

United States Marine Corps

Center for Irregular Warfare

Maritime Littoral Workshop

Final Report

18 February 2010



Executive Summary

Workshop Overview

The USMC Center for Irregular Warfare (CIW) conducted the Maritime Littoral Workshop on 5-7 January, 2010, in McLean, VA. The workshop included participants from the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Department of State (DoS), and Department of Homeland Security. The participants discussed collaborative efforts in three selected areas of interest to the maritime Services in the littorals: security sector reform (SSR), security force assistance (SFA), and visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS). With regard to SSR, SFA, and VBSS capabilities in the littorals, the objectives of the workshop were:

- Increase understanding of USG agencies' conduct of SSR, SFA, and VBSS
- Identify current and potential areas of collaboration within the U.S. Government
- Identify recommendations for the maritime Services

Workshop participants worked in groups arranged by activity area and then by Service to identify insights, ways to improve collaboration, and recommendations for the maritime Services.

Definitions

The littorals are “those regions relating to or existing on a shore or coastal region, within direct control of and vulnerable to the striking power of naval expeditionary forces.”¹ Furthermore the littorals are the gateway to any state that borders an ocean or sea, which includes the exit point from that country to the global commons. Sea-bound public and private traffic passes through the littorals when entering or exiting a country. A government's ability to control its littorals is vital to its national interest. Control of the littorals ensures proper shoreline-based defensive/offensive positions; fluid commercial traffic into and out of country; and, freedom of movement for law-abiding private citizens.

SSR in the littorals is a host nation working with its foreign and international partners (including the United States) to reform/rebuild those security institutions whose operations/policies occur in or have an effect on near-shore land and water.

¹ U.S. Department of the Navy, *Naval Doctrine Publication 1: Naval Warfare*, 28 March 1994

SFA in the littorals encompasses the U.S. military training/advising foreign navies, coast guards, and other maritime organizations to build their capability and capacity as well as that of their sustaining institutions.

VBSS is a mission conducted by the maritime Services involving the approach, querying, and / or boarding of vessels by military and law enforcement forces in support of a wide variety of missions. Such missions occur across a wide spectrum of threat conditions and include sanction enforcement, anti-piracy, counter-drug, counter-smuggling, fisheries protection, and right of visit (ROV).

Workshop Insights

The **overarching take-away** from the workshop is *that many of the participants were unaware of the operational, training, and educational tasks that other USG organizations are conducting with respect to the littorals, domestically and internationally.* The insights that follow highlight this overarching take-away.

SSR Insights

- Though it is the lead for all SSR efforts, DoS does not have sufficient capacity.
- SSR is a long-term effort.
- Cultural awareness is essential to SSR.
- The U.S. military does not have the right manning structure for SSR.

SFA Insights

- The current DoD force management system is ill-equipped to allocate resources to address maritime SFA objectives.
- SFA requires a “train the trainer” approach.
- There is no standard for accrediting the training that is being given to the host nation.

VBSS Insights

- Each Service has disparate definitions and terms of reference for VBSS.
- There is no standard assessment of mission analysis process.
- Units conducting VBSS would benefit from training and operating jointly.
- The boarding process is not optimized for reducing risk.

Workshop participants identified a number of ways to improve collaboration between the maritime Services with regard to SSR, SFA, and VBSS as well as a number of recommendations for the maritime Services to improve overall capability and capacity to perform these three activities.

The workshop concluded with a number of recommendations by the Service and government leads to continue holding workshops and experiments intended to further understanding of USG

agencies' conduct of SSR, SFA, and VBSS and to identify additional areas of collaboration in these areas.

