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Foreign Personnel Exchange Programs
A Supporting Effort in Building Partnership Capacity

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Executive Summary

Title: Foreign Personnel Exchange Programs: A Supporting Effort in Building Partnership Capacity

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Thesis: Current United States Marine Corps (USMC) foreign personnel exchange programs are limited in scope and can be enhanced significantly to better support Building Partnership Capacity by strengthening relationships, increasing interoperability, improving security cooperation, and augmenting regional expertise.

Discussion: Personnel exchange programs are military to military engagement activities that center on the exchange of officers and senior enlisted members between the Marine Corps and 15 foreign military services. The Marine Corps Foreign Personnel Exchange Program is the primary exchange program and the other is the Professional Military Education exchange. A third program, a Short Term Exchange Program, is currently in the concept phase. This study explores the current exchange programs and their efficacy for the Marine Corps in Building Partnership Capacity. It also investigates the short term concept and its applicability to the Marine Corps.

Conclusion: Current exchange programs are a viable supporting effort in Building Partnership Capacity but can be improved. The primary means of improvement is the institution of a short term program that will allow for improved support of USMC efforts in the Long War.

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List of Acronyms

BPC	Building Partnership Capacity
CAOCL	Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning
CHF	Commando Helicopter Force
CMRS	Career Marine Regional Studies
DOD	Department Of Defense
FAO	Foreign Area Officer
GCC	Geographic Combatant Commander
HQMC	Headquarters Marine Corps
IAOP	International Affairs Officer Program
IMET	International Military Education and Training
MARADMIN	Marine Administrative message
MCCLL	Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned
MCFPEP	Marine Corps Foreign Personnel Exchange Program
MCTAG	Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group
MOA	Memorandum Of Agreement
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
PALEX	Pacific Armies Look Exchange
PLU	International Issues Branch (Office code, Plans Unified commands)
PME	Professional Military Education
PP&O	Plans, Policies, and Operations
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RAO	Regional Affairs Officer
SC MAGTF	Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force
STEP	Short Term Exchange Program
TAD	Temporary Additional Duty
TTPs	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

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INTRODUCTION

Personnel exchanges between the United States (U.S.) and foreign militaries are a military engagement activity between two nations for the mutual benefit of both countries. Exchanges are a type of security cooperation activity that "demonstrate U.S. commitment, lend credibility to its alliances, enhance regional stability, provide a crisis response capability, and build capacities of potential coalition partners while promoting U.S. influence and access."[1] Exchange programs foster international relationships and expertise as well as support regional and service security cooperation plans. Current United States Marine Corps (USMC) foreign personnel exchange programs are limited in scope and can be enhanced significantly to support Building Partnership Capacity by strengthening relationships, increasing interoperability, improving security cooperation, and augmenting regional expertise.

> Arguably the most important military component in the War on Terror is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable and empower our partners to defend and govern themselves.[2]
> **Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates**

Personnel exchange programs were instituted during World War II to help standardize operational doctrine between allied forces. The USMC continues to participate in a number of exchange programs today. The primary foreign exchange programs are the Marine Corps Foreign Personnel Exchange Program (MCFPEP) and the Professional Military Education (PME) exchanges. A third type of exchange, a Short Term Exchange Program (STEP) is currently being concept tested by the USMC.

This paper will primarily cover MCFPEP and STEP and will briefly address the PME exchanges. The paper will begin by discussing the common benefits to foreign exchange programs followed by a discussion and analysis of each program. Two additional subjects that will be covered are regional expertise and the Long War concept. These will be used to illustrate

the widespread utility of exchange programs. The paper will conclude with a number of

recommendations that will capitalize on the efficiency of exchange programs.

> In the security environment of uncertainty the United States faces, long-term efforts to build and
> maintain a foundational base of security partners through exercises, military education, and
> exchanges are wise investments to hedge against future security challenges.[3]
>
> **Colonel Gregory J. Dyekman USA**

EXCHANGE PROGRAM BENEFITS

Building Partnership Capacity (BPC) is "targeted efforts to improve the collective

capabilities and performance of the Department of Defense and its partners."[4] Relationships

between the USMC and foreign service partners facilitate all engagement activities that allow for

BPC. Interoperability is "the ability to operate in synergy in the execution of assigned tasks" and

allows the USMC to effectively act in coalition operations.[5] Security cooperation initiatives are a

primary means of facilitating BPC with foreign partners and are defined as "interactions with

foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security

interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational

operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation."[6]

Security cooperation is an important component in U.S. national security strategy to combat the

Global War on Terror and "is a key element of global and theater shaping operations."[7]

Relationships

Exchange programs develop group and individual relationships. Group relationships are

fostered between foreign services and the USMC at the service level and between units that host

exchanges. Individual relationships are also developed allowing for future contact and

interaction throughout the careers of exchange personnel. The nature of the program having

exchange personnel act as members of another armed service, or immersing them in a military

school, instills an understanding of the other nations' military and culture while developing that

same level of understanding in their counterpart in the United States. This understanding

developed by exchange personnel primarily takes place at the individual and tactical level but

can be leveraged over time at the operational and strategic level. This is accomplished by

exchange personnel facilitating interoperability and assisting with achieving the aims of security

cooperation: promoting U.S. interests, developing capabilities and capacity, and providing

access.

