

Security Assistance Program

— mobile training provides military help

by CPT David Lewis

A little known program exists within the United States military establishment in which the Chemical School has played a significant role in the past few years: Security Assistance. Security Assistance is a Congressional program that provides military assistance to aligned countries or to countries that have a security assistance agreement with the United States.

The assistance can be anything from helping a country to train, equip, and maintain an air defense program for maintenance of its sovereign borders or to training the client country's military forces in nuclear, biological, and chemical defense skills. A typical mission may be as short as two weeks or as long as two years or more.

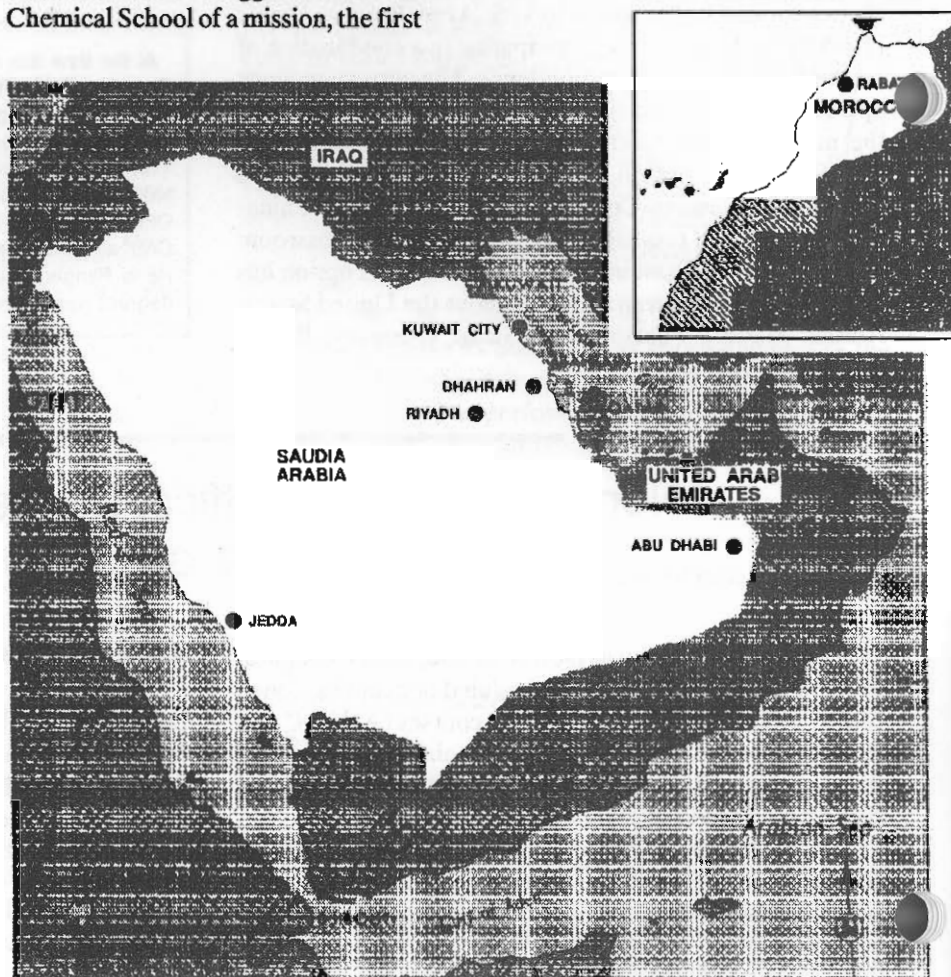
Since 1988, the US Army Chemical School has been an active part of the Security Assistance Program to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. The United States Army Chemical School has completed missions to Morocco, United Arab Emirates, and The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During the recent crisis in the Persian Gulf, two of the countries (United Arab Emirates and The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) requested training assistance from the United States in order to increase their readiness against the Iraqi chemical and biological threat. This assistance was different from the other missions the

Chemical School had been involved in; for the first time the Chemical School was sending men into a combat zone.

The Team

After the Security Assistance Command in Fort Bragg notifies the Chemical School of a mission, the first

order of business is to choose the team members. Because of the unique nature of Security Assistance missions, the Chemical School chooses team members from among the most mature and knowledgeable of the



soldiers at the Chemical School. Additionally, each member is chosen because of their ability to handle a variety of situations spontaneously.

Those who choose the team members consider each candidate's ability to adapt to unusual cultural traditions, exercise patience, and to be direct but tactful. The Chemical School chose one officer and two NCOs (a captain, a sergeant first class and a staff sergeant) for each mission to Southwest Asia.

The missions to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) were tasked during August and October 1990, respectively. Both missions were initiated under emergency conditions and the teams had only two weeks to prepare for each mission. Normally, such preparation continues over a two-to-six-month period, depending on the country that submitted the request for Security Assistance.

In both cases, there was very little warning; in fact, one day the team chief was simply told to stop what he was doing and to prepare to deploy. Until that moment he had never imagined that an assignment at Chemical School would lead to experience in a hazardous duty area.

The mission

The mobile training team (MTT) mission to the UAE was to conduct basic CB defense classes and recommend solutions for any problems the team discovered. The team chief anticipated that the mission would change because of the worsening tactical situation in Kuwait and Iraq. Therefore, the load list for the UAE MTT mission had everything needed to conduct an NBC School, set up and operate one or more nuclear, biological, and chemical control centers (NBCC), or move forward to advise client countries' military units during chemical defensive operations.

Security

As in every military operation, the primary consideration throughout the

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mission preparation is to develop plans for security. Travel is the most critical phase of each MTT mission. Therefore, teams generally travel on non-U.S. flagged air carriers and always in civilian clothes. Also, team members carry two passports, an official (red) passport and a tourist (blue) passport. The official passport is taken out only when necessary. Of course, all forms of military identification are kept out of sight.