Maritime Littoral Workshop

Final Report

I. Workshop Overview

The USMC Center for Irregular Warfare (CIW) conducted the Maritime Littoral Workshop on 5-7 January, 2010, in McLean, VA. The workshop included participants from the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Department of State (DoS), and Department of Homeland Security. The participants discussed collaborative efforts in three selected areas of interest to the maritime Services in the littorals: security sector reform (SSR), security force assistance (SFA), and visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS). With regard to SSR, SFA, and VBSS capabilities in the littorals, the objectives of the workshop were:

- Increase understanding of USG agencies' conduct of SSR, SFA, and VBSS
- Identify current and potential areas of collaboration within the U.S. Government
- Identify recommendations for the maritime Services

Workshop participants were placed into working-groups organized by activity area (SSR, SFA, or VBSS). Each group worked over the course of the three days to produce insights into their activity area as it occurs in the littorals, including areas of collaboration and implications for the maritime Services. On the last day, the groups were re-structured by maritime Service, with the interagency partners comprising a fourth group. These groups discussed the workshop objectives from a Service/interagency perspective. All seven groups briefed their findings at a final plenary session.



USMC CIW Maritime Littoral Workshop
Purpose | Objectives | Output

Purpose
Bring together USG agencies (e.g., maritime Services and civilian organizations) to discuss security force assistance (SFA), security sector reform (SSR), and visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) in the littorals.
Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increase understanding of USG agencies' conduct of SFA, SSR, and VBSS in the littorals ▶ With regard to SFA, SSR, and VBSS capabilities in the littorals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify current and potential areas of collaboration within the U.S. Government ▶ Identify implications for the maritime Services
Output
An analytical report that outlines insights into USG SFA, SSR, and VBSS in the littorals, current and potential areas of collaboration, and implications for the maritime Services.

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II. SSR, SFA, and VBSS in the Littorals: Scoping

Each activity requires a different perspective and nuanced expertise. Grouping SSR, SFA, and VBSS together created a workshop that looked at how the U.S. Government writ large (SSR), DoD (SFA), and maritime Services (VBSS) collaborate in three distinct yet interrelated activities. What links these three activities together is the scoping of the workshop: the littorals. The littorals are “those regions relating to or existing on a shore or coastal region, within direct control of and vulnerable to the striking power of naval expeditionary forces.”² Additionally, they are the gateway to any state that borders an ocean or sea, which includes the exit point from that country to the global commons. Sea-bound public and private traffic passes through the littorals when entering or exiting a country. A government’s ability to control its littorals is vital to its national interest. Control of the littorals ensures proper shoreline-based defensive/offensive positions; fluid commercial traffic into and out of country; and, freedom of movement for law-abiding private citizens.

Following is a summary of each of these activity areas with a description of what they might look like in the maritime/littoral environment.

² U.S. Department of the Navy, *Naval Doctrine Publication 1: Naval Warfare*, 28 March 1994

- *Security sector reform.* In 2009, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), DoS, and DoD published an interagency document on security sector reform.³ This document defines “security sector reform” as “the set of policies, plans, programs, and activities that a government undertakes to improve the way it provides safety, security, and justice.”⁴ Notably, SSR is something that a government does to itself; whereas, SFA, addressed in the following paragraph, is (potentially) the military contribution of one government to another government’s own SSR initiatives. As this would apply to the United States, a host nation would request assistance with some or all aspects of its SSR efforts. The United States would then determine if its involvement would benefit the interests of the United States. If so, U.S. involvement would be led by DoS. SSR encompasses a spectrum of activities, only some of which fall to the military. DoS, USAID, and other interagency partners perform the remaining activities. In other words, the military would play a supporting role to civilian agencies in most SSR initiatives. SSR in the littorals is a host nation working with its foreign and international partners (including the United States) to reform/rebuild those security institutions whose operations/policies occur in or have an effect on near-shore land and water.

- *Security force assistance.* General David Petraeus coined the term SFA during a meeting with the Service chiefs in 2006. SFA has never been codified or officially defined in joint doctrine. To correct this, the draft Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) on SFA is awaiting signature and will be the first step toward a DoD definition. While the November 2009 version of the draft DoDI gives a one sentence definition for SFA – “activities that directly support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their sustaining institutions”⁵ – earlier versions of the DoDI went into greater detail, stating that SFA “does not supplant any programs or operations” such as foreign internal defense (FID), security cooperation (SC), or security assistance (SA), “but supports them, depending upon the operational environment and intended purpose of the partner building activity.”⁶ SFA is a term that describes military contribution to what should be a larger interagency process of engagement with a partner nation. SFA in the littorals encompasses the U.S. military training/advising foreign navies, coast guards, and other maritime organizations to build their capability and capacity as well as that of their sustaining institutions.