Interoperability

> With a mutual understanding and respect of other partner services capabilities and the ability to be
> interoperable and effectively integrate operations to accomplish an overall campaign and/or US
> Government objective(s), the Armed Forces of the United States continue to build on the tradition
> of joint victory in war that began with the Revolutionary War.[8]   **Joint Pub 1**

In recent years, the ability to work well with our coalition partners has been an important

attribute to successful operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Exchange personnel are key enablers

in coalition operations due to their inherent knowledge of both services that facilitates

integration. During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 1 the United Kingdom (UK) land forces

were joined to I Marine Expeditionary Force. The Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) was a

supporting command to this effort and has MCFPEP positions with two of its three operational

squadrons. Lieutenant Commander Jim Newton DFC Royal Navy was the Training Officer

during OIF 1 of 847 Naval Air Squadron which has an AH-1W pilot on exchange. He is

currently the Operations Officer of CHF and believes that the exchange "brought a number of

essential qualities and capabilities, without which, our planning, training, execution and the

resulting operational successes would have been less than assured." He also stated "I am certain

that without such expertise [the exchange] our ability to maintain our Operation effectiveness

and momentum on the battlefield would have been significantly reduced."[9]

Promoting U.S. Interests

MCFPEP can be utilized to promote U.S. interests abroad by establishing new billets and

utilizing existing billets. Establishing a MCFPEP position with another county entails a detailed

process involving the Department of State, applicable component commanders, and multiple

staff elements of USMC. New billets are established when an U.S. interest can be furthered by

having an exchange with that service. For example, the two Colombian exchanges were

developed in 2004 in response to a broadening of U.S. interests from purely anti-drug to a

combined effort against drugs and terrorist groups.[10] Existing exchanges promote U.S. interests

by the nature of the program, especially when they are used in a combined effort with other

engagement activities as described below:

> U.S. military training activities with Chile help advance U.S. interests in regional stability,
> interoperability with U.S. forces, and the maintenance and protection of basic democratic values
> and human rights. As the Chilean armed forces have become more modern and professional, they
> have expanded their participation in U.S.-advocated activities such as international peacekeeping,
> exemplified by their participation in both the Multinational Interim Force and subsequent UN
> Mission (MINUSTAH) in Haiti, the latter routinely seeing Chilean participation of over 500
> troops.[11] - **Foreign Military Training: Joint Report to Congress, Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007**

Developing Capabilities and Capacity

Each exchange position gives a partner nation exposure to Marine Corps doctrine and

current tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). The USMC is seen as a premier fighting

organization by other services around the globe. Exchange positions are often requested by other

services to assist in developing nascent capabilities and/or increase overall capacity. The

Australian Army has undergone a force transformation focusing on areas the USMC has

particular interest and expertise in to include amphibious operations.[12] Since 1996, the USMC

and the Australian Army have increased the number of exchange positions from two to nine.[13]

An example of assistance in a developing capability is a recently established exchange of

helicopter pilots. The Australian Army did not have an attack helicopter capability until buying

the Eurocopter Tiger in 2001. As the Australians established their program they requested an

exchange position that would help develop their doctrine for this new capability. A USMC

Weapons and Tactics Instructor is facilitating this while concurrently an experienced Australian

pilot has joined a USMC light attack helicopter squadron.

Providing Access

Providing access is a desired result of security cooperation relating to U.S. and coalition

access to an area during times of peace or conflict. This access is essential to maintaining a

forward global presence with exercises and/or basing and to support contingency operations

when needed. Access can be at many different levels from logistical nodes such as airports and

ports, to supply routes through a country.[14] Exchange programs do not necessarily support

providing access directly, but when combined with other USMC security cooperation efforts and

integrated into the Geographic Combatant Commander's (GCC) overall engagement plan can

help influence gaining and maintaining access. An example of providing access is Pakistan's

support to Operation Enduring Freedom with access to ports, airfields, and supply routes.

Although there are no current exchanges with Pakistan, there is a Pakistani officer now attending

USMC Command and Staff College.

> Much time and effort is expended in learning about the enemy; a similar effort is required to
> understand the doctrine, capabilities, strategic goals, culture, religion, customs, history, and values
> of each partner.[15]   **Joint Pub 3-16 Multinational Operations**

MCFPEP

Background

MCFPEP is the primary exchange program in the Marine Corps. It is a relatively small

program that currently encompasses 36 officer and senior enlisted exchanges with thirteen

foreign militaries as depicted in Figure 1 and detailed in Table 1. The program is designed as a

reciprocal trade of service members of similar rank, qualification, skills, and training.   Exchange

personnel are under the operational control of the foreign service. The purpose of MCFPEP is to:

> encourage the mutual confidence, understanding, and respect necessary to strengthen the
> relationship existing between the Marine Corps and foreign military services. Experience,
> professional knowledge, and doctrine shared to the maximum extent permissible will foster a
> mutual appreciation of the policies and doctrine of each service.[16]

The intent behind the program is for exchange personnel to function as a regular element of their

host service in all respects (with some exception usually due to disclosure issues). Each

exchange requires a bilateral Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that governs the particulars of

any exchanges between respective countries.[17]

Figure 1: Geographic Laydown of Current Billets
(Created by author, modified from http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c3/BlankMap-World.png)

