order with specific instructions on the information the advisor units are to include in the comments supporting their assigned rating in each category for the assessed unit. This fragmentary order directs that each comment should focus on answering three questions, the answers to which “provide not only the what, but the why behind the issues that need addressing by the coalition and confirm the accuracy of the [Regional Command's] assessment of a particular unit.” USFOR-A further stated that IJC conducts a quality control check of every narrative to ensure adequate information is provided. Based on USFOR-A's comment and the referenced fragmentary order, we agree that the recommended guidance has already been provided to the advisor units and, therefore, we have deleted this recommendation and revised the report as appropriate.

Regarding our recommendation to develop and implement a formal, written plan for collecting, validating, analyzing, and reporting on ANSF capabilities, USFOR-A stated that “IJC will work with ISAF to codify all ongoing efforts into a single document that acts as an overarching roadmap of the way ISAF intends to retain the capability of assessing the progress of the ANSF now and in the future.” It appears that the creation of such a document would mostly satisfy our recommendation. We will follow up with USFOR-A to review this document once it is complete and determine at that time whether our recommendation has been implemented.

APPENDIX I - SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this audit were to assess the extent to which (1) the International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) tool for evaluating the manning, training, and equipping capacity of the ANSF—the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT)—was consistently applied to assess ANSF units, and (2) ISAF is taking steps to plan for the continued collection, validation, analysis, and reporting of ANSF capacity assessments during the military drawdown and the transition of security responsibility to the Afghan government. We did not conduct an independent assessment of the ANSF's capacity to man, train and equip its forces. Rather, we determined whether the tools ISAF used to assess the ANSF's capacity to man, train, and equip its forces provided users with sufficient information to inform decision making.

To assess the extent to which ISAF's tool for assessing the manning, training, and equipping was consistently applied, we reviewed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, as amended, which directs the Department of Defense (DOD) to report on the capabilities of the ANSF.²⁹ We also reviewed the April 2010 United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces, the NATO security force assistance model, the DOD Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, and the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) Advisor Guide.³⁰ We reviewed the CUAT Standard Operating Procedure, fragmentary orders, and current and past rating definition levels used to assess ANSF capacities. We reviewed CUAT results and summary data from April 2011 through July 2013. In addition, we analyzed CUAT rating definition level titles and supporting standards from April 2010 through July 2013 in order to determine the extent to which the standards changed as the titles changed. To do this, we listed all of the standards for each rating definition level, compared them against each other, and identified consistencies and inconsistencies. Individual assessments are classified, and as a result, we could not provide specific information contained in them. We visited select locations in Kandahar, Helmand, and Kabul provinces in Afghanistan to meet with coalition advisor teams; observe capacity assessment data collection, analysis, and verification processes; and review capacity assessment documents, which are classified. We reviewed preliminary information, such as fragmentary orders and a decision brief, on the Regional ANSF Status Report, ISAF Joint Command's (IJC) new assessment system that replaced the CUAT. We also reviewed a prior SIGAR audit on ANSF assessments,³¹ and reports and testimonies produced by other audit agencies.³² We interviewed officials from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Central Command, the IJC Campaign Transition Assessment Group, and the ISAF Afghan Assessments Group. We also visited Security Force Assistance Advisor Teams in Regional Commands South, Southwest, and Capital to obtain additional perspectives on the collection, validation, analysis, and reporting of CUAT assessments.³³

To assess the extent to which ISAF is taking steps to plan for the continued collection, validation, analysis, and reporting of ANSF capacity assessments during the military drawdown and transition of security responsibility, we reviewed the 2010 United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces, the NATO security force assistance model, the DOD's reports to Congress on the progress toward security and stability in Afghanistan, and the November 2012 Afghanistan Assessments Conference Report and task list. We also reviewed NATO's Combined Joint Statement of Requirements, version 13.0, which outlines NATO's required

²⁹ Pub. L. No. 110-181, §§1230-1231, 122 Stat. 3, 385-391 (2008) (amended 2013).

³⁰ Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) Advisor Guide (Version 2)*, April 2013.

³¹ SIGAR Audit 10-11, *Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments*, June 29, 2010.