- *Visit, board, search and seizure.* VBSS is a mission conducted by the maritime Services involving the approach, querying, and / or boarding of vessels by military and law

³ U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Defense, *Security Sector Reform*, February 2009

⁴ *ibid.*, 3

⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, DRAFT *Department of Defense Instruction 30XX.XX: Security Force Assistance*, 18 November 2009, 1

⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, DRAFT *Department of Defense Instruction 30XX.XX: Security Force Assistance*, 20 September 2009, 1-2

enforcement forces in support of a wide variety of missions. Such missions occur across a wide spectrum of threat conditions and include sanction enforcement, anti-piracy, counter-drug, counter-smuggling, fisheries protection, and right of visit (ROV). In certain theaters of operation, VBSS operations are a subset of Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) where maritime forces are employed to enforce sanctions or national policies imposed either unilaterally by a state or multilaterally by two or more states or as directed by the United Nations Security Council (NTTP 3-07.11). Each of the maritime Services - United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, and the United States Coast Guard – approaches the VBSS mission differently based on Service missions, Title authorities (such as Titles 10, 14, 18, 19, 33, and 50 under which the USCG operates) and bilateral agreements, doctrine, and current and future capabilities. As with security sector reform and security force assistance, VBSS operations contribute to security in the littorals.

III. Workshop Output

Much of what was discussed in the working groups and what they produced as output *was not* littoral-specific. Additionally, the participants' maritime-specific insights, for the most part, are expandable to general insights for SFA, SSR, and VBSS respectively, and vice versa. The groups tended to list broad categories of insights, areas of collaboration, and implications, which are can be tailored to any number of environments, including maritime or littoral, specifically. Furthermore, the groups tended to reach the same conclusions despite having different activity areas on which to focus.

The sections that follow will highlight insights, areas of collaboration, and recommendations for the maritime Services and their interagency partners. While these sections are generated from the group discussions and final briefings, they are not verbatim; rather, they are the product of analysis.

The **overarching take-away** from the workshop is that *many of the participants were unaware of the operational, training, and educational tasks that other USG organizations are conducting with respect to the littorals, domestically and internationally*. The insights that follow highlight this overarching take-away.

SSR Workshop Insights

INSIGHT #1 – Though Department of State is the lead for all SSR efforts, it does not have sufficient capacity.

DoS is the USG lead for participation in a host nation's SSR. However, while DoS has all of the authorities and much of the capability, it has little to no capacity to execute. This is not a new concern. It is a perennial challenge that requires a complex, systemic solution in the form of money, resources, priorities, and cultural imperatives transferring from one U.S. Federal agency to another. Without a capacity build-up in DoS and other civilian agencies, DoD will continue to

undertake much of the activity for the diplomatic and development aspects of SSR at the peril of the United States in two regards. First, foreign populations are uneasy with a U.S. military presence in their country, however benign the U.S. Government thinks the presence might be. Second, the military Services run the risk of stretching their ranks too thin by employing troops in traditionally non-military roles and losing proficiency in traditional skill sets as training in less-traditional skills increases to meet the demand signal.

INSIGHT #2 – There is no maritime doctrine for Stability Operations within which maritime SSR would reside.

Although there is the FM 3-07 and a JP3-07 in draft form, neither of these documents address the maritime aspects of either stability operations or maritime SSR. Without Service doctrine to provide context, there is little or no foundational requirement to pursue or implement DOTMLPF change to implement additional capability.

INSIGHT #3 – Cultural awareness is essential to SSR.