COUNTRY	BILLET	U.S. UNIT
MARINE FORCES NORTH (NORTHERN COMMAND)		
Canada	F-18 Pilot	MAG-31
Canada	KC-130 Pilot	MAG-14
MARINE FORCES SOUTH (SOUTHERN COMMAND)		
Argentina	Amphibious Staff Officer (O-4)	10th Marines
Brazil	Assistant Operations Officer (O-4)	2d MarDiv
Chile	Operations Staff Officer (O-4)	SOI East
Chile	Infantry Instructor (E-7)	SOI East
Colombia	TBD	TBD
Colombia	TBD	TBD
Peru	Amphibious Staff Officer (O-4)	II MEF SOTG
MARINE FORCES EUROPE (EUROPEAN COMMAND)		
France	Operations Staff Officer (O-4)	2d MarDiv
Italy	AV-8 Pilot	MAG-14
Netherlands	Amphibious Staff Officer (O-3)	6th Marines
Netherlands	Infantry Unit Leader (E-7)	II MEF SOTG
Norway	Logistics Staff Officer (O-4)	II MEF
Spain	AV-8 Pilot (O-3)	MAG-13
United Kingdom	Anti-Air Warfare Control Officer (O-3)	MAWTS-1
United Kingdom	AV-8 Pilot (RAF) (O-3)	MAG-13
United Kingdom	AV-8 Pilot (RN) (O-3)	MAG-14
United Kingdom	F-18 Pilot (GR4 Tornado)(O-3)	MAG-11
United Kingdom	MV-22/CH-46 Pilot (Sea King Mk4) (O-3)	MAG-26
United Kingdom	AH-1W Pilot (Lynx Mk7) (O-3)	MAG-39
United Kingdom	Commando Company Officer (O-3)	2nd Marines
United Kingdom	Amphibious Staff Officer (O-5)	MCWL
United Kingdom	Physical Training Instructor (E-7)	OCS
United Kingdom	Marksmanship Instructor (E-7)	Weapons Training Bn
United Kingdom	Mountain/Arctic Warfare Instructor (E-7)	MCMWTC
United Kingdom	Force Fires Officer	I MEF
MARINE FORCES PACIFIC (PACIFIC COMMAND)		
Australia	F-18 Pilot (O-3/4)	MAG-31
Australia	AH-1W Pilot (Eurocopter Tiger) (O-3)	MAG-39
Australia	Aircraft Maintenance Officer (F-18) (O-3/4)	MAG-11
Australia	ATC Officer (O-3/4)	MACG-38
Australia	LAV Instructor (E-7/WO)	1st LAR
Australia	EW/SigInt Officer (O-3/4)	3rd Radio Bn
Australia	Staff Officer (O-4)	MCWL
Australia	Staff Officer (O-4)	MARFORPAC
Australia	Armor (E-7/WO)	1st Tank Bn

Table 1 Current USMC PEP Billets (created by author, modified from MCO 5700.4E)

The International Issues Branch (PLU) of Plans, Policies, and Operations (PP&O) of Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) is the program manager of MCFPEP as designated in Marine Corps Order 5700.4E. Every exchange position is assigned a billet sponsor within HQMC based on the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) of the exchange. The billet sponsor is the advocate for the billet and coordinates all matters regarding the conduct of the exchange with other elements in HQMC, host units, and exchange personnel. New exchange programs or positions can be created at any time subject to the detailed process contained in the MCFPEP order. Marine activities can submit a proposal for establishing a new billet or program to PLU who then consults with the Department of State and Marine Component Commander for suitability. A billet sponsor will then analyze the proposal with PLU and the proposed host country. If both the Marine Corps and the foreign service agree to the exchange, a MOA is then drafted and routed through the appropriate approval chain.

For non-English speaking countries, exchange personnel must either be currently proficient to a minimum level of 2 in the Defense Language Proficiency Test or have scored better than a 100 on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery to allow for subsequent language training prior to assuming exchange duties. USMC personnel usually fill existing billets in foreign services but are sometimes given unique billets based on their respective background. USMC personnel interested in the program should discuss the program with their career monitor and the applicable sponsor to find out the details of a particular billet and the timeline associated with the next opening. An Administrative Action form is submitted through the chain of command and a selective process by the billet sponsor and the appropriate monitor occurs. After acceptance to an exchange billet an additional two year service commitment is incurred.

Foreign personnel are assigned to existing Tables of Organization line numbers and should not fill billets that are specifically created for them. They are expected to already be trained in their military specialty and are prohibited from holding a command billet. Foreign personnel are usually of equivalent rank but there are allowances for a lower or higher grade that can be made due to various differenced in promotion timelines between services.

Cost Analysis

MCFPEP has proven its utility by building relationships, increasing interoperability, and furthering security cooperation goals. A significant additional attribute is the fiscal efficiency of the program. The budget specifically required for the program is used to fund Temporary Additional Duty (TAD) requirements to cover any training (language) or briefs required prior to assuming the billet and TAD funds required to travel once established on the billet for USMC specified activities (i.e. annual flight physicals). The program budget is relatively low ($68,000 for FY 07/approximately $2000 per exchange) for a security cooperation initiative that provides significant benefit for both the U.S. and exchange nations.[18] In contrast, a single Colombian officer attended USMC Command and Staff College from 2005 to 2006 at a cost to the Department of Defense of $57,331 under the Regional Defense Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program.[19] There are other costs associated with MCFPEP billets due to the overseas nature of the billet including increased cost to fund an overseas move and also to pay overseas allowances, both of which are higher for most overseas locations.

