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Department of War Strategic Formative Evaluation
Security Cooperation Organizations in the U.S. Central Command
and Framework for Systemic Support
Public Summary

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Evaluation Purpose and Research Questions

Title 10, U.S.C., section 383, requires the U.S. Department of War (DoW) to maintain a monitoring and evaluation program to make assessments, monitor the implementation of programs and activities, evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of programs, identify lessons learned, and incorporate those lessons into future activities. In furtherance of this requirement, the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) was tasked by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Security Cooperation (ODASW(SC)) to develop a formative evaluation to understand how the Security Cooperation (SC) enterprise can better support Security Cooperation Organizations (SCOs)/Military Groups (MILGRPs). This effort involved two main reports:

1. Evaluation of Systemic Support to Security Cooperation Organizations (SCOs)

Frameworks: This report developed a framework for formative SCO/MILGRP evaluations intended to be replicable across Combatant Commands (CCMDs) with a physical area of responsibility (AOR).

2. CENTCOM Security Cooperation Organizations:

This report applied a framework for systemic support to SCOs/MILGRPs within the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) AOR.

The evaluation addressed the following questions:

- What are the key tasks and responsibilities of SCOs/MILGRPs?
- What variables affect SCOs'/MILGRPs' ability to complete these tasks effectively?
- How can the SC enterprise better support SCOs/MILGRPs, considering these variables?
- What are the specific challenges and opportunities for SCOs/MILGRPs in the USCENTCOM AOR?

Research Approach

IDA employed a two-phased approach:

- **Phase 1: Framework Development:** A literature review of DoW issuances to identify SCO/MILGRP duties, categorized into six areas and five variables affecting task performance.
- **Phase 2: USCENTCOM Research:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with SCO/MILGRP personnel. Interviews were also conducted in USCENTCOM along with site visits to Egypt, Jordan, Tajikistan, and the United Arab Emirates. Interviews were also conducted at USCENTCOM headquarters and with the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) desk officers for this AOR. A data repository, the Security Cooperation Organization

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Analysis Tool, was used for thematic analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed to create country profiles and identify trends.

Key Points on Framework

IDA describes its framework as follows:

- **Systematic Approach:** The framework provides a structured and repeatable methodology for assessing SCO/MILGRP effectiveness across different CCMDs and over time.
- **Comprehensive Coverage:** The framework considers both internal (DoW-influenced) and external (partner nation-related) variables.
- **Theory-Driven Analysis:** The framework's reliance on explicit theories allows for a more rigorous and evidence-based evaluation, facilitating the identification of causal relationships and potential intervention points.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** The framework encourages the integration of both qualitative (interview data) and quantitative (program data) sources, leading to richer and more nuanced findings.

The framework also exhibits a particular limitation. The framework, along with its findings and recommendations, do not address the current training program that seeks to professionalize SCOs/MILGRPs and its initial impact on SCO/MILGRP performance.

Findings and Recommendations: Application of Framework to USCENTCOM

- **Continued Need for Defense Institution Building Training:** Insufficient training prepares SCO/MILGRP personnel to understand the defense institutional requirements needed for sustainable partner capability.
 - **Recommendation:** Incorporate force development and capability development concepts into Defense Security Cooperation University provided SCO/MILGRP training.
- **Inconsistent Alignment of SCO/MILGRP Work with Source of Funding for a Staff Position:** The demands placed on SCOs/MILGRPs, particularly in smaller or challenging locations, are not consistently aligned with training and staffing levels.
 - **Recommendation:** ODASW(SC), in partnership with the Department of State (DOS), could consider seeking a legislative proposal for a new authority to allow all SCO/MILGRP work to be funded by a common source of funding. This will help avoid the complexity of needing to distinguish whether certain SCO/MILGRP work is aligned with the appropriate source of funding,

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- **SCO/MILGRP Staff Lack Adequate Institutional Memory:** SCO/MILGRP institutional memory can be a challenge as assigned military officers rotate out every two to three years.
 - **Recommendation:** An in-depth study on the impact of a given rotation length in country could inform recruitment and selection, as well as viable objectives of SC activities.
- **SCOs/MILGRPs Lack Adequate Support to Identify Innovative, Non-traditional Solutions for Partner Requirements:** Partner requests regarding commercial and emerging technologies are occurring at a greater rate than the DoW SC enterprise is capable of addressing at scale.
 - **Recommendation:** ODASW(SC), in partnership with DSCA, can consider collaborating with organizations like the Defense Innovation Unit to develop processes and align resources toward helping address increased partner demand for innovative solutions.
- **Coordination Challenges and IT System Incompatibilities:** SCOs/MILGRPs face challenges coordinating support services and encounter administrative and security protocol issues with DoW IT systems that don't align with SCO/MILGRP operations on DOS systems.
 - **Recommendation:** Establish a single technology communication platform for the SC enterprise.
- **Data Entry Burdens and AM&E Demands:** Demands for data entry into SC management tools (Security Cooperation Information Portal and Socium) and for conducting AM&E exceed SCO/MILGRP capabilities due to inadequate guidance, training, experience, and staffing.
 - **Recommendation:** Streamline data entry requirements and provide clearer guidance and enhanced training on AM&E, considering the short duration of some SCO/MILGRP assignments.
- **Limited Awareness of Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AM&E) Requirements:** At the time of this study, USCENTCOM SCOs/MILGRPs demonstrated limited awareness or clarity regarding responsibility for AM&E of SC efforts.
 - **Recommendation:** ODASW(SC) and DSCA should continue to communicate and reinforce AM&E requirements through outreach, training, and working groups.

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