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Security Force Assistance Brigades and US Indo-Pacific Command Multi-domain Competition

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ABSTRACT: Security force assistance brigades can enable multi-domain convergence in competition in the US Indo-Pacific Command. Rather than focusing on conventional Joint force capabilities, this article analyzes recent US Army operational experience in security force assistance and security cooperation in US Indo-Pacific Command and identifies capability gaps and opportunities for competition. Finally, military leadership and policymakers will find recommendations on how US Army security force assistance and security cooperation can shape environments and deter conflict in the US Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Keywords: SFAB, multi-domain, competition, deterrence, USINDOPACOM

The US Indo-Pacific website states, "USINDOPACOM is committed to enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win. This approach is based on partnership, presence, and military readiness."[1] In 2021, in the *Interim United States National Security Strategic Guidance*, President Joe Biden elevated the People's Republic of China as the primary military threat to the United States.[2] Consequently, the US military renewed its emphasis on competition within the US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) area of responsibility (AOR). As US strategic focus moves away from US Central Command following the conclusion of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the US Army must reassess its roles and look beyond its combat capabilities to aid in the success of the Joint force mission, specifically the operating environment of Indo-Pacific Command, to retain its relevance in the shifting strategic environment.

Security force assistance brigades (SFABs) can play a crucial role due to doctrinal, organizational, and extensive specialized training capabilities

1. "About United States Indo-Pacific Command," PACOM, n.d., accessed October 23, 2022, https://www.pacom.mil/About-USINDOPACOM/.
2. Joseph R. Biden Jr., *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, March 2021* (Washington, DC: White House, 2021): 8.

in partner integration. Since the Indo-Pacific's strategic and operational environments lie primarily in the air and maritime domains, security force assistance brigades could play a vital role in enabling convergence and synchronizing cross-domain effects by cognition and effort beyond physical mass within multi-domain competition. Integrating brigades with partnered foreign security forces will allow the US Army to leverage partner multi-domain capabilities in complementary ways to US Joint and interagency capabilities and achieve a relative advantage in regional competition.

This article considers roles security force assistance brigades can fill to enable combined multi-domain convergence in competition below the threshold of armed conflict. It examines current military problems in the Indo-Pacific, discusses how the brigades can address these problems, and provides recommendations for how to enable multi-domain competition.

The Indo-Pacific Problem

The central military problem in the Indo-Pacific Command is determining how the Joint force can maintain freedom of action and impose its will against peer adversaries in all domains to deter conflict while reestablishing a position of strategic advantage. The most effective and efficient way to do so is by retaining existing positions of advantage. While the air and maritime domains remain the main areas of focus in the Indo-Pacific, naval theorist Julian S. Corbett's emphasis on the interdependence of the land and maritime domains suggests that retaining a Landpower advantage remains vital.[3]

The second military problem to avoid is losing the first battle of the next conflict.[4] If North Korea attacked either Japan or South Korea, the Joint force would need to secure a swift initial victory to maintain its Landpower advantage. Chief of Staff of the Army General James C. McConville defines *Landpower advantage* as sustaining the fight, expanding the battlespace, striking in-depth across domains, gaining and maintaining decision dominance, creating overmatch, and prevailing in large-scale ground conflict.[5] Given the Army's considerable executive agent responsibilities in sustaining

3. Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1999). First published in 1918 by Longmans, Green.

4. Headquarters Department of the Army (HQDA), *Army Multi-Domain Transformation: Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict,* Chief of Staff Paper #1 (Washington, DC: HQDA, 2021), 5.

5. HQDA, *Multi-Domain Transformation*, 6.

the Joint force, integrating partner sustainment capabilities toward the goal of convergence is beneficial and critical to success.

In *Asia-Pacific: A Strategic Assessment*, David Lai warns of the danger of overplaying the "U.S. card" in pursuing an over-militarized strategy to influence territorial interests in the Indo-Pacific region, and Lai underscores the peril of provoking China into reckless actions that risk moving from competition into open conflict.[6] To mitigate this risk and achieve bilateral solutions, Lai recommends a strategic approach that reinforces the diplomatic and economic elements of national power coupled with a smaller military footprint.[7] Large, conventional forward-postured US forces could have a provocative rather than coercive or deterrent strategic effect. Embedded adviser forces partnered with East Asian security forces can enable similar combined multi-domain convergence and keep efforts in the competition sphere instead of conflict.