Normally, U.S. Security Assistance Mobile Training Team's aren't associated with any U.S. tactical units when they arrive in the host country, so they must prepare for every eventuality. U.S. public law prohibits Security Assistance teams from participating in combative operations, and the law is commonly interpreted as prohibiting teams from carrying weapons.

Although teams are actually allowed to carry weapons for self defense, the countries of United Arab Emirates and The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are considered to be extraordinarily safe, so weapons are not available.

Furthermore, since teams travel by commercial aircraft, it is impossible to draw weapons from the parent unit and carry them during travel. Nevertheless, team security plans include a duress code with several variants for situations that might occur. In addition to the duress code, the teams make it a matter of internal SOP to make immediate contact and establish

agreements for extraction with any U.S. military unit nearby.

United Arab Emirates

The original MTT mission to the UAE was to conduct train-the-trainer basic CB defense classes for their chemical school cadre and provide recommendations for any problems that the team discovered in any associated areas. Although the UAE mission lasted 21 days, the team covered every aspect of NBC defense imaginable. A basic NBC defense course was taught at the UAE NBC School located in the Zaid military complex. At the same time, the team was tasked to determine the NBC defense equipment needs for the entire UAE armed forces and recommend a distribution scheme.

During this process the Commandant of the UAE Chemical Corps related this story: A young UAE soldier became a casualty while working in a bunker around a supply of decontamination solution. Neither the commandant nor his staff could understand why the soldier had become a casualty and asked the team to look into the matter. After a brief site visit at the storage bunker, it was easily determined that the decontamination solution (C8 emulsion) was in an advanced state of decomposition. The bunker the young soldier worked in was not ventilated. When the temperature of the inside of the bunker increased in the 125-degree (Fahrenheit) heat of the day, the concentration of chlorine gas from the

decomposing C8 emulsion in the bunker rose to dangerous levels. The soldier had no protective equipment and very quickly succumbed to the chlorine gas. Fortunately, he sustained no permanent lung damage. The team simply recommended that the bunker be ventilated before anyone entered to work there and that protective equipment be used throughout the work period in the bunker. The UAE chemical commandant and his staff were very grateful for the recommendations given regarding the safety of his soldiers.

The team made recommendations on other significant findings. One finding stood out beyond the original scope of the mission: an inquiry about a device the UAE had purchased to test the filters of M17 series masks for toxic chemical agent filtering capability, the Q-127 filter testing machine. They had intended to use the Q-127 to set up a program of testing lot numbers in order to determine filter serviceability life.

Fortunately, one of the team members had experience on this type of equipment and said that the Q-127 could not test for toxic agent filtering but only for particulate filtering. A quick call to the subject matter expert at the United States Army Materiel Command facility at Rock Island, Illinois (Leon Dahl), confirmed that only the Q-95 and the Q-216 were able to test filters in a toxic environment. The UAE quickly ordered the correct piece of equipment to replace the old one. The team also made recommendations concerning NBC defense item inventory control, and storage. The UAE's entire stock of filters had been ordered outside the U.S. Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program and subsequently had untraceable LOT numbers. Emergency requisitions were submitted through the FMS program and the problem was soon alleviated. In addition, inventory con-

trol procedures were introduced to prevent the same problem from reoccurring.

In retrospect, the team had prepared adequately for the expected expanded mission and was able to improve the NBC defensive posture for the United Arab Emirates immeasurably.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The mobile training team mission to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) began very similiarly as the UAE mission began. The team was chosen quickly and a very short preparation period followed. The team chief for the mission to UAE also was picked as the team chief for the KSA mission. The specific mission to KSA was to activate three decontamination units to support the KSA Air Defense Forces (ADF). The team chief again anticipated that the mission would change because of the worsening tactical situation in Kuwait and Iraq.

Therefore the load list for the KSA MTT mission had everything needed to conduct an NBC school, set up and operate one or more nuclear, biological, and chemical control centers, or move forward to advise client countries' military units during chemical defensive operations. Almost immediately upon arrival to KSA, the mission changed. The new mission outlined to the MTT by the U.S. Military Training Mission (USMTM) was to prepare the Royal Saudi Air Defense Force (RSADF) units for defensive chemical or biological warfare.

The team had prepared for such a contingency and began to initiate a comprehensive survey of needs of the high priority RSADF units. The team designed a specific plan to begin the Saudi ADF NBC basic training. The plan generally was to conduct NBC schools at various central locations throughout the Kingdom. The

premise of the training was to train-the-trainer so the attendees of each NBC School would continue the training at his unit. The tactical situation required that the team teach an abbreviated NBC program of instruction; that after the team had distributed the basic information, a follow-on NBC MTT would establish a permanent NBC school at the ADF Institute in Jedda.

The team completed the NBC Schools and took on Chemical Staff augmentation duties. The tactical situation by that time had grown so critical that the team became a critical element of the Royal Saudi Air Defense Force staff under the supervision of the USMTM Air Defense Advisor. Before the war and during the war, the team completed such actions as establishing two NBCC's in high priority air defense sectors, advising the Ministry of Interior on Civil Defense actions for chemical warfare, fielding of critical, newly purchased NBC defense equipment, and designing an entire chemical force structure to include a governing regulation for the RSADF NBC Program. The MTT completed its mission within five months and returned to the U.S. Army Chemical School at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

The U.S. Army Chemical School continues to support the Security Assistance Program today. The USACMLS' active participation in Security Assistance affairs has been instrumental in combating the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons by providing our allies and aligned countries with the best NBC defense advice and advisors in the world.

At the time this article was written, CPT David Lewis was assigned to the US Army Chemical School.