U.S. Department *of* Defense

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Learning and Evaluation Agenda

for Partnerships Framework

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PURPOSE

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, the Department of Defense (DoD) is transitioning from an annual strategic evaluation plan to a comprehensive learning agenda framework. The Learning and Evaluation Agenda for Partnerships (LEAP) framework aligns with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards and best practices for evidence-based policymaking. The LEAP framework identifies the most urgent knowledge gaps in the security cooperation (SC) community and then plans and prioritizes evidence-building activities to help fill these gaps.

The LEAP framework builds on existing DoD processes and guidance, streamlining SC learning and evidence building under a common framework to increase coordination, collaboration, and deconfliction across the SC community. Robust SC evidence will inform key decisions to improve SC practice, impact, and return on investment, factoring into employment of DoD resources at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.

The following outlines the LEAP framework and learning questions.

BACKGROUND

DoD SC partnerships are key to achieving 2022 National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense Strategy (NDS) objectives. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2017 initiated a number of SC reforms, including a program of Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AM&E), with the intention of improving the practice and impact of DoD's SC activities. Building on those reforms, and in support of OMB guidance on evidence-based policymaking, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Partnerships (ODASD(GP)) established a five-year LEAP framework.[1]

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[1] Foundational guidance and mandates for LEAP include, but are not limited to: 2019 Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act; FY2017 and subsequent NDAAs; 2022 NDS; OMB Circular No. A-11, Part 6: Federal Performance Framework; OMB Memorandum 21-27: Evidence-Based Policymaking; DoD Instruction 5132.14: AM&E Policy for the SC Enterprise

LEARNING QUESTIONS

The learning questions listed below—formulated from existing DoD guidance and in consultation with key DoD and other national security stakeholders—support decision-making on leadership priorities related to strategy and policy formulation, SC planning, improving DoD capacity, as well as understanding "what works." For example, the answers to these learning questions could assist in the development of: updated guidance for NDS implementation, updated DoD Directives and Instructions, development of theater strategic plans for SC, resource allocation of SC activities, and revisions to curriculum and approaches to develop the SC workforce.

DETERRENCE

How does SC contribute to integrated deterrence approaches tailored to specific adversaries and scenarios, and help build enduring advantages with allies and partners?
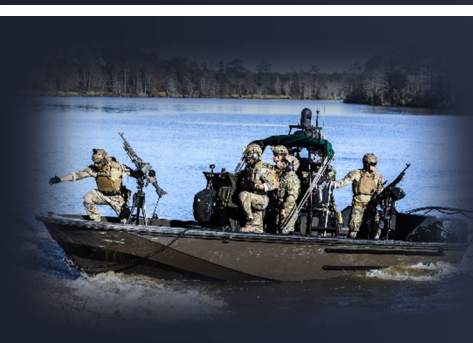
CAMPAIGNING

What approaches to active campaigning and burden sharing enable improved access and influence with partners for effective deterrence?

CAPACITY BUILDING

How effective are defense capacity building programs at expanding and enabling a network of like-minded, capable, and interoperable allies and partners to perform desired roles and achieve regional security objectives?

CRISIS RESPONSE PREPAREDNESS

How is SC enabling preparedness for crisis and disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and emerging trans-boundary challenges?

PARTNER CENTRIC

To what extent does partner nation political will, absorptive capacity, and institutional analysis influence SC strategy, planning, and resource decisions?

LEVERAGING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

What approaches work best to leverage ICB in support of the NDS and other national security objectives, including military effectiveness, rule of law, anti-corruption, and human rights?

RESOURCING AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

What approaches work best to plan, execute, and resource multi-year SC strategies, bridge gaps, and deliver a professional, diversified, and rightsized SC workforce?

METHODS AND EVIDENCE

What approaches work best to improve SC AM&E methods, access and use of data, and to build a sufficient evidence base to inform SC decision-making?

The above learning questions provide a structure to streamline and coordinate DoD evidence-building activities that will facilitate multi-year planning and resourcing over the next five years. Evidence-building activities include evaluations, research, assessments, performance monitoring, table-top exercises, and various forms of stakeholder workshops. The LEAP products developed through these evidence-building activities, such as action memos seeking senior leader decisions and evaluation reports, will feed back into the living LEAP framework and inform DoD decision-making.

LEAP FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC GUIDANCE

2022 National Security Strategy

2022 National Defense Strategy

Leadership Priorities

- Broad long-term (>5 years) enduring challenges for leadership
- "What keeps you up at night?"
- Informed by DoD priorities and defense objectives

Learning Questions

- Short-term (<5 years) scoped questions
- Reflects evidence-building needs to inform key DoD decisions
- Input from SC community, refreshed annually

Evidence-Building Activities

- Annual evaluation plan and execution
- Research, analysis, assessments, and monitoring
- Table-top exercises (TTX), stakeholder workshops

LEAP Products

- Internal action memos & evaluation reports
- TTX & stakeholder engagement reports
- Research papers, curriculum updates
- Public engagements

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