MCFPEP LIMITATIONS AND SHORTFALLS

A version of MCFPEP has existed for over 50 years with at least 5 participants achieving the rank of general officer including former Commandant, General Paul. X. Kelley USMC.[20] The program has been a success for the Marine Corps and partner foreign services, but there are

a number limitations and shortfalls that exist. These include: limited country participation, minimal program feedback, diplomatic deployment issues, recruitment and selection, unfilled billets, and career progression.

Exchange Country Analysis

Currently only 12 of the exchange positions are with non-English speaking countries. Approximately two thirds of the exchanges are with three English speaking countries: the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada. Long historical ties and a common language make exchanges with these countries understandable due to the number of allied operations that each has participated in with the United States over the years. When compared by GCC, European Command has the highest number of exchange countries as well as the largest percentage of total positions with all exchanges conducted with longtime NATO allies. Northern Command and Pacific Command only have exchanges with Canada and Australia respectively. Both Central and Africa Command have no established exchanges at this time. Southern Command has a number of countries representing most South American militaries that have a Marine Corps or Naval Infantry. With the exception of Southern Command, all exchange programs are with long time allies from well developed countries. Three possible reasons for this are differences in quality of life, force protection difficulties, and a reluctance to fill USMC positions with exchange personnel from less developed militaries.

Feedback

MCFPEP has three shortfalls concerning feedback on the program: incorporation of lessons learned, foreign personnel input, and lack of a consolidated annual report. USMC exchange personnel are tasked with completing a mid-tour and end-of-tour report that contains a comprehensive review of the exchange to include differences in doctrine, operating procedures,

and concepts followed by any recommendations. The report is routed through the billet sponsor, administrative support unit, and program manager but is not viewed further unless specific action is taken by one of the staff elements or the individual. The reports are filed at PLU and referenced when conducting annual reviews of the program primarily to evaluate the validity of a particular exchange but not necessarily to evaluate the program as a whole. There is no readily accessible archive of lessons learned for those outside of PLU to reference.[21]

Foreign personnel are not required to submit reports to the USMC on the completion of their exchange tours. Foreign personnel also participate in is the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. It is a State Department funded program with similar Security Cooperation goals to MCFPEP. IMET funds foreign military personnel to attend various U.S. military PME schools from basic skills courses to intermediate level schools like USMC Command and Staff College. A recent update (September 2007) to the IMET program has included implementing an assessment tool. A survey is given to recent graduates of various PME schools that foreign military members attend and a database of the results is kept togive feedback to the efficacy of the program.[22]

There is no consolidated annual report that gives a concise rundown of the whole program or details any successes or failures beyond the annual review conducted by PLU with Marine component commands. Previously, there was a joint report to Congress that contained a list of the services' personnel exchange positions and their respective budgets but the last instance of that was found for fiscal year 1996. There is a detailed annual report given by the Departments of State and Defense to Congress titled *Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interest*. This report mentions exchange programs but only discusses PME and unit exchanges and does not mention MCFPEP or other service equivalents.[23]

Hostilities and Deployments

Hostilities and deployments outside of the exchange country can lead to difficulties for exchange participants. As outlined in the MCFPEP order and usually codified in the specific MOA exchange personnel must request specific authorization from their respective governments prior to serving with their exchange unit during hostilities.[24] A problem occurs when the respective government denies the request leaving the exchange unit short of manning due to the reciprocal nature of the program. The unit with the exchange personnel must then be short staffed or obtain a short notice replacement when commencing combat operations as has been the issue with the Italian Harrier exchange pilot not being allowed to deploy in support of OIF. A similar problem can sometimes occur when an exchange unit deploys to a country that the exchange personnel's government does not have a Status of Forces Agreement with. This can affect units that make non-exercise deployments such as the Unit Deployment Program.[25]

Recruitment and Selection Process

The MCFPEP order details the Personnel Management Division of Manpower and Reserve Affairs to solicit applicants and establish a rigorous selection process in coordination with the appropriate billet sponsor. The billet sponsor for aviation exchanges has a robust system in place that facilitates this process. Currently the Aviation Manpower Support (ASM-52) branch of the Deputy Commandant for Aviation maintains a detailed website that includes information on all aviation exchange programs including billet descriptions, a billet rotation timeline, application procedures, and other references to help inform potential applicants about the program.[26] A semi-annual selection board is conducted by soliciting applicants with a Marine Administrative Message (MARADMIN) announcing the board and subsequently publishing the results in another MARADMIN in a similar fashion to promotion boards.[27]

Currently non-aviation billets are selected by an informal process that is reliant on personal communication with a career monitor.

Unfilled Billets

Five MCFPEP billets are currently or have recently been unfilled for lengthy periods of time. Title 10 legislation details the reciprocal nature of the program and current funding responsibilities with respect to personnel exchanges. Language training, travel, and cost of living for exchange personnel and their dependents is the responsibility of the native government and can possibly be a reason why these billets have not been filled. Title 10 legislation was changed in January 2008 with the passing of the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008.*[28] This change to legislation was requested by the Department of Defense (DOD) in the *Building Global Partnerships Act of 2007* to allow for non-reciprocal exchanges to take place. An analysis of the change states: "Waiving reciprocity agreements in these situations [lack of foreign funds] would directly support the theater security cooperation initiatives of all regional combatant commanders and support Phase Zero operations in the Global War on Terror."[29] Ideally, the exchanges would be reciprocal so foreign personnel can receive the benefit of a tour with the USMC; but when impractical, this change allows for the at least half of the benefit of an exchange. With this change there is still an issue with the existing billet in a USMC unit going unfilled.