A RAND Corporation study on security force assistance brigades in Afghanistan conducted by Leslie Adrienne Payne and Jan Osburg illustrates potential capability gaps in the Indo-Pacific and highlights issues that could result from employing conventional Joint forces trained and organized for "highly-kinetic" operations in advise and assist roles.[8] The employment of large, conventional forces in adviser roles violates economy of force by compelling a unit to execute a mission for which it is not equipped, organized, or trained while underutilizing its capabilities. Instead, Payne and Osburg recommend using specifically trained conventional advisers to assist forces in enabling partner contribution. They note US operations in Afghanistan caused a marked increase in "morale and enthusiasm" among partnered forces operating with dedicated adviser forces rather than conventional advisers.[9]

Payne and Osburg also underscore the importance of influencing two to three countries at once by employing dispersed military organizations more efficiently than conventional Joint forces.[10] The ability to influence multiple actors across a large, noncontiguous area of responsibility like the Indo-Pacific is necessary for maximizing Army support to the air and maritime domains. Also, Payne and Osburg suggest that, while it is sensible to align adviser forces regionally for continuity of partner relationships, conventional Joint

6. David Lai, *Asia-Pacific: A Strategic Assessment* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College Press, 2013), iv, https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/527/.
7. Lai, *Asia-Pacific*, v.
8. Leslie Adrienne Payne and Jan Osburg, *Leveraging Observations of Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan for Global Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), 12.
9. Payne and Osburg, *Security Force Assistance*, 12.
10. Payne and Osburg, *Security Force Assistance*, 14.

forces are ill-suited for perpetual regional alignment due to global demand for their aid and their limited multi-domain capabilities.[11]

Applicability to the Indo-Pacific Problem

The idea of the US Army reexamining roles in anticipation of a strategic and operational shift from counterinsurgency operations originating in US Central Command to competing with the People's Republic of China, Russia, and other global powers in the Indo-Pacific region is not a recent development. As early as 2006, the US Army strategic planning guidance outlined the need to prepare for a post-global war on terrorism strategic and operational environment shift: "We must immediately begin the process of re-examining and challenging our most basic institutional assumptions, organizational structures, paradigms, policies, and procedures to better serve our Nation. The end result of this examination will be a more relevant and ready force—a campaign quality Army with a Joint and Expeditionary Mindset."[12] To maintain the Army's competitive advantage in the Indo-Pacific, leadership must recognize the importance of enduring partner integration.[13] Security force assistance brigades represent a tailored, specifically trained unit large enough to manifest the full range of partner capability. At the same time, they are small enough to avoid strategically provocative connotations associated with larger forward-postured conventional forces, making the brigades ideal for the Army's shift to the Indo-Pacific and supporting partners to compete below the threshold of armed conflict.

Given that "joint interdependence is potentially the Joint Team's greatest asset," the *Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2006-2023* suggests the best opportunity to support the Joint force in the Indo-Pacific lies in "reassuring friends, allies, and coalition partners" to dissuade and deter adversaries.[14] In preserving a rules-based international order favorable to the United States and its allies, the Army possesses the unique ability to build cohesive and enduring teams among allies and partners. Integrating partner capabilities to "sense, understand, decide, and act faster than an adversary in any situation" requires Army adviser forces to enable the execution of "simultaneous and sequential operations distributed throughout a non-linear battlespace and conducted in close coordination with interagency and multinational partners," synchronizing effects across all domains.[15] Executing such a mission requires an understanding of the multi-domain operational concept

11. Payne and Osburg, *Security Force Assistance*, 34.
12. HQDA, *The Army Strategic Planning Guidance 2006-2023* (Washington, DC: HQDA, 2006), 4.
13. HQDA, *Military Competition*, fig. E2, viii.
14. HQDA, "*Army Strategic Planning Guidance*," 4.
15. HQDA, "*Army Strategic Planning Guidance*," 5.

and an ability to apply this understanding to complex, complicated, and "wicked" problem sets without final solutions.[16]

