
FEATURE ARTICLES

U.S. Marine Corps Security Cooperation

By

LtCol J.P. Hesford

and

Mr. Paul Askins

Overview

Undeniably, the most visible elements of U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) security cooperation are the deployed Marines assisting partner nations in building or strengthening their desired capabilities. These Marines build partner capacity across the continuum of operations, from military-to-military contacts and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations in Phase Zero to transition teams providing training in support of current operations such as Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. These efforts, led by the Regional Marine Component Commands, support their respective Combatant Commander's objectives for each geographic region.

While overseas advisory or training assistance are the most prolific aspects of Marine Corps security cooperation, with hundreds of Marines deployed in these roles around the world, it's far from the entire story.

The Marine Corps employs a coordinated approach to security cooperation. Currently this approach is guided by the Secretary of Defense's Security Cooperation Guidance. Based on that guidance, the Commandant of the Marine Corps publishes an Implementation Strategy that compliments and supports the Theater Security Cooperation Plans published by the Geographic Combatant Commanders. With the recent publication of the Guidance for Employment of the Force, the Marine Corps is now developing its Campaign Support Plan to support the Campaign Plans these Geographic Combatant Commanders will use as their guides to security cooperation in the future.

Even though the Regional Marine Component Commands remain the focal point for execution of security cooperation within their regions, the cohesiveness and unity of purpose of the Corps overall security cooperation effort is achieved through the communication and integration of efforts of three major security cooperation organizations within the National Capital Region—the International Issues Branch, Strategies and Plans Division, Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations, located at Headquarters, Marine Corps; the Security Cooperation Education and Training Center, Training and Education Command located in Quantico, VA; and International Programs, Marine Corps Systems Command also located in Quantico, VA.

The International Issues Branch (PLU) acts on behalf of the Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations as the coordinating and oversight authority for implementing Marine Corps policy in security cooperation and technology transfer matters, thereby ensuring Marine Corps security cooperation efforts are consistent with U.S. strategic plans. The Branch develops Marine Corps recommendations to the Joint Staff on policy and program aspects of security cooperation and is the author of the Commandant's Security Cooperation Implementation Strategy and pending Security Cooperation Campaign Support Plan.

To facilitate communication and integration, PLU hosts monthly sessions with the other Marine Corps security cooperation organizations within the region and annually sponsors the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Conference that brings together all Marine Corps security cooperation personnel for a plenary and planning session. As a part of the Branch's policy development role, personnel from PLU support various DoD and Joint Staff working groups on a variety of building partner capacity issues including the Train, Advise, and Assist Working Group; the Building Partnerships Capabilities Portfolio Management; and the Quadrennial Defense Review Roles and Missions Analysis.

Regional desk officers within PLU closely coordinate with partner nation personnel, their Marine Component Command counterparts, and with their counterparts in the other key Marine Corps security cooperation organizations as an ongoing part of communication and integration. PLU also coordinates the Marine Corps International Affairs Officer Program which includes Marines assigned to security cooperation billets worldwide.

The Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC) is responsible for implementing and evaluating Marine Corps security cooperation education, training, and programs in order to support Marine Component Command efforts to build partner capacity. SCETC consists of three branches—the International Programs Branch, the Operations and Training Branch, and the Civil Military Operations Branch. The roles and missions of these branches are as follows:

International Programs Branch plans, coordinates, administers, and tracks all Marine Corps security cooperation education and training programs. The branch's regional program managers are in constant contact with partner nation, country team, and service counterpart personnel to build partner capacity through various security cooperation programs such as Foreign Military Sales (FMS), International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), Countering Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), and Counter-Drug Training Support. The branch is currently working on several new initiatives to expand international education and training opportunities within the Marine Corps for partner nation personnel. These include the implementation of the Marine Corps University International Fellows Program, the expansion of the Command and Staff College Distance Education Seminar Program, and the development of the Expeditionary Warfare School Distance Education Seminar Program. The branch is also leading the center's effort to develop a new security cooperation planner's course designed for Marines at all command and headquarters levels who are involved in planning security cooperation missions.

Operations and Training Branch is responsible for establishing security cooperation training standards for all Marine Corps units and personnel. These include the identification of appropriate security cooperation mission essential tasks and the publication of the security cooperation training and readiness manual that will guide Marines and Marine units executing security cooperation missions. The branch currently supports training for deploying transition teams, trains designated security cooperation advisor/training teams from both the Marine Corps and other government agencies, and coordinates military-to-military events not supportable by the Regional Marine Components.