Cultural awareness is vital to the success or failure of SSR. No country is a cultural mirror of the United States. For that matter, most countries in which the United States would be supporting SSR have institutions and employ processes that bear little to no resemblance to those of the United States. As such, creating foreign security institutions in the image of U.S. institutions could create resentment of the United States and undue burden for the host nation. U.S. law does not currently give much leeway to the maritime Services in helping to reform a host nation's maritime organizations. Not every host nation will want or need separate navies, coast guards, port authorities, customs and immigration organizations, and federal police services. As U.S. law currently stands, there are hard lines where military and other Federal agencies can and cannot participate in the reforming and rebuilding of these host nation organizations. For example, the U.S. Navy could only train foreign police forces or customs agents if these organizations were under the purview of the host nation's military.

INSIGHT #4 – The U.S. military does not have the right manning structure for SSR.

The maritime Services – and the U.S. military writ large – are not properly structured for the type of “plug and play” manning that SSR efforts require. Most likely, any given SSR effort will not require all aspects of the maritime Services to participate, though it might. There is no central body/system to prioritize these SSR manning requirements. Additionally, the SSR matrix that

DoS created outlining the various agency/department participants and their roles is a useful baseline template for how the United States should organize its participation in SSR missions.⁷

SFA Workshop Insights

INSIGHT #1 – The current DoD force management system – meant to allocate personnel and materiel for major combat operations – is ill-equipped to allocate resources to address maritime SFA objectives.

The Working Group discussed several reasons for this disconnect between demand signal and resourcing. First, SFA efforts are largely not connected to a combatant commander's theater campaign plan (TCP). TCPs are relatively new and generally forecast out on two year cycles. Many SFA operations are considered "steady state" or routine operations (such as port calls). Many are also unplanned or as a target of opportunity and therefore are not anticipated in the TCP writing process and are not registered as part of the demand signal.

Second, the mechanism for assigning forces to requirements does not favor joint or interagency solutions. The sourcing system favors single Service taskings to meet SFA demands. Many SFA operations require joint and interagency participation. In the case of littoral SFA, that could mean ICE, CBP, Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps personnel are all required to conduct joint training of a partner nation in a complex and inherently multi-agency mission such as port security. Not including any one of these organizations would jeopardize the value and completeness of the training. While the TCP might be able to express the necessity of the joint force to work with interagency partners, the TCP cannot mandate that the Services give specific units with specific capabilities to the COCOM, nor can the TCP mandate resource allocation from interagency partners.

Third, no two SFA operations are exactly alike. Without a central system for registering a demand signal, the diverse requirements of SFA operations go partially met, at best, and rely on ad hoc cooperation between joint forces, interagency partners, and a host nation. An important point to note is that while much of the collaboration for SFA – and SSR – is done on an ad hoc basis, there are many that believe institutionalizing and normalizing processes could prove to be the biggest barrier to success yet. Indeed, many current laws that keep the military and police out of each other's lanes, for example, epitomize how an institutional norm can hinder progress. A degree of flexibility is necessary.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Security Sector Reform: Organization and Authorities within the U.S. State Department*, April 2008

INSIGHT #2 - SFA requires a “train the trainer” approach.

The working group determined that the joint force does not adequately focus on the “train the trainer” preparation needed for SFA. The central objective of SFA is building partner capacity (BPC), which includes training and advising partner nation militaries and defense institutions to perform operations and activities on their own. An oft-overlooked, but no less important secondary focus is the training of host nation forces to generate their own trainers and advisors. The end goal of an SFA mission, no matter how long the time horizon, is to leave a partner nation able to execute and train in the activities that the U.S. military has taught them. This requires the joint force to plan and execute SFA missions that have as its central goal the establishment of self-sustaining programs within the host nation. The working group found that most of the preparation of the joint force focused on preparing the joint force to either execute the mission themselves or to train the host nation on the activity itself. The example used by the working group was Marines sent to train the host nation on conducting security patrols, vice establishing a school run by the host nation to teach the same skills. Therefore, training the trainers and building a robust advisor corps is vital to ensuring the sustainability of these skill sets that lead to success in long-term building and sustaining partner capacity.