Maintaining "favorable regional alliances" in the USINDOPACOM area of operations hinges upon two critical regions: Northeast Asia and the East Asian littoral.[17] The fact that US strategic ends do not always directly align with our partners' and allies' goals often complicates efforts to compete with and deter adversaries. Deterrence can be achieved through synchronizing partnered efforts in competition by shaping environments with Army special operations forces (SOFs) and security force assistance brigades.[18] Since 2013, conventional forces have played a significant role in competition with non-allied great powers via brigade combat teams regionally aligned force deterrent rotations to the Republic of Korea. Integrating special operations forces and security force assistance brigades into the permanent United Nations and Republic of Korea/US Coalition command-and-control structures in doctrinal liaison roles would provide significant opportunities to achieve unity of effort across all domains and establish the potential of the United States' East Asian littoral partners. It would also allow the embedded brigades to shape the information space through interoperability and strategic and operational messaging.[19] Given most allies and partners in the East Asian littorals possess a relative local advantage in the land domain, the brigades could be the link in amplifying local advantage into a theater advantage.

While direct competition is distinct from conflict, it still risks using armed force—mainly through proxies to gain or maintain advantage. Adversaries in the Indo-Pacific, (such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea), already use proxies, shell corporations, and Islamic extremist organizations in the Philippines. Since Army special operations forces and security force assistance brigades are task-organized to win through partners, not by closing with the enemy personally and directly, this focus makes them appropriate and necessary to assist regional partners in neutralizing direct adversary competition.

Indirect competition occurs when national interests are not directly involved but actors pursue different aims within a similar environment.[20] Maintaining relative advantage in indirect competition may involve averting escalation to direct competition or conflict more than the pursuit or denial

16. Jeff Conklin, "Wicked Problems and Social Complexity," in *Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems* (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2006).
17. HQDA, "*Army Strategic Planning Guidance*," 14.
18. Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004).
19. Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005).
20. HQDA, *Military Competition*, vi.

of an objective. Employing brigades in emerging sub-theaters (like Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia) could preempt Russian and Chinese attempts to reassert influence over Southeast Asia. Brigades could leverage historical animosity toward China and build enduring relationships with regional security forces. By fostering and integrating partner capabilities across all domains with US Joint capabilities, brigades have the potential to "preserve and expand friendly (US, allies, and partners) advantages while limiting or eroding adversary options, imposing costs, and increasing adversary doubts. They can establish deterrence and set the conditions for military success when deterrence fails."[21]

To succeed in multi-domain competition in the Indo-Pacific, allies and partners must be kept free from adversary coercion.[22] The Indo-Pacific Command should ensure the means employed are neither coercive nor escalatory.[23] To that end, the brigades can signal a willingness for interoperability with Pacific allies and partners without the potentially provocative act of increasing conventional ground-maneuver forces, naval forces, and theater missile defense forces. Even if the Indo-Pacific Command decided against that course of action, the brigades' mere presence counters adversary narratives that the United States is withdrawing from its role as a global leader and creating a strategic power vacuum. Additionally, they can, and should, be used to support foreign information warfare capabilities to confront Russian and Chinese malign-information operations in the region.

Populous nations such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam maintain strong land component security forces, creating an opportunity to embed US adviser forces and achieve greater synergy in the land, cyber, information, and space domains. Although allied and partner capabilities in the space and cyber domains lack the sophistication of US capabilities, there are opportunities for the United States to foster partnered integration in the space and cyber domains for competitive advantage in ways that benefit partners without compromising US morals and ethics. Nations like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam are strategically located within the layers of China's anti-access and area-denial (A2AD) network. Furthermore, these nations have legal, political, strategic, and operational caveats different from those of the United States, enabling the US military to leverage these differences to advance US strategic interests where the interests of our allies and partners do not align with the People's Republic of China. By partnering with the US military, nations in the Indo-Pacific would

21. HQDA, *Military Competition*, 2.
22. HQDA, *Military Competition*, ii.
23. Christopher P. Twomey, *The Military Lens: Doctrinal Difference and Deterrence Failure in Sino-American Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 151,123.

have opportunities for defense and security alliances; access to US resources, military technology, and materiel; and the possibility of greater financial, information, and economic cooperation.

Integration in these domains could create a relative advantage in preventing the first potential battle of the next war (if it were to happen in the cyber domain). While competition in the Indo-Pacific aims to avoid escalating crisis into conflict, limiting a conflict's scale and returning to competition as rapidly as possible represents USINDOPACOM's second concern. To facilitate a return to competition from conflict, McConville asserts the Army must maintain contact in all domains, hold adversary interests at risk, impose costs on malign actions, enhance assurance, persist inside threat systems (such as anti-access and area denial), and facilitate the transition to competition.[24] The embedded adviser forces of the security force assistance brigades could serve as the connectors for maintaining contact across domains while holding adversary interests at risk and imposing costs on malign actions through partner interoperability.

