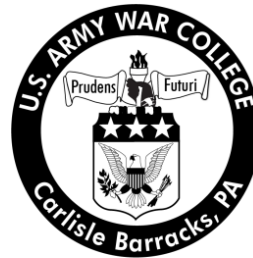


Civilian Research Project USAWC Fellow

Expanding the State Partnership Program within Asia Pacific

by

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United States Army War College
Class of 2013

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USAWC CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

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The United States announced in January 2012 implementation of a new Defense Strategic Guidance. This revised guidance pivoted the U.S. military's emphasis to Asia Pacific and the security and stability of the region. Traditionally, the Department of Defense (DoD) engages Asia Pacific countries through security cooperation programs to build partnerships in an effort to maintain the security and stability of the region. With 65 partnerships spanning the globe, the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) continues to expand access, collaboration, and interoperability with partner countries. However, only seven partnerships exist in the Asia Pacific region. This limited presence requires an assessment of the SPP to determine what steps to take to expand its capabilities within the area of operation. This Civilian Research Project will assess the current SPP configuration to determine if it is optimal for Asia Pacific. This document will demonstrate why expanding the SPP in the Asia Pacific region is a prudent move.

Expanding the State Partnership Program within Asia Pacific

The United States announced in January 2012 implementation of a new Defense Strategic Guidance that pivoted or rebalanced the U.S. military's emphasis to the Asia Pacific.¹ The U.S. seeks to influence the region with a *soft power* approach using security cooperation programs designed to maintain security and stability. The National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) is an element of this approach. With 65 partnerships spanning the globe, the SPP continues to expand access, collaboration, and interoperability with partner countries.² However, only seven partnerships currently exist within Asia Pacific, demonstrating a potential underutilization of the program within the region. Senior leaders from the National Guard, the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), and the U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) recognize this shortfall and believe the program's emphasis must shift to Asia Pacific. With a mature program and powerful stakeholders, a change in emphasis is no easy task. State governors and Adjutants General may be unwilling or apprehensive to limit engagements with existing partnerships unless there are overwhelming benefits. Furthermore, a change in emphasis may be untimely and difficult, particularly in light of increased oversight of the program by Congress and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). These issues represent only some of the obstacles precluding a shift in emphasis.

Although issues exist, evidence shows that a shift in emphasis to the Asia Pacific region is in the best interest of the United States. Shifting the emphasis will align the SPP with the Defense Strategic Guidance to rebalance to Asia Pacific, provide additional resources to maintain security and stability within the region, shape the USPACOM Security Cooperation Plan, and provide expanded trading and economic opportunities. However, five core issues limit the program's ability to expand within Asia

Pacific. These include a lack of formalized SPP guidance and metrics; marginalization of the National Guard within Asia Pacific; lack of training and an established career path for Soldiers and Airmen who implement the program; a lack of understanding of the economic benefits of Asia Pacific partnerships; and policies and perceptions that limit the program's ability to engage countries such as China. Some of these issues affect the program as a whole, regardless of the region in which it is implemented.

The State Partnership Program and Asia Pacific Overview

While many senior Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State (DoS), and National Guard leaders are familiar with the SPP, most do not have a clear understanding of the program's mission, goals, objectives, and funding sources. For example, Major General Mathews, Deputy Commander, USARPAC, noted, "The current program is Cold War centric."³ The absences of clear program guidance and metrics, combined with a misunderstanding of the program itself, fuel this perception. This overview will summarize the SPP, discuss its genesis and expansion, describe the program's goals and objectives, and highlight the importance of the Asia Pacific. This overview will also address some of the criticisms intertwined within the program and its apprehension to change.

State Partnership Program Overview

The National Guard's SPP, a Joint Security Cooperation program under the direction of the DoD, uses Army and Air National Guard resources to support military-to-military engagements. The SPP also leverages relationships with civilian contacts at the state and local level, and with private organizations to support civilian-to-military and civilian-

to-civilian engagements. These three engagement types are used to achieve Geographical Combatant Commanders' (GCC) and DoS Chiefs of Mission security cooperation goals. Civilian engagements are not supported with DoD funding, but are a key aspect of programmatic success because they bring additional capabilities and experiences not available within the National Guard. The SPP uses a soft power approach and aids the DoD and DoS by "strengthening relationships with partners to facilitate cooperation, access, and interoperability; improving cultural awareness and skills among U.S. military personnel; and fostering the integration of reserve and active component forces into a 'total force.'"⁴