INSIGHT #3 -- There is no standard for accrediting the training that is being given to the host nation.

The working group determined that there is no standard or accreditation process for training aimed at building maritime partner capacity. The group identified two issues that contribute to this. First, each maritime Service prepares its personnel for these operations using its respective tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and standards for evaluating performance. This lack of common tasks and standards leads to differences in how each organization that conducts SFA to train the host nation using its own training as the baseline. Second, a lack of common standards exists for accrediting organizations or training programs prior to deploying on an SFA mission. There are no standard programs of instruction or instructor evaluation standards common to each maritime Service tasked with conducting maritime SFA. Currently, each Service trains and accredits its own units for SFA missions prior to being provided to the combatant commanders.

VBSS Workshop Insights

INSIGHT #1 – Each Service has disparate definitions and terms of reference for VBSS.

To facilitate and enhance the joint training and operation of VBSS forces, it will be important for the maritime Services to align definitions and terms of reference employed in VBSS.⁸

INSIGHT #2 – There is no standard assessment or mission analysis process.

Each of the maritime Services maintains varying capabilities with respect to VBSS; some of those capabilities are unique to a particular Service while others are common and complimentary. A standardized assessment and mission analysis process would optimize the scarce resource capabilities of the maritime Services by clearly identifying the range of VBSS capabilities of each Service across the range of missions and threat categories, levels, and echelons in order to identify capability overlaps and shortfalls.⁹

INSIGHT #3 – Units conducting VBSS would benefit from training and operating jointly.

Working group discussions highlighted the value of the maritime Services training and operating jointly for VBSS missions and partnering and sharing scarce training resources. Each Service has unique capabilities that when executed jointly creates very flexible and highly capable force packages. As examples, the Coast Guard has a series of title authorities which permits them to conduct a wide range of military and law enforcement missions, the Marine Corps is in the process of developing a significant capability to conduct Level III boardings, and the Navy has a large surface fleet with crews capable of conducting Level II boardings but does not have law enforcement authorities nor higher Level boarding capability.¹⁰ A joint force package of Coast Guard law enforcement personnel with Level III capable Marines embarked on Navy surface combatants would give the combatant commanders a very flexible and highly capable instrument, increasing theater capacity to undertake a wider range of VBSS-related missions. Each of the maritime Services maintains its own training programs to support the development of VBSS capabilities, many of which employ common TTPs. By partnering in such areas as

⁸ A fundamental problem in the workshop is that the VBSS definition is only releasable to DoD personnel and their contractors. If VBSS capability and capacity is to be adequately addressed among the maritime Services and other USG agencies, at a bare minimum the definition must be releasable to the entire community of interest.

⁹ The maritime Services identify the corresponding capabilities needed to categories, levels, and echelons. Each Service has its own phraseology, whether it be category, level, or echelon, to determine the corresponding unit to assign to the mission.

¹⁰ Level II and Level III are terms used by the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps to designate the threat level associated with boarding operations. Level II boardings that are generally considered compliant situations where boarding teams have been allowed to come on board to review documents and inspect a vessel. Level III pertains to non-compliant boarding situations, where permission to board has not been granted by the vessel's master and may involve activities on the part of the crew to impede or deny boarding. Level I boardings are not very well defined. It is roughly the equivalent of boarding a U.S. flagged vessel. The Navy does not board U.S. flagged ships.

training, the maritime Services can optimize scarce resources and allow the Service with the best training capability to take the lead in training the other Services, creating more efficient training pipelines and producing more proficient forces.

INSIGHT #4 – The boarding process is not optimized for reducing risk.

The actual boarding process, putting Service members on to foreign vessels from small boats and aircraft in often poor weather conditions and into potentially hazardous threat environments, is inherently risky. Having accepted the risk by conducting the boarding and having incurred a significant upfront investment in personnel, equipment, and training, it is incumbent on the operational commanders to maximize the results of the boarding process by properly collecting and exploiting all the information and intelligence that may be available on the target platform within the confines of policy and strategy of the cognizant operational commander in order to optimize the boarding process and to support such important capabilities as maritime domain awareness.