The presence of adviser forces enhances the strategic position of East Asian partners and enables continuous operations within adversary A2AD zones. By bridging the range of operations throughout escalation to conflict, embedded security force assistance brigades could present a unique opportunity to facilitate the transition back to competition, as the bulk of security cooperation and assistance operations remain in the competition space, regardless. Moreover, enduring SFAB presence could create friendly forward positions within Indo-Pacific threat A2AD networks. The brigades distributed organization across echelons could mitigate the risk of isolation within Chinese or Russian Indo-Pacific A2AD networks by creating a smaller target than conventional forces.[25]

Despite their small size, the ongoing presence of security force assistance brigades would support deterrence by providing a constant reminder the United States could respond quickly to escalatory actions. The 2006–23 Army strategic planning guidance suggests successful competition in the Indo-Pacific relies upon "deterring aggression and countering coercion against the U.S., its forces, allies and friends in critical areas of the world by developing and maintaining the capability to swiftly defeat attacks with only modest reinforcements."[26] Through enduring integration of security force assistance brigades with partnered foreign-land component security

24. HQDA, *Military Competition*, 10.
25. US Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), *The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028* TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, 2018), x.
26. HQDA, "*Army Strategic Planning Guidance*," 14.

forces in the East Asian littorals, the United States reduces the potential for more extensive force commitments should competition transition to conflict. Effectively "dissuading adversaries from developing threatening forces or ambitions, shaping the future military competition in ways that are advantageous to the U.S. and complicating the planning and operations of adversaries" would preempt more coercive forms of deterrence.[27]

Consequently, enduring SFAB integration with East Asian partnered land components creates a deterrent in being with a lower risk of conflict escalation across domains than other joint formations. Before partnered forces can effectively dissuade adversaries as part of Joint and multinational competition efforts, US forces must reassure partners "by demonstrating U.S. steadiness of purpose, national resolve and military capability to defend and advance common interests, and by strengthening and expanding alliances and security relationships."[28] The brigades' presence in the Indo-Pacific provides assurance at a low risk and materiel cost compared to other joint capabilities.

If the first military problem presented by competition is how the Joint forces prevent escalation from competition to conflict, then successful security force assistance and security cooperation are critical. Countering adversary competition actions in the USINDOPACOM area of operation, US Army forces "as an element of the Joint force, conduct Multi-Domain Operations to prevail in competition; when necessary, Army forces penetrate and dis-integrate enemy anti-access and area denial systems and exploit the resultant freedom of maneuver to achieve strategic objectives (win), and force a return to competition on favorable terms."[29] Crucial tenets of multi-domain competition include having forward-postured expeditionary forces, massing cross-domain fires, maximizing human potential, and layering options. Army special operations forces and security force assistance brigades possess organic doctrine, organization, training, and equipment to execute security force assistance and security cooperation across each tenet.[30]

Building partner capacity is critical to succeeding in multi-domain competition; therefore, the security force assistance brigade should play a significant role. The brigades meet critical requirements for success in multi-domain competition, including "[p]reparing the operational environment by building partner capacity and interoperability and setting the theater through such activities as establishing basing and access rights,

27. HQDA, *Army Strategic Planning Guidance*, 14.
28. HQDA, *Army Strategic Planning Guidance*, 14.
29. TRADOC, *Multi-Domain Operations 2028,* vii.
30. HQDA, *Military Competition*, iv.

prepositioning equipment and supplies, conducting preparatory intelligence activities, and mapping EMS and computer networks." Likewise, they help with, "[b]uilding partners' and allies' capacities and capabilities to defeat increasingly sophisticated Chinese and Russian-sponsored unconventional and information warfare," further emphasizing the criticality of combined, partnered, and allied contributions to competition. Consequently, dedicated adviser forces are critical to enabling partner capabilities in facilitating successful multi-domain convergence.