Career Progression

As mandated by the Performance Evaluation System MCO 1610.7F, all USMC exchange personnel receive a foreign service's unique evaluation report attached to a non-observed USMC Fitness Report.[30] This can amount to two years or more of service that is non-observed. Marine Forces South believed this to be detrimental in promotion boards for their exchanges and

arranged an agreement to pursue an observed report through the administrative chain of command with foreign input.[31] Currently, other U.S. services' respective exchange programs maintain observed reports utilizing their respective U.S. chain of commands with input from their foreign commanders.[32] With the length of all MCFPEP billets being at least two years, a concern exists regarding promotion and command screening due to non-observed reports and a lengthy time away from an occupational field. The timing for an exchange is critical and should be discussed in detail by applicants and their career monitors.

PME EXCHANGES

Foreign personnel attend many USMC PME schools. Foreign countries usually either pay for tuition or receive U.S. funding through a program such as International Military Education and Training. The USMC also sends officers abroad to attend foreign intermediate and top level school equivalent institutions. A PME exchange only takes place when the USMC and a partner service each have students at the other's school. Seven exchanges occur with Command and Staff College: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, France, Republic of Korea, Norway, and Spain. At Top Level School, the Marine Corps sends students to Argentina, Australia, Israel, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Norway but no foreign students attend Marine Corps War College so these are not labeled as exchanges.

PME exchanges are authorized through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Selection for USMC attendance at foreign PME schools is completed by the selection boards for the respective schools. The PME exchange is a reciprocal program and if a country is unable to meet their side of the exchange, attendance is then at own government expense. Foreign PME schools offer detailed insight into another military through an academic environment. The cost

analysis for PME exchange program entails the same considerations of an overseas move and differing allowances as discussed in the MCFPEP section.

REGIONAL EXPERTISE

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) states "Developing broader linguistic capability and cultural understanding is also critical to prevail in the long war and to meet 21st century challenges."[33] Current USMC establishments used to facilitate this include the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL), the Security Cooperation Education and Training Center, and the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity. Programs that are directly tasked with developing cultural understanding and linguistic skills for the USMC include the International Affairs Officer Program (IAOP) and the Career Marine Regional Studies (CMRS) program.[34]

International Affairs Officer Program

The International Affairs Officer Program is a HQMC program that is designed to develop and maintain a cadre of officers with experience in political-military affairs that have specific regional expertise. These personnel are known as Foreign Area Officers (FAO) or Regional Affairs Officers (RAO) and are developed either through an education track or an experience track. The 2006 QDR states "Current and emerging challenges highlight the increasing importance of Foreign Area Officers, who provide Combatant Commanders with political military analysis, critical language skills and cultural adeptness."[35] Exchange personnel can qualify for rating under the program as per the IAOP order but Secretary of Defense guidance requiring an advanced degree in International Relations and a foreign language skill has curtailed this practice.[36] A shortfall occurs when exchange personnel who often have detailed national and regional expertise (and possibly linguistic skills) are not tracked for possible

utilization of this expertise since there are no follow on tours currently associated with exchange billets.

Career Marine Regional Studies

CMRS is a recently developed program that is managed by CAOCL whose "end-state will be a career force sufficiently skilled in regional culture and fundamental language familiarization to allow them to act as regional knowledge resources within their units." This is achieved by initial training conducted in The Basic School for officers and at the Sergeants' Courses for enlisted personnel. After this initial training Marines are aligned with one of 17 different regions throughout the world that they will continue to study via online training through their career progression to Captain or Staff Sergeant. At the completion of their online studies they will be "able to inform rapid planning and the execution of operations virtually anywhere in the world where Marines might operate."[37] The only region designated by the CMRS program that currently has MCFPEP exchanges is South America.

> Whenever advisable, the United States will work with or through others: enabling allied and partner capabilities, building their capacity and developing collaborative mechanisms to share the decisions, risks and responsibilities of today's complex challenges. The United States must work with new international partners in less familiar areas of the world to reduce the drivers of instability, prevent terrorist attacks or disrupt their networks, to deny sanctuary to terrorists anywhere in the world, to separate terrorists from host populations and ultimately to defeat them.[38]
> **QDR Execution Roadmap: Building Partnership Capacity**

LONG WAR CONCEPT

A USMC operational employment concept regarding plans to fight the Long War was published in February 2008. As commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan reduce, and the Marine Corps grows to 202,000 personnel, the USMC plans to use two new initiatives to directly facilitate BPC: the Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group (MCTAG) and the Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force (SC MAGTF). The MCTAG is officially formed

but is in the very early stages of gaining mission readiness and "will eventually grow to constitute a cadre of trained advisors organized into regional branches that deploy scalable teams of Marine advisors to partner nations." The advisor program will provide "training, education, advice, equipment, and material to select partner nation security forces" and will also facilitate training the SC MAGTFs prior to through their experience in the specific regions.[39]

The SC MAGTF is a concept based around an infantry battalion that will "be tasked with building partner nation security capacity and supporting partner nation security efforts in a specific regional area." The SC MAGTF concept is envisioned to be used in three GCC's areas of responsibility: Southern Command, Central Command, and Africa Command. Each associated region will have assigned regiments and groups to support the concept. These higher echelon units will "adopt a specific regional orientation with specialized manpower and training." This specialized manpower will be "foreign area officers (FAO), regional affairs officers (RAO), linguists, and other personnel with regional expertise."[40] As discussed previously, there are no exchanges with countries in these regions possibly due to the unsuitability of current exchange programs for these areas.