IV. Improving Collaboration

The working groups identified the following ways that the maritime Services could improve collaboration:

- Establish a common database to share after-action reports, lessons learned, and assessments of SSR and SFA missions.
- Establish a common assessment methodology to determine maritime requirements for any given host nation.
- Examine the establishment of joint training teams for maritime SSR, SFA, and VBSS missions as required.
- Establish intra-USG student, staff, and faculty exchanges at schools that contribute to maritime SSR and SFA activities.
- Address insights in the joint, interagency community of interest (COI) meetings (e.g., the USSOCOM-led SFA COI).
- Establish a formal relationship with interagency partners operating in the maritime domain (e.g., Border Patrol Special Operations HQ) to examine maritime collaboration opportunities.

V. Service/Interagency Recommendations

- The maritime Services should lead the effort to establish joint doctrine for SSR, SFA, and VBSS.
- The maritime Services should consider expanding the Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower document to include interagency partners as signatories for future versions.
- The Department of the Navy should lead a review of the maritime Services' capability to perform all three categories of VBSS – compliant, noncompliant I, and noncompliant II.
- The maritime Services should hold a VBSS conference at the classified level.
- The maritime Services should create a tri-Service assessment and planning capability for SSR – doing so will help to reveal deficiencies in capabilities, capacities and authorities.
- The maritime Services should work with USJFCOM to ensure that their equities and concerns are properly accounted in the Deployable Assessment and Assistance Team Concept.
- The maritime Services should enact standards for U.S. military trainers and advisors that serve in SSR and SFA missions. Standards should also be developed to which the host nation forces/maritime organizations must train before being certified in a skill set.
- The maritime Services should ensure that cultural norms of the host nation are reflected in the institutions and organizations established as a result of SFA and SSR. These norms should be taught per country in the school house before trainers and advisors are sent to a host nation.
- The maritime Services should continue to work with DoS and USAID to develop a more detailed and true-to-life SSR task matrix based on the effort that DoS has already undertaken.
- The maritime Services should establish a VBSS training resource community of practice or a VBSS training integrated process team to identify areas of joint partnership and resource sharing in VBSS training and to aid in the establishment of a common joint operating culture.
- The maritime Services should establish an aviation working group to develop common procedures for aircraft employment and increase familiarity with each Service's capabilities as well as aid in the establishment of a common joint operating culture.
- The maritime Services should consider a Capabilities Based Assessment (CBA) for VBSS across the range of missions and threat categories, levels, and echelons in order to identify capability overlaps and shortfalls.

VI. Way Ahead

The Marine Corps Maritime Littoral Workshop was the first step to accomplishing many of the implications listed in this report. It was a unique opportunity for all three maritime Services to meet with their interagency partners and discuss a unique problem set: how to perform interagency, DoD-specific, and maritime Service-specific activities collaboratively in the littorals. The workshop concluded with a number of recommendations by the Service and government leads to continue holding workshops and experiments intended to further understanding of USG agencies' conduct of SSR, SFA, and VBSS and to identify additional areas of collaboration in these areas. In particular, CIW leadership recommends the following specific action:

- Incorporation of maritime SSR, SFA and VBSS into future games/experiments like the Joint Irregular Warrior as well as through USJFCOM's Warfighter Challenges series.
- Supporting a DoS-sponsored workshop specifically geared toward SSR.
- Participation in a tri-Service maritime community of interest.
- Creating a web-portal for discussion of maritime-specific issues on either the Small Wars Journal website or the CIW website.
- Participate in the development of joint doctrine for SSR, SFA, and VBSS. Specifically CIW should lead a maritime stability doctrine effort.

VII. Appendix A - Workshop Participants

USMC CIW Maritime Littoral Workshop POC List				
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VII. Appendix B – Literature Review Sources

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