Genesis and Expansion of the State Partnership Program

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the DoD developed the Joint Contact Team Program to increase military-to-military contact, establish relationships, and foster democratic governance in former Warsaw Pact countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, and the Ukraine.⁵ In 1992, when the North Atlantic Cooperation Council asked the DoD to assist Latvia with Military Support to Civil Authorities training—a traditional National Guard mission—the DoD turned to the National Guard to develop the training.⁶ The training was considered a success and laid the foundation for the development of the SPP. In 1993 the National Guard developed a proposal to partner with 13 former Central and Eastern European countries. The International Working Group, at the time the leading organization for all engagements with Warsaw Pact countries, and U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) approved the proposal, and the SPP was established.⁷

Today, the National Guard partners with 65 countries in support of all six GCCs. The two GCCs with the largest number of partnerships are USEUCOM and U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), both with 22. Figure 1 demonstrates the expanse of the partnerships and their support to the GCCs.

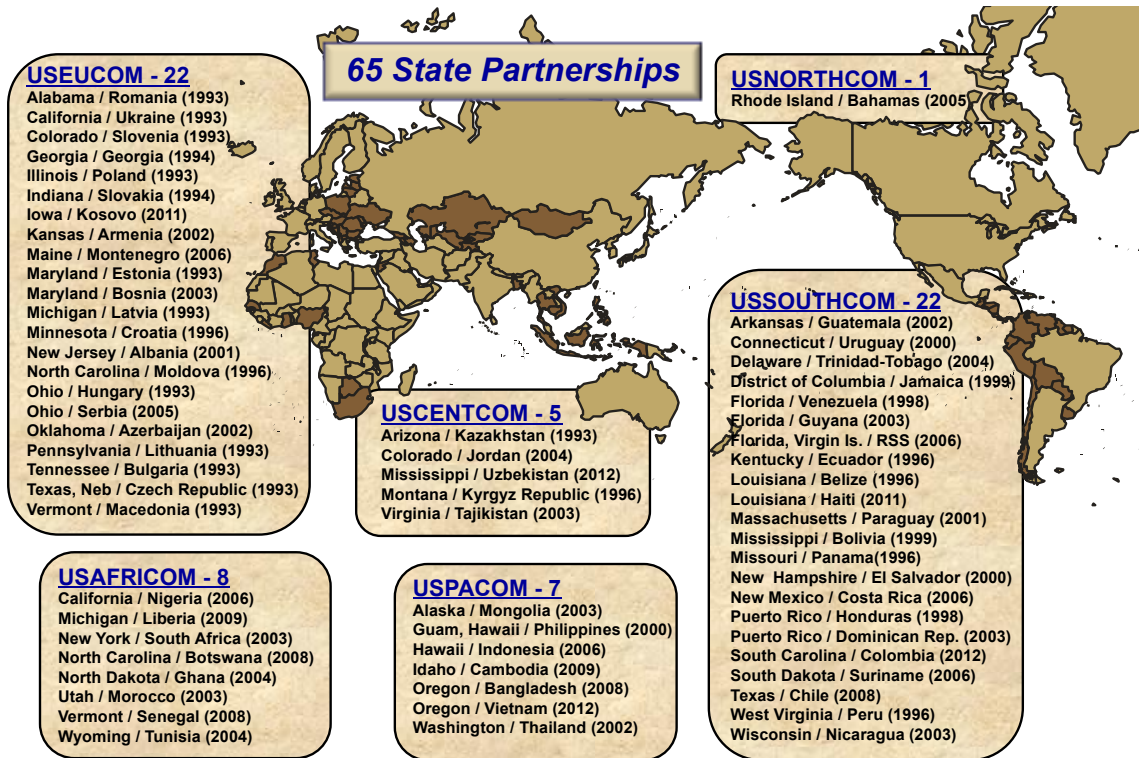


Figure 1. State Partnership Program Partnerships by GCC⁸

The large number of partnerships within USEUCOM and continued expansion of the program within the region are reasons why the Cold War perception exists. For example, as recently as 2011, Iowa established a partnership with Kosovo, a nation within USEUCOM.⁹ However, partnerships within USEUCOM continue to be some of the strongest within the SPP. These strong and enduring relationships create a dilemma for State governors and Adjutants General, and raise some very important questions: do they maintain the status quo and do nothing to jeopardize their existing strong

relationships; do they diminish their efforts with existing partners to build new ones in the Asia Pacific region; or do they abandon existing partnerships to support a complete shift to Asia Pacific?

