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Strategic Evaluations of Institutional Capacity Building in Colombia and Indonesia (2013-2018)
Public SummaryDepartment of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

The Department of Defense (DoD) sponsors strategic evaluations of security cooperation (SC) programs and activities pursuant to 10 U.S.C. Section 383 and DoD Instruction 5132.14, “Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy for the Security Cooperation Enterprise.” The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Partnerships (ODASD(GP)) and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) initiated two strategic evaluations to measure strategic effects and implications of DoD Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) initiatives.

DoD contracted Vysnova, with support from DevTech, to undertake two independent strategic evaluations of DoD ICB efforts in Colombia and Indonesia, respectively. The two evaluations, “Strategic Evaluation of U.S. Department of Defense Institutional Capacity Building in Colombia (2013-2018)” and “Strategic Evaluation of U.S. Department of Defense Institutional Capacity Building in Indonesia (2013-2018),” examined 10 U.S.C. Section 332 ICB SC activities conducted in those countries from 2013 to 2018.

The two evaluations focused on three overarching questions:

1. How and to what extent have U.S.-led ICB initiatives impacted U.S. bilateral and multilateral relations in the country/region?
2. What have been the outcomes of U.S. efforts to improve Allied partner nations’ defense institution capabilities?
3. What sustainable changes to the security environment in the country/region can be attributed to U.S.-led ICB efforts?

Methodology: DoD selected two cases to ensure the evaluations included regional SC partner nations representing varying degrees of ICB-relevant capacity and capability. The evaluation teams focused on Section 332 U.S. ICB efforts—including those previously referred to as Defense Institution Building (DIB)—that DoD considered “significant” or “priority” initiatives that had been operating for at least three of the five years under evaluation and where sufficient data existed or could feasibly be collected.

The evaluation teams used a mixed-methods approach using document review, stakeholder interviews, and surveys and focus groups of personnel involved, to gain insight into ICB efforts in Colombia and Indonesia from 2013 to 2018. Across these data sources, the evaluation teams consulted official U.S. and external sources, including country and regional experts, academia, and third-party data sources. The reports analyzed the data to produce findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Prior to reforms enacted in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, the Department did not have a comprehensive program of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation to measure SC’s contributions to strategic objectives. The evaluation teams therefore reconstructed initiative design frameworks and ICB-related aims for the two evaluations. Gaps related to program planning processes, data collection, and monitoring were a challenge in both countries, which limited the evaluation teams’ ability to fully assess the programs’ success.

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DoD ICB Background: ICB programs are a core element of how the Department of Defense (DoD) builds and expands the capacity of foreign defense and security forces to address shared challenges. The purposes of ICB programs conducted pursuant to Section 332 include: (1) build civilian oversight of foreign security forces; (2) establish responsible defense governance and internal controls in order to help build effective, transparent, and accountable defense institutions; (3) assess organizational weaknesses and establish a roadmap for addressing shortfalls; (4) enhance ministerial, general or joint staff, or service level core management competencies; and (5) other purposes as the Secretary of Defense considers appropriate, including to contribute to collective security arrangements (such as the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO).

ICB engagements seek to achieve these objectives through various focus areas, such as strategic planning, defense management integration, financial management, human resource management, logistics, and rule of law. DoD is actively engaged in ICB efforts across six Combatant Commands.

Evaluating ICB aims in two cases: The two evaluations, “Strategic Evaluation of U.S. Department of Defense Institutional Capacity Building in Colombia (2013-2018)” and “Strategic Evaluation of U.S. Department of Defense Institutional Capacity Building in Indonesia (2013-2018),” examined ICB SC activities conducted in those countries from 2013 to 2018 under the authority of Section 332.

The Colombia evaluation focused on ICB programs and engagements executed by DSCA and U.S. Southern Command from 2013 to 2018. These efforts varied in intensity and duration. Topics included resource management, human resource management, strategy, policy, and planning, acquisition and logistics, rule of law, force development, command and control, and intelligence/information sharing.

The evaluation team reconstructed the primary aims of U.S. ICB in Colombia during the evaluation period, deriving five from the available evidence: 1) build strategic level capacity; 2) develop ministerial, joint staff, and service headquarters core functions including resource management and logistics; 3) improve intelligence and sharing; 4) strengthen rule of law capability; and 5) strengthen human rights programs/policy.

The Indonesia evaluation focused on programs and engagements identified by DSCA and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command as ICB over the 2013 to 2018 period. Topics included defense management, resource management, defense planning and strategic development, maritime security, and legal reform.

The evaluation team reconstructed the primary aims of U.S. ICB in Indonesia during the evaluation period, deriving two from the available evidence: 1) build partner capacities in defense management and strategy; and 2) improve bilateral relations.

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Key Findings: After collecting data on ICB outputs and outcomes tied to the identified aims, the evaluation teams used this evidence to analyze the difference between intended and actual outcomes of ICB programming for each country. The evaluators identified outcomes for each country and organized them thematically by evaluation question:

Evaluation Question 1: How and to what extent have U.S.-led ICB initiatives impacted U.S. bilateral and multilateral relations in the country/region?

