Competing Through C-IED Fusion in the Pacific: Developing Partners and Allies With Functional Area SFA

By Mr. Jeffrey S. King

Per its mission and end state, the Asia Pacific Counter Improvised Explosive Device Fusion Center (APCFC) actively engages and assists partners and allies in developing interoperability and capabilities to minimize and counter impacts from current and emerging improvised threats.

Beyond developing partner nation capability and capacity through security force assistance (SFA), APCFC completes the "security cooperation triad" by establishing, maintaining, and expanding numerous quality partner nation relationships and enabling partner nation access. APCFC influence extends across and outside the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) area of responsibility (AOR).

As the INDOPACOM lead for enhancing partner nation counter improvised explosive device (C-IED) capacity, APCFC regularly conducts engagements with partners and allies through joint and five-eye country C-IED capacity (building a synchronized matrix across the AOR, and synchronizes partner nation engagement with the National Guard State Partnership Program. It also conducts expert academic exchanges with partners and allied nations and participates in regional security cooperation events.

APCFC partner nation engagement opens doors for broader U.S. Army Pacific Command engagement with 17 countries, with more than 25 percent of these engagements being joint and one-third of them interorganizational or multilateral.

Expanding beyond the Indo/Asian-Pacific, APCFC develops and maintains a standard training support package for partners and allies, based in part on best practices from global partners. Prime partners include the other Army service component commands, the C-IED Center of Excellence, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Specific SFA Tasks

Per Joint Publication (JP) 3-20, *Security Cooperation*,[1] SFA activities are conducted to organize, train, equip, rebuild/build, and advise foreign security forces from the ministerial/department to tactical levels. The Army considers "assist" to be part of the "advise and assist" activity. The APCFC directly supports several organize, train, equip, rebuild/build, and advise tasks, with prominent support for training foreign security forces.

APCFC provides counter improvised threats training, (training to counter improvised explosive devices [IEDs] and those who emplace, create, fund and support them through networks) to partner nation forces to directly prepare them to counter current and emerging threats with a standard training support package for partners and allies, supporting 14 specific exercises in 2017. This training integrated regional engagements and exercises that replicated the threat networks of the operational environment. Some training was extended to "assist" activities that help prepare for peacekeeping operations in support of stability. Training also included means of exploitation (such as fingerprint recovery and matching) to identify and address left-of-boom threats. APCFC can potentially coordinate with the Defense Forensic Science Center, Forest Park, Georgia, to integrate forensic exploitation laboratory analysis capabilities. The center advises at the operational level and extends efforts to build institutional capacity, collaborating with partners to develop institutionalized and enduring C-IED programs. The center internally supports its institutional capacity building through training C-IED master trainers, tailoring the curriculum to current and anticipated regional IED threats, fabricating training aids to match regional IEDs, and training opposing forces for exercises.

The APCFC irregular warfare IED trend analysis capability is used by the United States and partner nation military and civilian organizations to understand IED trends and activity in the AOR. APCFC collaborates with U.S. and partner nation militaries to—

- Identify threat actors and understand their latest tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Support targeting efforts.
- Enhance force protection.
- Improve regional security activities.

Support to Joint and Whole-of-Government Competition

Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-19, *Competition Continuum*,[2] calls for the Department of Defense to compete, in conjunction with all elements of national power for a whole-of-government effort, against the major U.S. adversaries for positions of advantage. APCFC recognizes the importance of relationships to stability and preparedness and promotes a whole-of-government unity-of-effort approach.

IED training aids

APCFC has many relationships and partnerships with other government agencies and joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) partners, and those entities share information and synchronize efforts to counter emerging improvised threats across the region. These relationships and actions serve as an example of such a whole-of-government competitive approach that results in greater regional security and stability.

APCFC maintains partnerships with INDOPACOM service component commands, other Army organizations, the intergovernmental domain (local, state, and federal), nonprofit and commercial organizations, and multinational partners (five-eye countries, the Association of Southeast Asia Nations, and other host nations) across the APCFC functional areas. In addition to the National Guard State Partnership Program, the APCFC partners with other U.S. military services, the National Ground Intelligence Agency, and even more diverse partner organizations such as the United Nations Peacekeeping Organization.

The APCFC works with other geographic and functional combatant commands to standardize training and support rotational and predeployment C-IED training requirements. It also collaborates with JIMM organizations on identity intelligence and real-world trends. Additionally, it integrates with multinational forces in the AOR to share exploitation tactics, techniques, and procedures in exercises and exchanges.

The APCFC participates in and leads several significant collaboration forums made up of diverse partners across many functional areas. Forum functional areas extend to—

- C-IED and intelligence exchange.
- C-IED and exploitation synchronization.
- Identity activities (processing intelligence to capture and link identities to support law enforcement and military operational decision making).
- INDOPACOM.
- Five-eye countries.
- Global threat integration and mitigation programs.
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- Asia-Pacific All-Partners Access Network (the unclassified information-sharing service for the Department of Defense).
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
- C-IED Center of Excellence.

The APCFC also conducts C-IED interoperability reviews (gap assessments) with partners and allies, and it contributes to multinational peacekeeping and stability exercises and operations. Through improvised threat engagements and outreach with JIIM partners, the APCFC demonstrates assured U.S. commitment to promoting security cooperation, interoperability, and regional stability.

The Way Ahead

APCFC inherently performs SFA and the other security cooperation activities and has multifunctional area influence across the whole-of-government and JIIM environments. APCFC is among the prime contributors to SFA and other security cooperation activities as well as related irregular warfare, security, and stability in the INDOPACOM AOR and throughout the world. APCFC activities also serve as good examples of institutional capacity building and the use of lessons learned to improve internal and external institutional capacity. It would also behoove the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance; similar global and regional SFA organizations; and other security cooperation, irregular warfare, and stability units and organizations as well as the counter-explosive hazard and intelligence functional areas to process and disseminate associated APCFC best practices and lessons learned. Synergizing APCFC best practices and lessons learned across the region would improve JIIM SFA and related contributions and have positive effects, improve INDOPACOM AOR security and stability, and allow the benefits to be applied to other functional areas.

These APCFC best practices and lessons learned can also be applied globally. All geographical and functional combatant commands, global JIIM partners, SFA organizations, broader security cooperation-related practitioners, and counter-explosives hazards and intelligence functional areas can leverage and apply the lessons learned to other regions as well as to globally integrated operations, exercises and wargames.

Endnotes:

[1]JP 3-20, *Security Cooperation*, 23 May 2017.

[2]JDN 1-19, *Competition Continuum*, 3 June 2019.

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