As the SPP expanded from its original 13 partnerships, it also fought for limited resources and its existence. Prior to 2009, the majority of funds supporting the program came from GCCs, National Guard Bureau (NGB), State governors, or Adjutants General. Sixteen years after the establishment of the first partnership, the SPP received its first official funding with its inclusion into the 2009 Program Objective Memorandum (POM) and Future Year Defense Program (FYDP).¹⁰ Its struggle for legitimacy has been difficult, and repeated efforts by the Department of the Army and Department of the Air Force designed to eliminate, reduce, or relegate the program have created a group of individuals who see any attempt to modify the program as another attempt by the Services to marginalize it. As a result, these individuals resist change of any type. However, the Vice Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral James A. Winnefeld Jr., noted that the SPP has “proven to be a very, very valuable high-leverage tool for us, ... so we plan to build on things like that to help us on these innovative approaches to other parts of the world.”¹¹ To his point, interest in the program’s practicality and economy of force approach has created resurgence throughout the DoD. This resurgence highlights the value the SPP provides to all GCCs and makes the argument to refocus the program to Asia Pacific even more difficult, as it seems unlikely the GCCs would want to see their SPP resources shift or reduced to support the rebalance efforts. Furthermore, given the reduction in defense spending directed by the Budget Control

Act of 2011, GCCs must assess the impact a reduction of funds allocated to support the SPP will have on their security cooperation programs.

State Partnership Program Goals and Funding

For well over a decade the SPP worked in an ambiguous environment with little oversight by the DoD. Within this environment, NGB and the states developed an unconventional, yet effective process to meet the needs of the GCCs, Department of State Chiefs of Mission, and partner nations. While efforts to formalize the SPP have been attempted, the SPP never gained the structure commensurate with a formalized program. Figure 2 illustrates the vague goals developed by NGB in its Program Goals Fiscal Year 2008–2013, which was disseminated to the states in 2007.

Goal #1: Build partnership capacity to deter, prevent, and prepare.
Goal #2: Build partnership capacity to respond and recover.
Goal #3: Support partners' defense reform and professional development.
Goal #4: Enable and facilitate enduring broad-spectrum security relationships.

Figure 2. Mission and Goals of the State Partnership Program (2008–2013)¹²

These unconventional processes created a perception that the SPP implemented security cooperation engagements in an unfocused way and operated on the fringes of accountability. This perception is perpetuated by ongoing investigations designed to determine if DoD funds were used to support past military-to-civilian and civilian-to-civilian engagements, both not permissible under the National Defense Authorization Act.¹³ To combat this perception and to provide guidance on what is permissible, the DoD published its first Department of Defense Instruction in December of 2012 that “establishes policy, assigns responsibility, and provides instruction for the use of funds

appropriated to the DoD to pay the costs of authorizing SPP activities.”¹⁴ NGB is also addressing these criticisms, developing refined guidance and procedural requirements for the states to follow.

While additional guidance is a step in the right direction for formalizing the program, funding continues to be an issue. In 2009 the POM/FYDP included funding for the SPP; however, this funding was not resourced from a dedicated statutory authority. The SPP used monies from Title 10 (Armed Forces), Title 32 (National Guard), and programs such as Asia-Pacific Regional Initiative (APRI) fund and the Combatant Commander’s Initiative Fund to provide Soldier/Airmen’s Pay and Allowances (P&A), Temporary Duty Assignment (TDY), and travel.¹⁵ In Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) the SPP received approximately \$14.6 million. NGB manages these funds and divides them into three different accounts. Figure 3 illustrates fund management.