³² U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Afghanistan: Key Oversight Issues*, GAO-13-218SP, February 11, 2013; DOD Inspector General, *Assessment of the U.S. Government to Train, Equip, and Mentor the Expanded Afghan National Police*, SPO-2011-003, March 3, 2011; U.S. Government Accountability Office, Statement of Charles M. Johnson and Sharon L. Pickup, *Afghanistan Security: Long-standing Challenges May Affect Progress and Sustainment of Afghan National Security Forces*, GAO-12-951T, July, 24, 2012; DOD Inspector General, Statement of Ambassador (Ret.) Kenneth P. Moorefield, *Afghan National Security Forces and Security Lead Transition: The Assessment Process, Metrics and Efforts to Build Capacity*, July 24, 2012.

³³ We attempted to visit additional advisor teams in Regional Commands North and West, but were restricted due to weather and security.

staffing levels for its advising mission, among other things. In addition, we interviewed officials from IJC, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and U.S. Central Command.

We did not use or rely on computer-processed data for the purposes of the audit objectives. With respect to assessing internal controls, as part of our first objective, we reviewed the CUAT Standard Operating Procedure and fragmentary orders to determine whether they provided sufficient to instructions to advisor teams completing the assessments. The results of our review are included in the body of this report.

We conducted our audit work in Kabul, Helmand, and Kandahar provinces in Afghanistan, and Washington, D.C., from February 2013 to February 2014, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. This audit was performed by SIGAR under the authority of Public Law No. 110-181, as amended, and the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

APPENDIX II - CUAT QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT AREAS

Under the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT), International Security Assistance Force Joint Command advisor teams assessed the Afghan National Security Forces according to one overall assessment with 14 component assessment areas. Each area included a series of topics for advisors to comment on to support the assigned the CUAT rating definition level. Figure 2 lists the CUAT's qualitative assessment areas and topics for the advisors to comment on.

Figure 2 - CUAT Qualitative Assessment Areas and Topics

OVERALL ASSESSMENT.

- Months to next RDL. Estimated time for the unit to progress to the next RDL (in months), based on the assessor's experience. This is not required if the unit is rated as Independent with Advisors (RDL 1)
- Must include comments on the following:
 - › Time to progress to next RDL and why,
 - › Key factors limiting or enabling overall assessment (operations, intelligence, logistics, leadership, etc.),
 - › Actions needed to accelerate the development of the unit
 - › And an explanation for change in previous overall assessment rating if applicable

OPERATION.

Must include comments on the following:

- Unit's mission,
- Ability to accomplish the mission
- Employment of basic Operations Security (OPSEC)
- Ability to plan or conduct basic troop leading procedures and/or military decision making process (MDMP)
- Ability to coordinate with external units and agencies
- Ability to conduct MEDEVAC/CASEVAC
- Ability to treat casualties
- Ability to execute Counter IED (CIED) operations,
- And ability to maneuver within its area of responsibility.

PARTNERING.

Must include comments on the following:

- Time with the unit
- Frequency of visits
- Confidence in assessment
- Embedded or patrolling to advise
- Afghan dependency on PU/AT
- Assessment of the relationship between PU/AT and ANSF unit leadership
- Any planned changes to relationship in the next cycle
- And is the unit temporarily deployed

LEADERSHIP.

Must include comments on the following:

- Are leaders present and do they actively participate in planning and execution of operations
- Do they enable subordinate leaders to accomplish the mission
- Does leadership negatively impact mission accomplishment?
- Leadership competence
- Unit morale (including health and welfare)
- AN SF will to fight
- Actions taken to remove or correct negative leaders

- And external assistance needed for removing or correcting-negative leaders
- Competence, Honesty, Influence and Loyalty RDLs. Select RDL from drop downs based on the definitions in Annex D.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION.

Used as a workaround for training data under Host Nation Resources, pending form redesign.

- Format of numbers within # symbols are required so that data may be queried using WebTAS. Will include at a minimum: personnel requiring branch specific training by specialty MOS (#MOS Auth/OHITrained#), PME or Institutional Police Education completion (by Officer, NCO, and Enlisted; #PME Auth/OHITrained#)
- Additional Comments:
 - › Workarounds and challenges due to illiteracy
 - › Observed training best practices
 - › Status of CIED and IED defeat/awareness training
 - › And unit's plan for getting untrained personnel trained (especially for enabler functions and specialty MOSs)
 - › Specialty MOSs required include: EN, EOD, Medical, Signal, MI, Fires (artillery and mortar), Logistics

MAINTENANCE, AND SUPPLY.

Similar police specialties are also required.

CORRUPTION AND DRUG USE.

RDL. Pending update. Observed or Not Observed.