Civil Military Operations Branch provides outreach to service and partner organizations and coordinates civil military operations education and training. This branch is currently involved in developing a civil affairs military occupational specialty qualifying course; providing training and support for Marine Corps Civil Affairs Groups (CAGs), artillery battalions (currently serving as provisional CAGs), and various other Marine Corps forces; supporting the Marine Corps Training Detachment at Maritime Civil Affairs Group School in Little Creek, VA; developing a civil military operations planner's course; developing civil military operations distance learning options for Marines; and providing observers/controllers for Marine expeditionary force mission readiness exercises.

International Programs (IP) of the Marine Corps Systems Command is responsible for planning, coordinating, implementing, and executing all Marine Corps related security cooperation acquisition and logistics matters, procedures, instructions, technology transfer programs, disclosure of classified information requests, and technical data packages to provide military assistance to partner nations.

IP acts as Case Administering Office (CAO) for Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Financing, or cases from other security cooperation programs assigned to the command. IP case managers exercise direction and control over assigned case acquisition programs and related activities as well as financial authority and responsibility over assigned cases.

While IP's FMS portfolio is too broad to review here, its work on the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle program has been critical over the past several years. The MRAP family of vehicles provides warfighters multi-mission platforms capable of mitigating Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), underbelly mines, and small arms fire threats which are currently the greatest casualty producers in the Global War on Terror. Three categories of vehicles are being produced; and the totals to date, \$22.4B in funding and 14,058 units, speak to the enormity of the project. Carrying a DX rating, and considered absolutely essential as a force protection measure in theater, Marine Corps Systems Command IP's program managers have worked doggedly to ensure the acquisition requirements of our international partners are serviced in consonance with the overall DoD demands.

The Director of International Programs is essential in the approval process of the Department of State and Department of Commerce munitions and commodities export licensing for Marine Corps items.

IP coordinates and reviews leases of Marine Corps equipment to partner nations and selected international co-production related to Marine Corps equipment. IP negotiates and concludes Cooperative Logistics Supply Support Arrangements (CLSSA) with partner nation governments and prepares service to service implementing procedures regarding logistics support for Marine Corps weapons systems and equipment. IP also coordinates Marine Corps proposals for Non-Developmental Item Foreign Comparative Testing and Defense Acquisition Challenge.

IP has delegated authority to determine releasability of classified and unclassified end items and associated information for Marine Corps weapons systems and equipment.

There is one other key Marine Corps organization that plays a crucial role in coordinating Marine Corps security cooperation, especially those aspects regarding deployed training or advisory assistance. The Marine component of Joint Forces Command, Marine Forces Command, coordinates force provider responsibilities for security cooperation missions. Through the utilization of force requirements data systems and a periodic synchronization conference, this component command addresses all force requirements involving Marine Corps equity, recommending sourcing solutions as appropriate. This is critical to building partner capacity because the current operational tempo makes sourcing deployed training or advisory requirements a continual challenge.