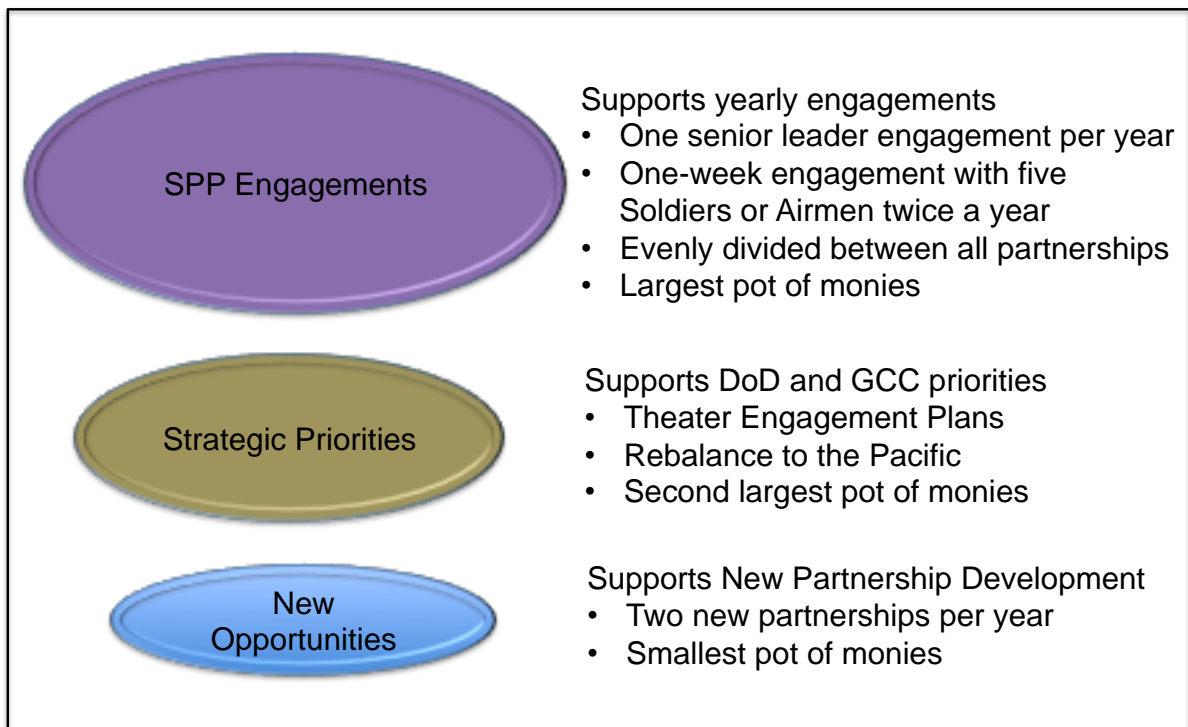


Figure 3. Expenditure Emphasis for State Partnership Program Monies¹⁶

The “SPP Engagement” account is the largest of these three accounts, and is evenly divided among the 65 existing partnerships. The allocation of funds supports one senior leader engagement and two one-week engagements, comprised of five Soldiers or Airmen, per year. Engagements above and beyond these three types of engagements require additional funding from either the DoD or the GCCs. The second account supports DoD or GCC strategic priorities. USPACOM will receive a 15% increase in funds in comparison to other GCCs in FY13 to support the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance emphasis to rebalance to the Pacific.¹⁷ GCCs, in conjunction with the NGB, determine the focus for the engagement and the anticipated outcome. The final, and smallest, account supports the development of future partnerships. NGB’s current plan is to add two new partnerships per year, until it reaches between 100 and 125 partners, which is the maximum number of engagements the NGB believes it can support.¹⁸ Some GCCs provide additional funds to support an expanded emphasis of the SPP within its own area of operation. This additional emphasis, however, causes a perception that certain geographical regions receive more funds than others.

The Asia Pacific Region

Why is the Asia Pacific region important to the U.S.? Using the boundaries of USPACOM’s area of operation, the Asia Pacific region covers 50% of the earth’s surface, is home to 36 countries, and includes the world’s four largest nations: China, India, Indonesia, and the United States. The region comprises half of the world’s population who speak over 3,000 languages.¹⁹ It is home to the three largest economies in the world: the U.S., China, and Japan. In 2011, these countries comprised 40% of the

world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) totaling \$28.2797 trillion in current U.S. dollars.²⁰

The Asia Pacific region is also home to seven of the ten largest armies in the world and various territorial disputes and regional flashpoints.²¹

The confluence of these dynamics influences international order and the U.S.'s security and prosperity, especially when pundits see the U.S. declining in both economic and regional influence. As China continues to grow as a political, economic, and military regional power, its capability to influence the region grows as well.