> Paramount among these [Long War] demands will be the requirement for Marines to train and mentor the security forces of partner nations in a manner that empowers their governments to secure their own countries.[41]   **General James T. Conway USMC**

SHORT TERM EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

There is another type of exchange that harnesses most of the positive attributes of MCFPEP, avoids deployment issues, allows for broader engagement, and can be more responsive to security cooperation plans. Although no formal name exists for a program of this type in USMC lexicon, it has been referred to as a Short Term Exchange Program (STEP). This is based on an exchange duration of less than six months which corresponds to Department of

Defense Temporary Additional Duty (TAD) duration. STEP billets are unaccompanied, non-operational, and do not fill a table of organization billet of the host command.

Pilot Program

There is no established short term exchange program in the USMC but a proof of concept initiative is scheduled to take place during the spring of 2008 with the Australian Army. This pilot program known as Exercise Anchor Sun involves the exchange of senior enlisted members of the two services' respective Schools of Infantry. The aim of the program is to "broaden the experience and professional knowledge of the exchange personnel while promoting continued cooperation between the Participants through exposure to different tactics, techniques, procedures, culture, and personnel." The aim is very similar to MCFPEP and should realize the same benefits as discussed earlier: relationships, interoperability, promoting U.S. interests, improving capabilities and capacity, and providing access. The long term intent is the exchange positions to be reciprocal but non-identical. Non-identical means that there is not a direct swap of similarly skilled personnel for specified units; instead, the type of unit hosting an exchange will be requested by the sending service based on their respective needs. This allows services to target specific interests that may not be shared by the other service.[42]

Other STEPs

There are two short term programs that currently exist outside of the USMC: Pacific Armies Look Exchange (PALEX) and Exercise Long Look. PALEX is a U.S. Army Pacific program that exchanges personnel with similar units in Armies throughout the Pacific for up to a three month period. The program began in 1979 but has not been used since 2002 due to current operational deployment tempo.[43] Exercise Long Look is a joint exchange of individual personnel from services in the United Kingdom with those of Australia and New Zealand. Both

exchange programs are non-operational and have similar goals of building relationships, improving interoperability, and improving professional knowledge of other militaries and cultures.[44]

STEP Benefits

The characteristics of a STEP provide an additional number of unique benefits to security cooperation efforts including utilization of exchange experience, broader engagement possibilities, responsiveness to security cooperation plans, and minimal effect on deployments and manpower. The STEP program achieves these benefits mainly due to the short duration of the exchange, usually less than three months based on research examples. This period allows participating units to send and regain exchange personnel under a TAD status, allowing gained knowledge to be retained in a unit. Another benefit of a STEP program is maintaining table of organization line numbers with USMC personnel instead of filling with a foreign service member as in the case of MCFPEP. There are many developing partner services that are not yet capable of filling permanently existing billets inside the USMC so STEPs can be established where MCFPEPs are not suitable. The TAD qualities of STEP make a more flexible program than the Permanent Change of Station orders of MCFPEP allowing a GCC to implement exchange positions more quickly. The shorter period may also be more appealing to other nations due to the potential of exposing more personnel to the USMC and due to potentially smaller budgets. STEP billets may also be well suited for reserve personnel to augment active duty forces especially when reservists have unique language skills.

Cost Analysis

The cost of STEP programs depends on the number of billets, the duration of exchange, and the country associated with. Below is a rough cost estimate for five personnel to travel to each of the following locations for a sixty day period.

Country, Location	Travel (airfare only roundtrip from New York City)	Per Diem (Based on Proportional Meal Rate and incidentals)	Total Travel and Per Diem
Indonesia, Jakarta	$6750	$21,600	$28,350
Jordan, Amman	$5500	$17,700	$23,200
South Africa, Johannesburg	$6000	$16,200	$22,200

Table 2 Estimated TAD costs for STEP example (created by author using JFTR tables and Expedia.com)

This example with 15 Marines participating in a STEP displays that a widespread program can quickly amount to more money than is currently used for MCFPEP, but when compared to the BPC request of $800 million for the DoD in fiscal year 2009, it is a relatively small amount for what would be a very responsive program.[45]

STEP Shortfalls

There are potential negative attributes associated with a STEP program including language issues and MOA generation. The first potential issue is language compatibility and requirements. A STEP alone probably does not warrant a lengthy language training period unless it is in conjunction with future billets such as FAO assignments. The specific language requirements will have to be considered for each exchange country. Another concern is a MOA will need to be generated each time a new exchange country is established. This process can take some amount of time and resources due to legal and routing issues especially if there are a large number of demands for MOAs at the same time.