Recent Events and "Where we are" on Security Cooperation

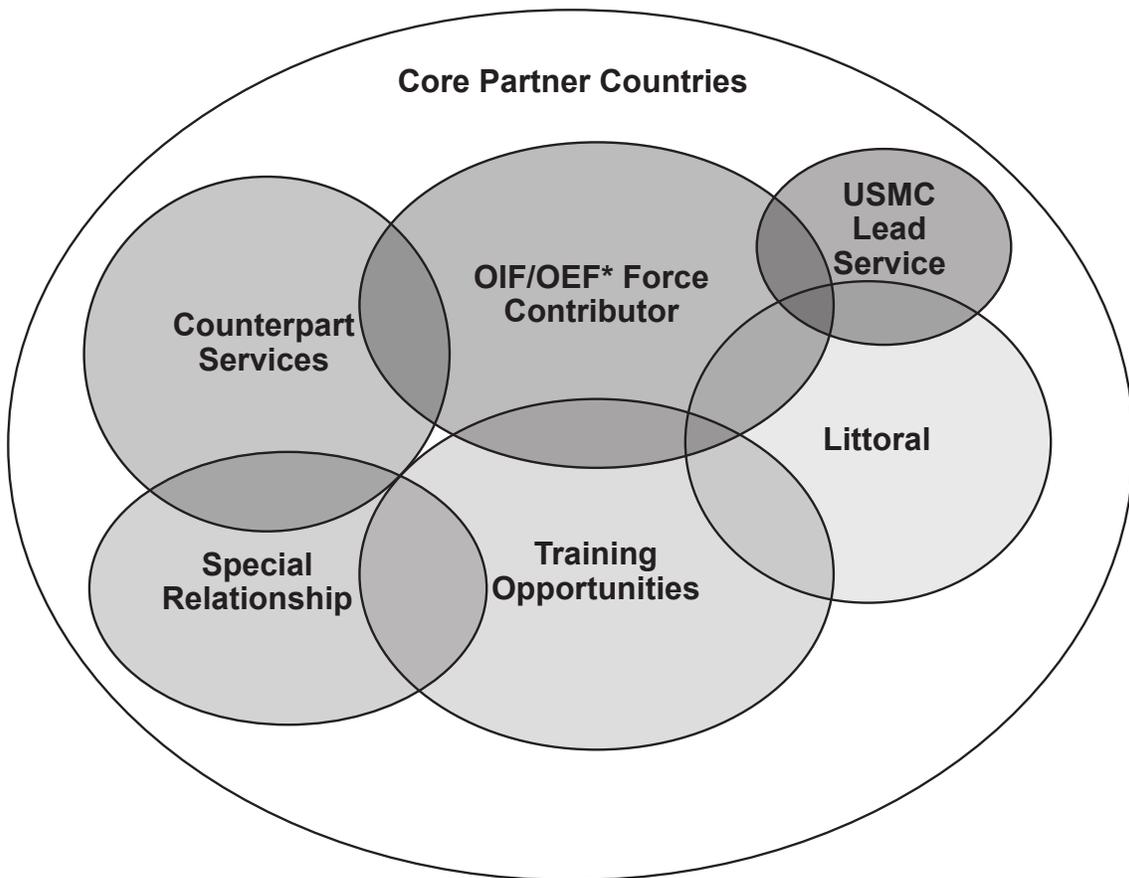
The Director, Strategy and Plans Division (PL) hosted the fourth annual USMC Security Cooperation (SC) conference at the Gray Research Center aboard Marine Corps Base (MCB) Quantico, VA, 11-13 March 2008. Keynote addresses at the conference were delivered by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Partnership Strategy, Dr. Jeb Nadaner, and Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, VADM Jeffrey Wieringa. This annual conference, which garners participation from each of the regional Marine Forces (MARFOR) component commanders' security cooperation planning staffs, as well as the three Marine Expeditionary Forces and various representatives from the services and other DoD agencies, is the cornerstone of the Marine Corps Security Cooperation planning cycle. Collecting the most significant

stakeholders together and candidly discussing pressing issues from the previous and forthcoming fiscal years has proven to be an invaluable exercise, and this year was no exception.

In addition to providing a general update on “where things stand” with regards to USMC SC issues, the conference this year served as an opportunity to generate an awareness of the increasingly central position security cooperation currently holds in U.S. security strategy. While the introduction of the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) will engender a number of significant changes to all facets of USMC SC, it also serves to demonstrate the collective mindset of our civilian leadership. The leadership of the Marine Corps believes this represents somewhat of a benchmark for SC policy. It fundamentally underpins the rationale behind the USMC Long War Concept (see below for amplification) and should serve as an impetus for the budgetary, personnel, and organizational changes that initiative entails.

Despite the changes, regional MARFORs will remain the focus for all USMC SC related activities. While the manner in which global SC operations will be planned and executed will be affected by the adoption of Theater Campaign Plans and Campaign Support Plans, regional MARFORs will continue to be the “primary arbiters” of Marine Corps SC operations, primarily in support of Combatant Commander objectives. Based on our relatively small size as a service and our inherently expeditionary nature, the Marine Corps typically seeks out tightly-focused and short duration security cooperation operations that capitalize on our unique character. The following chart illustrates the criteria we consider when apportioning forces and dedicating assets.

USMC Security Cooperation (SC) Orientation



* OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom)/OEF (Operation Enduring Freedom)