According to the structural theory concept of offensive realism, China desires four end states: to secure regional hegemony, maximize control of wealth, secure pre-eminent regional military might through a powerful land army, and attain nuclear superiority.²²

As China's power rises, the U.S. must increase its engagements in the region commensurate with the potential threat to ensure it maintains influence in Asia Pacific. The SPP assists in achieving this objective by developing partnerships and building partner capacity, thereby increasing stability, security, and regional influence. Shifting the emphasis of the SPP to Asia Pacific can and must be successfully implemented.

Issues Affecting the SPP Rebalance

As identified above, five core issues hamper shifting the SPP emphasis to Asia Pacific. The benefits of resolving these issues and shifting the focus of this economy of force program are significant to the U.S., its partner nations, and to the longevity of the program itself. The following section examines these core issues, provides recommended solutions to overcome them, and addresses a way to bring about the required change.

Core Issues

Formalized Guidance and Metrics

Aligning the SPP to the Asia Pacific region is in the best interests of the program, the U.S., and partner nations in the region. Since its inception, the employment of SPP capabilities in the types of ambiguous environments consistent with the nature of the post–Cold War era relied on empowering leadership techniques that necessitated implementing the program in a decentralized manner, relying on small-unit actions to achieve strategic level objectives. This empowering approach allowed for creativity and flexibility, and presented opportunities for states to leverage resources within their capabilities. The international community recognized the merit of the program and participating states’ desire to achieve desirable outcomes. As a result, the SPP expanded to every GCC within 12 years.

When the program was included in the 2009 POM, federal scrutiny and oversight came with it. In accordance with the Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the U.S. Government Accountability Office conducted a study of the SPP and determined the program “lacks clear goals, objectives, and performance metrics.”²³ Note.¹ Some analysts believed the program’s primary mission was to build partnerships; others felt building partnership capacity was the primary mission. Colonel Jeff Pounding, Chief, Operations Division, G3, Army National Guard, summarized this ambiguity by stating, “The program has a branding problem.”²⁴ To overcome this deficiency, NGB is in the process of developing the SPP Strategic Plan 2012–2016

¹ These deficiencies were apparent during the research for this document, as demonstrated by the different understandings, perspectives, and opinions as to the program’s mission and end state.

(Draft). This document is designed to provide an updated mission and goals for the program. Figure 4 illustrates the proposed mission statement and supporting goals for the SPP.

Mission: Support United States Combatant Command’s security cooperation goals and objectives by providing a consistent and stabilizing presence abroad, reinforcing deterrence, building capacity of U.S. and partner countries for internal and external defense, strengthening alliances, and increasing U.S. influence.
Goal #1: Educate and train National Guard forces for conducting security cooperation activities.
Goal #2: Sustain and strengthen enduring relationships and build partner capacity.
Goal #3: Advance geographic combatant commander and ambassador security cooperation goals.
Goal #4: Posture to adeptly respond to future global scenario by ensuring the program is synchronized with National, DoD, and Joint strategies.

Figure 4. Mission and Goals of the State Partnership Program (2012–2016)²⁵

While the document represents an important first step in overcoming criticism, significant details are still missing. For example, the Strategic Plan does not discuss evaluation criteria used to determine which state will partner with a specific nation. Such criteria could include natural disaster preparedness levels, natural disaster recovery experience, similar military composition and national demographics, or the number of Soldiers and Airmen who possess language capability commensurate with designated partner nations. When a potential partner nation approaches the U.S. Chief of Mission to request a partnership, the Chief of Mission could inquire about the objectives the nation would like to gain from the partnership. If an Asia Pacific nation highlighted typhoon preparedness and recovery training, it would be reasonable to link them with one of the Gulf Coast states due to these states’ experience with hurricanes. To formalize and add this information to the SPP’s Strategic Plan would be a simple task since the criteria already exists. Various NGB memos used in past selection processes

denote the evaluation criteria already used. By defining, standardizing, and publishing evaluation criteria into the Strategic Plan, NGB would establish increased transparency and increase the legitimacy of the selection process.