Additionally, employing security force assistance brigades could effectively mitigate the military risks posed by China and Russia in the Indo-Pacific region. The Army multi-domain operating concept highlights that, while Chinese and Russian military systems in the Indo-Pacific are robust, they depend on a predictable, pattern-bound enemy. Beyond simply alternating US Joint force posture, embedding adviser units with East Asian partnered security forces generates more options and increases the width and depth of the battlefield across domains for potential threat actors. Combined (that is, multinational) rather than US-only force posture alternation enables strategic and operational deception efforts across domains.[31]

As China and Russia have developed "space, cyber, information, and electronic warfare (EW) capabilities that can halt American power projection before it begins," the need to augment partnered land capabilities in achieving convergence will only increase. Partnered security forces in the USINDOPACOM area of operations represent forward-postured allied capabilities within Chinese and Russian A2AD zones. Brigades can leverage partners already present in theater (like Vietnam, Singapore, and Taiwan) to compete in the land, air, and maritime domains other US forces cannot enter without escalating to conflict. In the multi-domain operating concept, security force assistance brigades competing through partners provide "overmatch through speed and range at the point of need."[32]

McConville explains how the Army's contribution to multi-domain competition rests on three lines of effort—engaging and training, equipping and enabling, and advising and assisting to "[e]xpand the [l]andpower [n]etwork."[33] The security force assistance brigade is currently the only Army formation doctrinally trained and equipped to execute each line of effort simultaneously for itself and a partnered force. While McConville's white paper specifies competing in the land domain, the contribution of East Asian littoral land component security forces to air, littoral, cyber,

31. TRADOC, *Multi-Domain Operations 2028*, 29.
32. HQDA, *Multi-Domain Transformation*, 1.
33. HQDA, *Multi-Domain Transformation*, 2.

space, and information operations suggests an expanded role in achieving convergence through partners.

Security force assistance brigades could play a vital role in countering Russia and China's attempts to "outflank" US partnerships and alliances using the space, cyber, and information domains to fracture alliances below the threshold of armed conflict.[34] While some scholars question the efficacy of Westphalian alliance systems, the presence of brigades in the theater with partnered forces represents a clear assurance of the United States' commitment to partner defense. The brigades' presence also disrupts Russian and Chinese coercion attempts by physically emplacing forces within the competition space, which forces adversaries to account for them in their decision calculus.[35] Beyond enabling partnered contributions in the land domain, brigades could assist partners in deterring attempts to fracture allied command-and-control architecture in the cyber, space, and information domains in a foreign internal defense capacity.[36]

Embedding security force assistance brigades with East Asian partners raises the stakes of fait accompli attacks while extending operational reach. Brigades can advise foreign security force fires while simultaneously integrating US joint fires in-depth across domains. Their integration into allied command-and-control architecture in East Asia flattens organizational hierarchies while reducing friction. Although not organically organized to prevail in large-scale ground combat, SFAB-partnered interoperability in competition dramatically reduces the risk of large-scale ground combat in the first place.

Security force assistance brigades in allied and partnered nations will provide many of the same capabilities as conventional forces and reduce the burden on host nations. Brigades possess the same communication systems as conventional Army forces, in addition to others found only in the special operations community. They possess the ability to clear joint fires at the brigade and battalion levels and within the fires battalion and joint fires observers in the infantry battalion and cavalry squadron. They are also capable of executing the operations process like conventional brigades and battalions. The smaller scale of the brigade staffs, however, requires careful allocation of resources and efforts to balance advise, assist, support, liaise (with), and

34. HQDA, *Multi-Domain Transformation,* 3.
35. Brett Ashley Leeds, "Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes," *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (July 2003): 427ff.
36. HQDA, *Multi-Domain Transformation,* 3.

enable (AASLE) operations to coordinate with conventional operations, depending on the mission and operating environment.

One of the chief areas where a brigade's smaller scale could and should be employed is in synchronization efforts with allies and partners in the cyber domain. The US Army cyberspace operations concept describes how China and Russia attempt to "capitalize on emerging technologies to establish and maintain a cultural and social advantage; leveraging these new capabilities for command and control, recruiting, coordinating logistics, raising funds, and propagandizing their message" in the Indo-Pacific.[37] A foundational dimension of the Joint and Army cyber approach in countering Chinese and Russian competition in cyberspace relies upon "strategic engagement, which involves keeping friends at home, gaining allies abroad, and generating support or empathy for the mission."[38] Understanding that the maintenance of competitive advantage in cyberspace relies on coordinating all combined-force capabilities, since the cyber domain pervades all others, the need to synchronize allied and partnered cyber efforts in Indo-Pacific competition will only increase.