Must include comments on the following:

- Has the AT or PU observed anything (like selling of fuel or equipment)
- And if so, did it impact the unit's ability to accomplish the mission

COMMUNICATIONS

Must include comments on the following:

- Does the unit have reliable internal/external communications
- Ability to communicate using secure means/methods
- Have operations been compromised due to communication methods
- Status of MoD/MoI nets (KDK and PHQ and above)
- Effectiveness and limitations of communications
- And ability to use and operate authorized communication equipment

PERSONNEL/TRAINING.

Not required and pending deletion.

Not Assessed in the meantime.

EQUIPMENT HOLDINGS/READINESS.

- Not required and pending deletion. Select Not Assessed in the meantime.

EQUIPPING.

Used as a workaround for materiel data under Host Nation Resources.

- Format of numbers within # symbols are required so that data may be queried. Will include at a minimum: totals for shoot, move, communicate (#ETOT Auth/OH/Operational#), status of mission essential equipment by type (#EME Auth/OH/Operational#)
- Additional Comments
 - › Accountability of equipment (especially sensitive items and mission essential equipment)
 - › Fielding and status of CIEO equipment [metal detectors and Electronic Counter Measures (ECMs)]
 - › And unit's plan for completing equipment fielding (if needed)

INTELLIGENCE.

Must include comments on the following:

- Does the unit have established Priority Intelligence Requirements (PIR)
- Unit's ability to collect and dissemination information in support of PIR
- And ability to use information collected to drive operations

LOGISTICS.

Must include comments on the following:

- Unit's overall logistics assessment
- Time to progress to next logistics RDL and why
- Key factors limiting or enabling logistics
- Explanation for change in previous overall assessment rating if applicable
- And ability to plan logistics (including medical) in support of operations

MAINTENANCE.

Must include comments on the following:

- Unit's ability to perform maintenance

- Status of contract maintenance (ANP)
- Training of ANP to perform maintenance
- And plans for training maintainers (as needed)

PERSONNEL.

Used as a workaround for personnel data under Host Nation Resources.

- Format of numbers within # symbols are required so that data may be queried. Will include at a minimum: personnel assignment and utilization for specialty MOSs (#UTIL Auth/OH/Filling Auth Position#)
- Additional Comments:
 - › Ability to track personnel and assignments
 - › Ability to pay personnel accurately and on time
 - › Ability to incorporate and track leave and/or the red/amber/green cycle
 - › And observed challenges and best practices

TRANSPORTATION.

Pending change. This field will be changed to Supply in CIDNE. However, pending that change, the transportation field will be used to provide Supply RDLs and Comments.

- Must include comments on the following:
 - › Ability to track and account for classes of supply
 - › Ability to use the Afghan supply system (including processing of requests and forms)
 - › Observed weak points in the supply system
 - › And observations on supply failures.

INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES.

Must include comments on the following:

- Does the unit have adequate facilities for housing, dining, medical, maintenance, and operations?
- If not, what are the major limitations?
- What is being done to fix any issues?
- Are their facilities permanent or temporary?
- Is their infrastructure sustainable, and why or why not?
- And are there local facilities that can and/or do fill gaps in capabilities?

Source: Commander's Unit Assessment Tool Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), CIDNE Version 2.1.8.0.3, IJC ANSF Assessments, February 26, 2013.

APPENDIX III - CUAT RATING DEFINITION LEVELS

Using the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT), International Security Assistance Force Joint Command advisor teams assessed the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) according one overall assessment and 14 component assessment areas. CUAT rating definition levels are the overall subjective rating of these 15 areas based on the advisor teams' assessment. Figure 3 shows descriptions of the overall CUAT rating definition levels that were in effect from August 2011 to July 2013.