Findings:

- Interoperability between the United States and Colombia improved through sharing of defense reform ideas, logistics practices, doctrine, and intelligence cooperation.
- Colombian officials see value in ICB programming, referencing it specifically in various planning and reform documents.
- U.S. relationships with Colombian Ministry of National Defense (MND) officials strengthened, increasing the frequency, breadth, and depth of interaction.
- Indonesian officials see value in ICB programming, including specific requests for U.S. assistance with capacity building on topics ranging from internal human resource processes to ministerial-level strategy development.
- U.S. relationships with Indonesian defense officials were developed and maintained despite challenging geopolitical contexts, with ICB programming serving as a mechanism to build trust and communication with prominent officials and institutions.
- Alignment of interests increased modestly between the United States and Indonesia, though not necessarily due to ICB programming.

Conclusions:

- *ICB efforts in Colombia from 2013 to 2018 helped advance the relationship between the United States and Colombia and multilateral relations in the region by increasing trust and burden sharing.*
- *ICB efforts in Indonesia from 2013 to 2018 contributed to improved relations between the United States and Indonesia through establishing and maintaining relationships.*

Evaluation Question 2: What have been the outcomes of U.S. efforts to improve Allied and partner nations' defense institution capabilities?

Findings:

- Strategy, policy, and planning efforts were the most successful ICB programs throughout the evaluation period in Colombia.
- Colombian information-sharing capabilities increased.
- ICB efforts helped sustain gains from initial, organic Colombian institutional defense reforms.
- Colombia ICB efforts had gaps in design, documentation, and lack of sufficient integration with other U.S. SC, such as activities at the ministry level with those at the service level.

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- ICB processes have continued to improve, and there is increasing continuity and alignment between the policy, funding, and long-term planning of ICB activities in Colombia.
- ICB efforts in Indonesia successfully generated buy-in from individual senior-level defense officials, but faced challenges in developing sustained institutional-level buy-in.
- ICB efforts in Indonesia contributed to DoD's ability to understand Indonesian partners, which will help ensure future SC efforts are realistic, targeted to the correct audience, and will be better received by our partners.

Conclusions:

- *U.S. efforts produced tangible improvement in the capacity of some areas of the Colombian MND and Public Forces. During the evaluation period, U.S. efforts increased information sharing between the United States and Colombia.*
- *There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that U.S. efforts resulted in direct, causal improvement in the institutional capacity of the Indonesian defense sector by the end of the study period. However, U.S. efforts likely contributed to modest improvements in institutional function and helped lay groundwork for more significant future institutional reform.*

Evaluation Question 3: What sustainable changes to the security environment in the country/region can be attributed to U.S.-led ICB efforts?

Findings:

- Colombia's role as a regional security leader was supported by ICB programming. Colombia invested in NATO standardization of their logistics systems, motivating other regional nations to seek NATO standardization as well.
- As the only official NATO partner in the region, the MND is exporting its ICB expertise through hosting regional conferences and bilateral exchanges.
- Indonesia's strategic interests shifted from land security to maritime security, which is a shift from being internally focused to externally focused, during the study time period, although the role of ICB programming is unclear.
- ICB programs contributed to a closer defense partnership and moderate reforms in strategic and capability planning, which may have enabled Indonesia to take a more active posture with regard to shared maritime security aims.

Conclusions:

- *ICB activities played key roles supporting domestic post-war reforms in the Colombian military, contributing to professionalization and allowing the country to become a more assertive U.S. partner in the region.*
- *ICB efforts in Indonesia made small, positive contributions to improved relations between the United States and Indonesia.*

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Recommendations: The evaluation teams crafted the following policy and operational recommendations to inform future DoD decision making about ICB:

- Improve sequencing and coordination of ICB efforts with other SC activities. In some cases, it may be useful to frame ICB as a foundation, rather than an augmentation, to other SC.
- Develop a U.S. Government-wide definition of ICB to synchronize, focus, and measure activities.
- Plan and fund ICB efforts as continuous and long-term (10-15 years).
- Direct ICB programs to improve assessment, monitoring, and evaluation tied to partnership objectives, including developing clearer theories of change and integrated logical frameworks.
- Increase continuity of host country relationships by extending the tour length of Ministry of Defense Advisors or establishing a role of ICB country integrator.
- Partner with non-defense organizations to build oversight, accountability, and management mechanisms for defense institutions.
- Improve coordination with regional Allies and partners on ICB.
- Create an ICB working group of stakeholders, including those at the country-team, Combatant Command, DSCA, and Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy levels, to coordinate at the planning stages for ICB programming.
- Deepen Defense Institute of International Legal Studies involvement within ICB.

Evaluation Results: In accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 5132.14, “Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy for the Security Cooperation Enterprise,” the Department is applying recommendations and lessons learned from these evaluations to make adjustments to policy, programs, and resource allocation decisions, including the following:

- *Implementing Recommendations:* The Department developed an internal action plan in coordination with primary stakeholder organizations to implement recommendations from these evaluations. The design and review of ongoing SC efforts are informed by findings and recommendations of these reports, including updates to ICB planning and programming. For example, the recommendation for more integration between ICB and other SC has helped inform and encourage more streamlined SC planning and programming since the completion of the evaluations. Additionally, the considerable return on investment determined by these evaluations has informed SC resourcing considerations for ICB efforts.
- *Contributions to the SC and ICB Performance Management Framework:* DoD disseminated the evaluation teams’ findings across the Department to support learning from past DoD ICB efforts. Content of the two evaluations will be entered into an SC activity database. Additionally, findings related to data collection gaps from the two evaluations are incorporated into the design and implementation of ongoing monitoring activities.