Exchanges are difficult with partners from developing nations, although these may be the most important for success in a particular region.[46]   **Building Global Partnerships Act of 2007**

STEP Utilization

An established STEP program gives a framework for multiple applications that are beneficial to Building Partnership Capacity. It can be used to augment MCFPEP either as a precursor to establishing a long term position with a country or in conjunction with established long term positions as part of an overall engagement strategy. The program can be used by the GCCs through the Marine component commands as part of their security cooperation plans. This may be particularly helpful to pre-deployment and sustainment training for those units designated with a regional responsibility for Security Cooperation MAGTFs. It would also prove helpful for the Marine Corps Training and Advisory Group as it stands up and develops its regional expertise. STEP can also potentially be used by PLU as part of the one year in-country training period for officers going through the study track of the IAOP. Another application would be to augment the PME exchange affording exchange personnel to engage beyond the academic environment. The last possible application is in conjunction with the CMRS as the final step in completing the program. Figure 2 below describes potential exchange utilizations with Step inclusion.

SECURITY COOPERATION

REGIONAL EXPERTISE

MCFPEP

FAO/RAO (EXPERIENCE)

FOLLOW ON BILLET

SC MAGTF

VALIDATE

STEP

FAO/RAO (EDUCATION)

AUGMENT

MCTAG

PME EXCHANGE

CMRS
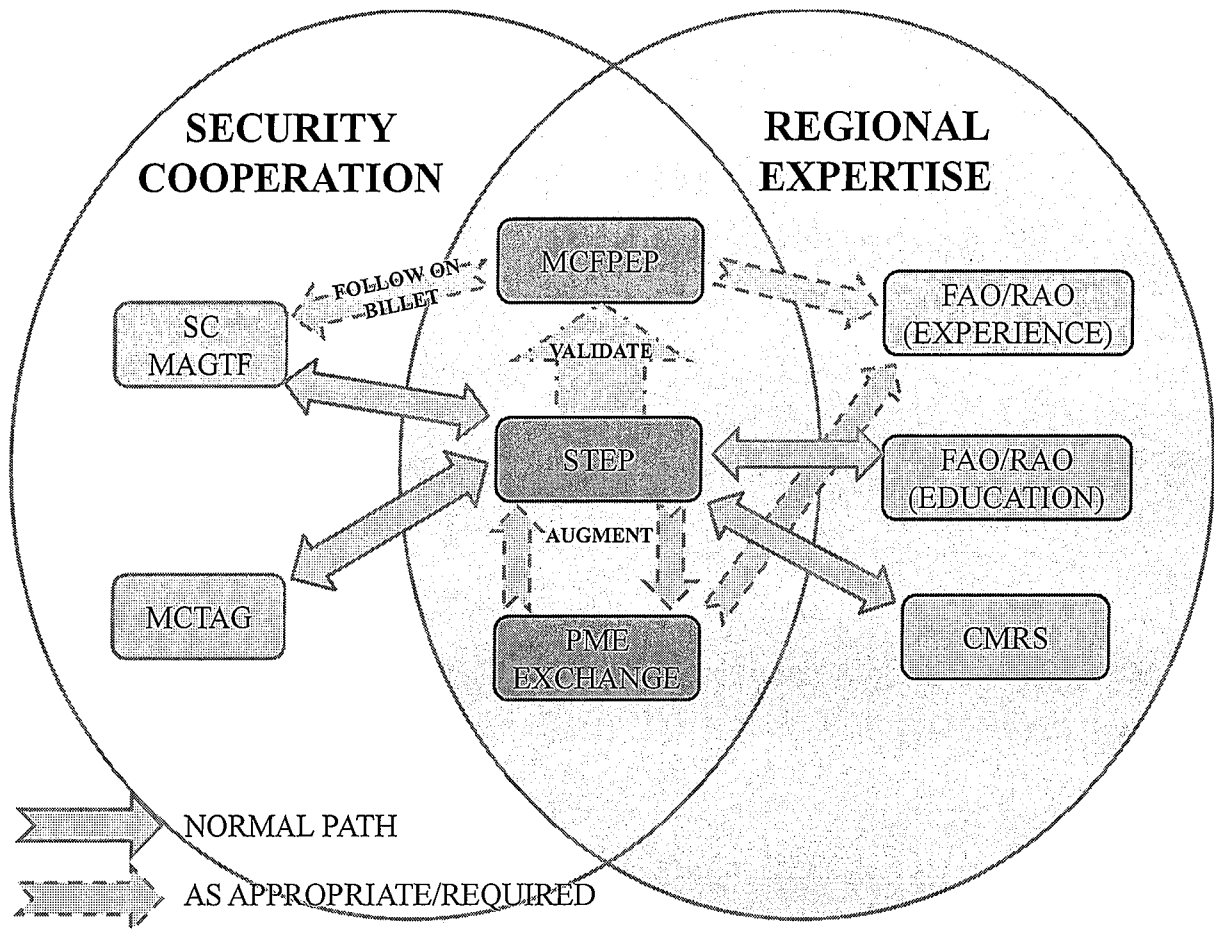
NORMAL PATH

AS APPROPRIATE/REQUIRED

Figure 2 Exchange Relationships

The individual Marine is the scarcest, yet most sought after resource for accomplishing USMC Security Cooperation objectives worldwide. Allied and partner nations recognize that capitalizing on the USMC ethos, training regimen, and professionalism is one of the best ways to transform their defense and security organizations. However; supply rarely meets demand, and a rigorous process of planning, requesting, validating, and sourcing Marines for these important missions is crucial.[47]   **Update to USMC Procedures for Security Cooperation**

RECOMMENDATIONS

USMC foreign exchange programs are proven enablers to building relationships, facilitating interoperability, promoting U.S. interests, developing partners' capabilities and capacity, and facilitating access. However, there are a number of improvements that must be made to capitalize on the potential of these programs for Building Partnership Capacity.