Figure 3 - Overall CUAT Rating Definition Levels Starting in August 2011

	Independent with Advisors. The unit is able to plan and execute its missions and maintain command and control of subordinate elements, calling on and controlling a QRF and MEDEVAC assets when required. When necessary, the unit can call for and integrate joint effects from coalition forces and is capable of exploiting intelligence and operating within a wider intelligence system. Unit personnel and equipment levels are $\geq 75\%$ of the authorized strength (Present for Duty/Operational) and are sufficient for the unit to undertake its assigned tasks. The unit can operate, account for and maintain its equipment and meet its basic logistic needs with no assistance from Coalition Forces. The unit is able to co-ordinate its operations with other ANSF units and headquarters.
	Effective with Advisors. The unit conducts effective planning, synchronizing, directing, and reporting of operations and status. The unit is able to coordinate and communicate with higher, lower, adjacent, and combined/joint units. The unit maintains effective readiness reports. Leaders, staff, and unit adhere to the ANSF Code of Conduct, and are loyal to GIROA. All unit enablers are present and effective in this unit, and are providing most of the support to the ANSF unit. Coalition Forces provide only limited, occasional guidance to the staff. Coalition Forces may provide enablers that are missing from HIGHER or LOWER ANSF levels. Coalition Forces augment support only on occasion. Equipment and personnel levels are $\geq 75\%$. OCC P and R are always integrated, and links are usually effective.
	Effective with Partners. The unit requires routine mentoring for planning, synchronizing, directing, and reporting of operations and status; coordinating and communicating with higher, lower, adjacent, and combined/joint units; and maintaining effective readiness reports. Leaders, staff, and most of the unit adhere to the ANSF Code of Conduct, and are loyal to GIROA. Most unit enablers are present and effective. Those enablers present are providing most of the support to the ANSF unit. Coalition Forces may provide enablers that are missing from this level, and augment enabler support at this level. Equipment and personnel levels are $\geq 65\%$. OCC P and R are always integrated, and links are sometimes effective.
	Developing with Partners. The unit requires partner unit presence and assistance for planning, synchronizing, directing, and reporting of operations and status; coordinating and communicating with higher, lower, adjacent, and combined/joint units; and maintaining effective readiness reports. Leaders and most of the staff usually adhere to the ANSF Code of Conduct, and are loyal to GIROA. Some unit enablers are present and effective at this level of unit. Those present provide some of the support to the ANSF unit. Coalition Forces provide the missing enablers and most of the support at this level. Equipment and personnel levels are $< 65\%$. OCC P and R are usually integrated.
	Established. This unit is at the beginning of organization or has just been fielded. It is barely capable of planning, synchronizing, directing, or reporting operations and status, even with the presence and assistance of a partner unit. It is barely able to coordinate and communicate with higher, lower, adjacent, and combined/joint units. It has barely effective or missing personnel, logistics, training, or readiness reports. Leadership and staff may not adhere to the AN SF Code of Conduct, or may not be loyal to GIROA. Most of the units' unit enablers are not present or are barely effective. Those enablers present provide little or no support to the ANSF unit. Coalition Forces provide for the missing enablers and most of the support at this level. Equipment and personnel levels are $\leq 50\%$. OCC P and R are sometimes integrated.
	Not Assessed. Areas where insufficient data is available for complete assessment.

Notes: QRF=quick reaction force; MEDEVAC=medical evacuation; GIROA=Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; OCC P=Operational Coordination Center Provincial; and OCC R=Operational Coordination Center Regional.

Source: Commander's Unit Assessment Tool Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), CIDNE Version 2.1.8.0.3, IJC ANSF Assessments, February 26, 2013.

APPENDIX IV - COMMENTS FROM U.S. FORCES-AFGHANISTAN



HEADQUARTERS
United States Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A)
Kabul, Afghanistan
APO AE 09320

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

USFORA-DCG

24 January 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR: SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL for AFGHANISTAN
RECONSTRUCTION (SIGAR), Crystal City, Virginia 22202

SUBJECT: USFOR-A Concurrence with Comments to SIGAR Draft Audit Report 14-x, "Afghan National Security Forces: Actions Needed to Improve Capability Assessments and Plans for Sustaining Assessment Efforts", dated January 2014

See SIGAR
comment 1.

1. USFOR-A acknowledges and appreciates SIGAR's recognition of the difficulties in assessing the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) as Coalition Forces draw down. This is a challenge that both ISAF and USFOR-A are addressing through a series of efforts directed toward both the ANSF and Coalition Forces, as alluded to within the body of the SIGAR Report. USFOR-A concurs with the overall recommendations of the SIGAR 14-x Audit Report, however non-concurs with some specific recommendations and provides the comments below for further consideration and clarification.

2. SIGAR Recommendations:

1. **Develop and issue guidance – by the end of April 2014 – that provides clear instruction on the level of detail advisor teams are to include in the comments supporting their assigned rating definition levels for the ANSF units they assess.**

USFOR-A non-concurs with this specific recommendation as unnecessary. IJC FRAGO 244, issued on 30 September 2013, contains specific instructions on the information the advisor units are to include in the comments supporting their assigned rating in each category for the assessed unit.