While the current SFAB organization does not contain dedicated cyber forces, signal capabilities within headquarters adviser teams and the SFAB signal company are capable of augmenting US Cyber Command cyber combat mission teams. The Army cyberspace operations concept defines the *cyber domain* as a "global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information technology infrastructures, including the Internet, telecommunications networks, computer systems, and embedded processors and controllers."[39] The brigades have recognized the cyber domain's influence on the information domain. Consequently, they have sought to contribute to convergence through operational messaging and dedicated support to partner information operations to counter malign Chinese and Russian information campaigns.

The SFAB's robust organic signal capabilities create opportunities to link less secure or sophisticated allied and partnered networks to the Department of Defense networks at a lower cost and risk than directly linking foreign networks. The same logic theoretically applies to the space domain. Although most East Asian littoral allies and partners possess limited space capabilities, a brigade's ability to provide a secure coupling between foreign and US networks allows partners to benefit from the full range

37. TRADOC, *The U.S. Army Concept Capability Plan for Cyberspace Operations*, 2016-2028 TRADOC Pamphlet 525-7-8 (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, 2010), i.
38. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, i.
39. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, 68.

of US space capabilities, including navigation and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

Given the unprecedented speed with which adversaries can seize positions of advantage in cyberspace, having security force assistance brigades on-site and operating with partnered cyber forces would create an improved, competitive deterrent complex.[40] A brigade's role as an adviser on foreign military sales could aid East Asian littoral partners with the constantly evolving hardware and software necessary to compete in the cyber, information, and space domains.[41] Given that an increasing amount of cyber equipment acquisition comes from foreign vendors, the ability of brigades to influence investment in software and hardware for partners and the Joint force is potentially considerable.[42]

Adversaries employ "sponsorship, training, education, skills, motivation, or tools" competing via proxies in the space, cyber, and information domains. Therefore, embedded adviser forces with East Asian partners executing such lines of effort could preempt Chinese and Russian attempts to gain relative advantage in the cyber domain within the Indo-Pacific.[43] The Joint force currently possesses limited forces in the Indo-Pacific theater to liaise with or train foreign security forces in cyber, space, and information operations.[44] Additional training or organizational changes would be necessary for brigades to provide training, education, and skills to East Asian partnered cyber forces. The presence of regionally aligned brigade forces in the Indo-Pacific creates an opportunity to bridge time delays in deploying combat cyber support teams to the theater. It also supports the Army cyberspace operating requirement that "the Army's battle command system must be able to exchange relevant operational information with Joint, interagency, intergovernmental multinational partners, nongovernmental organizations and contractors."[45] Furthermore, embedding brigade advisers enables the subsequent cyberspace operating requirement of integrating "coalition partner(s) and other specified networks during garrison and deployed operations, including the capability to integrate into the networks of coalition partners with different intelligence-sharing relationships in order to enable effective Joint and/or multinational operations and ensure freedom of action."[46]

40. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, 10.
41. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, 11.
42. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, 12.
43. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, 13.
44. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, 39.
45. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, 48.
46. TRADOC, *Cyberspace Operations*, 48.

Realistically, supplemental training on cyber operations would be necessary for most existing brigade advisers.

Conclusion

Security force assistance brigades represent the connective tissue or hub necessary to enable unified action and unity of effort across the multinational command-and-control architecture in the Indo-Pacific Command. A first step the Army can take to make full use of a brigade's capabilities would be to embed SFAB advisers beyond the tactical level. Building on this step, the Army, in conjunction with the Indo-Pacific Command and grand strategic command authorities, must seek opportunities to integrate security force assistance brigades with regional allies and partners whom the United States does not historically possess enduring peacetime security agreements (such as Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Malyasia).

In addition, the Army must seek opportunities to employ brigades in lieu of conventional ground-combat formations, where appropriate, to enable cooperation, retain relative advantage in competition, and maintain competition below the threshold of armed conflict. The presence of embedded SFAB advisers with East Asian allied and partnered multi-domain components links partnered capabilities to the US Indo-Pacific Command Joint multi-domain convergence effort. Furthermore, the brigades' small organizational profile allows them to embed with East Asian allies and partners and passively penetrate threat A2AD networks, circumventing the military problem of power projection in a denied environment. By integrating security force assistance brigades with partnered foreign security forces, the US Army can leverage partner multi-domain capabilities in ways that complement US Joint and interagency capabilities, deter adversaries, and create relative advantage, enabling successful competition for the United States and allies across domains.

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