The USMC Long War Concept

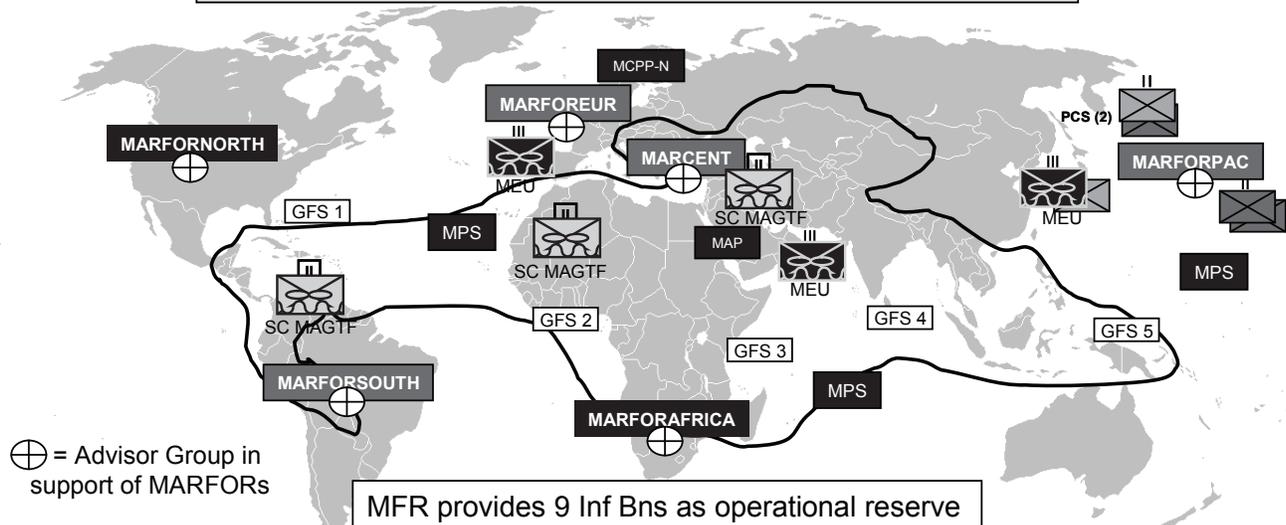
Given the general consensus that has evolved regarding the changing nature of the threat to America's security (namely the rise of non-state actors such as ideological extremists, ethnically-based militias, and transnational criminals) and the belief that these threats will present the most likely challenge to our national security interests for the foreseeable future, the Marine Corps has developed a new force employment concept.

Seeking to support the regional combatant commanders through the employment of a multi-capable Marine force tailored for regional engagement activities, the principle goal of the concept is to leverage partner nations' security forces while confronting the underlying conditions that foster instability. As an expeditionary force in readiness, the Marine Corps will always remain prepared to defeat our enemies through direct, kinetic operations; however, we likewise understand the strategic imperative to minimize, to the extent we can, the requirement for putting Marines in combat. Under the general rubric of Building Partner Capacity (BPC) and through the use of the full spectrum of security cooperation tools, the Marine Corps is embracing an operating concept that includes the establishment of a Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force (SC MAGTF) capability.

The development and employment of SC MAGTFs will capitalize on the overall USMC growth to 202,000 (202K) personnel and the subsequent force planning construct this structure increase will yield. At 202K, the Marine Corps will realize 27 active-duty infantry battalions, nine of which will remain forward-deployed, for a sustained 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio. In addition to SC MAGTFs organized for specific training and operations events, three Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU) will be continually

Persistent & Episodic Engagement

Creative force employment and increased capacity enables global sustained forward naval presence



Force Planning Construct:

- 9 Inf Bns forward (3 MEU/3 UDP/3 SC MAGTF)
- 18 Inf Bns conducting full spectrum training
- 27 Inf Bns Total (202K) operating on 1:2 dwell

Global Fleet Stations:

- Maritime security cooperation
- Operationalizes Naval Operations Concept
- Sea-based naval headquarters

deployed for episodic security cooperation operations and short-notice, first responder duties in the event of crises requiring direct action. Additionally, the Unit Deployment Program (UDP), which provides for the deployment of Marine forces from CONUS (Continental U.S.) locations to Okinawa, will provide forces to support a global force-laydown that most effectively supports our national interests.

While the MEU and UDP battalions will constitute an essential element of the Marine Corps overall BPC and SC portfolio, the SC MAGTF will be task-organized to provide a forward deployed presence for specific, discrete engagement opportunities. Organized for specific events, the SC MAGTF will consist of a Ground Combat Element (GCE), a Logistics Combat Element (LCE), and an Air Combat Element (ACE). For SC activities where the traditional MAGTF structure is unnecessary, the force will be tailored to meet those tasks particular to the mission, normally focusing on conducting foreign internal defense and training, advising, and assisting in developing military and security forces. While certain augmentees to the SC MAGTF that handle basic functions such as civil affairs planning and civil-military operations will likely be a staple for deployments, specialized elements can be included based on specific regional factors. For example, in rural areas where an agricultural lifestyle is predominant, a veterinary unit assigned from the U.S. Army can be included to provide training and education on current animal health practices.