- *STEP*: Establish a STEP with a corresponding order and management structure to realize potential benefits. Widespread use of STEP is probably not feasible at this time due to operational commitments; however, STEP can be incrementally implemented to increase the number of engaged countries over time as commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan decrease. An incremental implementation will allow early review of the program and exchange countries could be prioritized by GCC's security cooperation plans. The program should also be established to allow reservist participation.

- *MCFPEP*: Expand the program when billet opportunities are identified. If required validate with STEP first. Expand exchange country portfolio to engage emerging regional partners while maintaining exchanges with longtime allies.

- *ALL EXCHANGES - Feedback (Lessons Learned):* Establish a lessons learned database through the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL). Use of the MCCLL website to post reports and other lessons learned will provide a common access site for all exchange personnel. This site can be set up as a "Community of Practice" and will allow all

USMC personnel to add to and access lessons learned information even from foreign locations (using Combined Access Card readers). MCCLL also can be used as a conduit to relate foreign services' TTPs when appropriate for discussion.

- *ALL EXCHANGES - Feedback (Annual Report):* Establish a consolidated annual report on USMC foreign exchange activity. Similar in intent to a Command Chronology, a comprehensive annual report will provide a historical record, an annual assessment, and; most importantly, justification for increased funding or if needed justification of existence. This would meet QDR guidance to "improve the Department's ability to assess the relative benefits of security cooperation activities to enable better resource allocation decisions." Include the report in MCCLL.[48]

- *ALL EXCHANGES - Feedback (Foreign Exchange Tool):* Establish an end of tour assessment tool and database similar to the IMET program. This tool allows for feedback on the program from outside of the USMC and may identify areas of improvement. A database would keep a record of past exchange personnel for contact purposes and long term evaluation of participants progress in their respective militaries. Results from this feedback should be incorporated into the annual report.

- *MCFPEP- Recruitment and Selection:* Billet sponsors should adopt similar procedures and methodology in the recruitment and selection process as the aviation billets. MARADMIN announcements and a formal board process will produce a more robust selection process as per the intent of the MCFPEP order and will inform a wider audience.

- *MCFPEP and PME EXCHANGES: Experience Tracking:* A means of tracking the unique experience of exchange personnel is required. Two possibilities are either using the FAO under training additional MOS or possibly a new additional MOS for MCFPEP personnel.[49]

Either possibility will allow for specialty tracking in the Marine Corps Total Force System for subsequent use. The application for or designation of this MOS should be required at the end of the exchange tour. STEP experience tracking would also have to be considered if implemented.

- *ALL EXCHANGES - Reciprocity:* Ideally all exchanges are reciprocal. If this is not possible due to financial constraints of a partner service, consideration should be given to amending Title 10 exchange restrictions. This would allow nations eligible for foreign military assistance to receive funding for certain aspects of the exchange such as travel, language training, or possibly housing. Housing in particular is a recent issue due to the shift to privatized base housing which can cost as much as $30,000 or more annualy. Peru is currently receiving a total of $1,744,624 in various funds to participate in military training activities but current law prohibits funding foreign exchange costs.[50]

- *RESERVE FORCES:* Consider use of Reserve forces for all exchange programs especially if an applicant has particular language skills.

- *PME Exchanges*: Increase the number of PME Exchanges with partner nations that have suitable schools. Coordinate PME exchange with STEP or MCFPEP billets when appropriate to give an exposure beyond the academic setting as well.

- *ALL EXCHANGES - Joint Credit:* The National Defense Authorization Act made numerous changes to Joint Officer Management including a means of accruing points towards achieving the certification as a Joint Qualified Officer. Many exchange positions will qualify for some number of points based on experiences in joint and combined training, exercises, and operations. Exchange programs must incorporate this into their orders.[51]

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of Building Partnership Capacity has grown significantly since 9/11. Experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq continue to reinforce the need for partners and allies who are well prepared to meet the challenges of the modern battlefield. BPC has evolved to a new initiative asking for $800 million on the fiscal year 2009 budget request.[52] Exchange programs are fiscally sound and prove an effective means of BPC. The fiscal responsiveness and effectiveness of these programs lend themselves well to this increased funding.

Support to BPC "will challenge some long-standing practices within the Marine Corps" as recognized by the Commandant, General James Conway. Department of Defense efforts in BPC have been a major part of the transformation efforts over the past five years with the institution of Theater Security Cooperation Plans. The Marine Corps concept to support these plans can only be improved by improving and expanding the exchange programs.

Exchange programs have been a valuable part of USMC international engagement efforts since World War II. Current programs are valuable tools in BPC but are not used to their fullest potential. A number of improvements can be made; the most important is broader engagement with emerging partners. A STEP is the most effective type of exchange to engage with emerging partners and should be implemented. This will give foreign exchange personnel the opportunity to visit the U.S. and observe democracy and a civilian controlled military. This opportunity will shape the future leaders of partner militaries and cultivate long term relationships more effectively than current practices.

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