See SIGAR
comment 2.

The FRAGO (mentioned previously by COMIJC in his letter to the SIGAR on 19 October 2013) directs each comment to focus on answering three questions. The answers to these questions provide not only the what, but the why behind the issues that need addressing by the coalition and confirm the accuracy of the RC's assessment of the particular unit. The answers to these directed questions also provide COMIJC and COMISAF the necessary information to allocate scarce resources and make necessary decisions. Additionally, IJC conducts a quality control check on every narrative to ensure adequate information is provided.

2. **Develop and implement a formal, written plan for collecting, validating, analyzing, and reporting on ANSF capabilities that details how ISAF will:**

- a. **Assess the ANSF's capability with fewer advisors to conduct the assessments and**
- b. **Mitigate the challenges associated with the ANSF reporting its own assessment results.**

IJC will work with ISAF to codify all of the ongoing efforts into a single document that acts as an overarching road map of the way ISAF intends to retain the capability of assessing the progress of the ANSF now and into the future.

See SIGAR
comment 3.

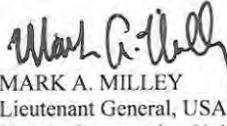
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SUBJECT: Non-concurrence with the recommendations of the SIGAR 14-x Audit Report

3. SIGAR's report is focused on the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool (CUAT), which is a report that has not been in use since June 2013. While the Regional ANSF Status Report (RASR), and the CUAT before that, provides a common and recurring foundation for making assessments of the ANSF, the final assessment is a combination of a number of reports, both qualitative and quantitative, to include commander's updates. Any external review of ISAF's and IJC's ability to assess the ANSF must take these other mechanisms into account in order to provide informative and relevant feedback.

See SIGAR
comment 4.

4. Point of Contact for this memo is COL (OF-5) Ronald McNamara, IJC Inspector General, DSN: [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED] or COL (OF-5) Wesley Jennings, Director, IJC Campaign and Transition Assessment Group, DSN: [REDACTED] email: [REDACTED]


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SIGAR's Response to Comments from USFOR-A

1. See comment 2.
2. Based on USFOR-A's comment and our review of the referenced fragmentary order, we agree that the recommended guidance has been provided to the advisor teams. We have deleted the recommendation and revised the report as appropriate. For example, we revised the title to reflect the deletion of the recommendation.
3. The document USFOR-A describes in its comments would largely satisfy our recommendation. We will follow up with USFOR-A to review this document once it has been completed and determine at that time if our recommendation has been implemented.
4. As noted in our report, our first objective was specifically to assess the extent to which ISAF's tool for evaluating the manning, training, and equipping capacity of the ANSF—the CUAT—was consistently applied to assess ANSF units. We were not informed officially until late August 2013 that IJC had replaced the CUAT with the RASR. Despite having already completed our fieldwork, we revised our draft report to include information on the RASR in an effort to recognize the steps IJC had taken to improve its assessment efforts, particularly in light of the drawdown of coalition forces. Although IJC stopped using the CUAT in June 2013, IJC's response to SIGAR's prior audit of ANSF capability assessments suggests that our findings are still relevant to the improvement of the assessment process.³⁴ In particular, shortly before the completion of our 2010 audit of IJC's assessments of the ANSF, the command introduced a new unit assessment tool—the CUAT—that replaced the CM tool. However, that particular change in assessment tools did not negate the importance of our findings on the CM because, in responding to that report, IJC stated it would address our findings and recommendations as part of its implementation of the CUAT. Similarly, the findings in our current report are relevant to the RASR and any future ANSF assessments tools because they inform IJC of weaknesses with the CUAT. This information could enable the command to take actions to prevent these weaknesses from resurfacing. Finally, we do not suggest that the CUAT and its successor the RASR are the only sources of information used to assess the ANSF's capabilities. Our draft report clearly noted that IJC used the results of the assessments along with other information, such as battlefield reporting, informal commander's assessments, and ISAF's assessments of the Ministries of Defense and Interior, to develop an overall assessment of the ANSF's operational effectiveness and readiness. Although the RASR, and the CUAT before it, is not the only information that feeds into IJC's overall assessment of the ANSF, it is a tool for regularly collecting a standardized set of information on the capability of ANSF units. As such, an evaluation of the tool still has merit in providing information on ISAF's and IJC's assessment efforts.

³⁴ SIGAR Audit 10-11, *Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments*, June 29, 2010.

APPENDIX V - ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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