Additional support to the SC MAGTF is envisioned by means of the recently established Marine Corps Training and Advising Group (MCTAG). Based in Ft. Story, VA, MCTAG is currently manned by a mix of officers and enlisted Marines who have been tasked with a wide variety of SC tasks. Principle among these, MCTAG will prove indispensable as the coordinator and facilitating agency for ensuring that the requisite advance planning is completed and that SC MAGTFs (and their supporting commands both on home station and under the regional MARFOR), as well as other SC units, are getting the training, education, and resources they need to best conduct training with our partner nations. Though final details have yet to be worked out, MCTAG may have an operational role as well. A MCTAG-led team has already participated in SC operations in Africa, advising and training peacekeeping forces under the ACOTA (African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance) program.

Though the full implementation of the Long War Concept and the SC MAGTF depends on a significant drawdown of USMC forces in the Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR), preparations are underway to roll-out a limited, proof-of-concept SC MAGTF during FY09.

Realizing that the future expansion of security cooperation operations will require a corresponding increase in the number and availability of those who facilitate it, PLU, Intelligence, and Marine Corps University (MCU) have initiated an effort to analyze and recommend changes to the global laydown of externally assigned officers in the Marine Corps. Externally assigned officers is an informal naming convention that includes Marine attachés (MARA), security assistance officers (SAO), personnel exchange program participants (PEP), officers attending foreign PME (Professional Military Education) schools, and liaison officers (LNO).

To varying degrees, each of these officers acts as a de facto security cooperation officer, representing the Marine Corps to a foreign audience on a host of disparate initiatives and programs. As the role of security cooperation becomes ever more central to national security, the unique placement and skills (language and cultural) of these officers has the potential to reap important dividends. The USMC Long War Concept and the programs imbedded therein warrant a detailed analysis on how we might better leverage our array of externally assigned officers in their role as security cooperation enablers.

Based on a formal query co-sponsored by PLU and Marine Corps Intelligence, each Regional Component Commander has provided comment on its current laydown of externally assigned officers, as well as recommendations on potential changes within its AOR. An informal working group is set to analyze these responses and draft a recommendation for Marine Corps leadership that offers multiple

courses of action for re-aligning and expanding these billets. Ultimately, the goal is to achieve consensus on a viable, long-term plan to maximize the effect these officers can have on USMC security cooperation efforts globally. The following chart was created to serve as a guide for assessing the value of each particular billet.

Table 1 Security Cooperation Officer Relative Value Matrix						
	Language	Culture	Access	Availability	Awareness	Overall
SAO	3	5	5	5	5	5
LNO	5	5	4	4	4	4
MARA	4	5	4	4	5	5
PEP	5	3	2	2	3	3
PME	5	3	2	1	3	2

Notes:

- *Estimated value for each category (5 being the highest) is subjective and situation dependent.*
- *Culture refers not just to the country but to the military culture within the armed forces, particularly at the service headquarters level.*
- *Awareness refers to the officer's presumed familiarity with the field of security cooperation, based on billet specific training.*
- *This matrix applies only to commissioned officer positions. The utility of externally assigned Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) requires a case-by-case analysis and does not lend itself to generalization; i.e. a Disbursing Accounting Officer (DAO) SSgt in Ghana may be more useful than an Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) GySgt in Berlin.*

Summary

The security cooperation landscape is undeniably changing. Partnership programs and policies that were once viewed simply as “additional” or “ancillary” tasks by combat-oriented Marine commanders have now evolved into core missions that are given equal resources and attention. Marine forces in every geographic region have a deep reservoir of first-hand experience on which to rely when executing security cooperation operations. Inside the Beltway and within the National Capitol Region, the Marine Corps security cooperation community clearly understands the Commandant’s intent for the Long War and is working closely with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and Joint Staff to ensure that the guidance and support passed on to the fleet conforms to and enhances the vision of our military and civilian leadership. Though the past several years have unquestionably demonstrated the difficulty of predicting what the future holds for deploying units, the importance of security cooperation and the degree to which it can contribute to meeting our national security objectives are, by now, self evident.

About the Authors

LtCol J.P. Hesford is the Security Cooperation Head at Headquarters Marine Corps, Plans, Policies, and Operations, Strategy and Plans Division.

Mr. Paul Askins is the Director of International Programs at the USMC Security Cooperation Training and Education Center, Training and Education Command, in Quantico, VA.