Assessment metrics must also be established to determine if a partnership is successful. The development of metrics to determine success would allow senior leaders to assess existing partnerships to determine if certain relationships should be reduced or eliminated. Dialogue with NGB, OSD, and DoS highlights this deficiency as one of the most difficult to overcome and explains why, in my opinion, the current SPP Strategic Plan lists no assessment metrics. In 2009, the RAND Corporation conducted research for OSD on assessing programs designed to build partnerships. This study revealed, “because security cooperation is both dispersed and long-term, it is difficult to measure.”²⁶

One way that NGB and Adjutants General measure success is by highlighting various SPP success stories. For example, the state of Alaska has a strong partnership with Mongolia, and that relationship extended to Iraq and Afghanistan. Mongolia, a country previously influenced by the U.S.S.R. and Russia, provided forces in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). From 2003 to 2008 the Mongolian Army deployed an Infantry company to support operations in Al Hillah and Ad Diwanyah, Iraq. These deployments came with one condition: the Alaska Army National Guard had to embed one officer and one Non-Commissioned Officer in the Mongolian company. This request came about due to the outstanding relationship developed through the SPP. In addition to providing Soldiers in support of operations in Iraq, since 2003 the Mongolian Army has provided an Artillery Mobile Training Team

and an over-strength Infantry company to Afghanistan. Once again, the Mongolian Army requested Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers in support of these missions.²⁷

Conversely, unsuccessful examples also exist. The Chief of Mission for Kazakhstan from 2001 to 2004, Ambassador (Retired) Larry Napper, noted the relationship between Arizona and Kazakhstan during his tenure as “limited at best.”²⁸

What is the status of the program today? Outside of opinion, this is difficult to assess. With the establishment of evaluation criteria, NGB, Arizona, and Kazakhstan could make a less subjective assessment to determine if the relationship requires a course correction.

The point in making this observation is not to debate the merits of the SPP itself; sufficient evidence suggests that the program is extremely successful. Rather, the point in highlighting this issue is that the SPP works within a resource-constrained environment and cannot afford to funnel funds or resources into a partnership that is not productive. The establishment of evaluation criteria will assist in this effort. By establishing a set of defined metrics, senior leaders will have the tools required to make informed decisions, therefore providing further legitimacy to the program. Otherwise, decisions will be based on subjective perceptions and opacity.

How should NGB go about developing these assessment metrics? A regionally based assessment process that integrates input from participating states, GCCs, and Chiefs of Mission within that region is a viable option. Applying a cookie-cutter approach of assessing success will not work because what is suitable in USEUCOM may not be suitable in USSOUTHCOM. This recommendation nests well with NGB’s goal of advancing the GCCs and ambassador’s security cooperation goals. This assessment

approach also provides senior leaders with a useful tool to make informed decisions. This type of assessment methodology also provides leaders with the information and ability to determine if a relationship requires expansion, reduction, or abandonment.

Finally, NGB needs to develop disengagement criteria. While the majority of the partnerships will continue to last for years, there will come a point when reduced partnering or graduation from a partnership is prudent. In my opinion, NGB is apprehensive to broach this subject for fear it will somehow precipitate a “beginning of the end” type circumstance for the SPP at large. States share a similar attitude. Colonel Gregory Chaney, Texas Army National Guard Chief of Staff, acknowledges, “Texas will never abandon our partnerships.”²⁹ However, a reduction in engagements, or a graduation from a partnership, may occur in this resource-constrained environment. In addition, a GCC and/or Chief of Mission could direct the graduation, or the relationship between the state and partner may become damaged beyond repair. Without pre-existing disengagement criteria, states and NGB will find themselves reacting hastily to high-risk situations with large geo-political implications such as civil wars, ethnic or religious tensions, or all-out war.

The appointment of General Frank Grass as the new Chief of NGB offers an opportunity to make these improvements to the draft SPP Strategic Plan. Upon assuming his responsibilities, General Grass implemented a no change to policy or programs directive for the first 100 days of his appointment in order to provide an opportunity to assess the organization. Leaders like Brigadier General Daniel Hokanson, NGB’s Director for Strategic Plans, Policy and International Affairs (J-5), now have an opportunity to educate General Grass on the pros and cons of the program. To

this fact, Brigadier General Hokanson placed the distribution of the SPP Strategic Plan on hold because he thinks it will require a rewrite once he receives further guidance from General Grass.³⁰

The development of the SPP Strategic Plan is the step in the right direction. This document provides updated missions, goals, and objectives. It begins the process of eliminating ambiguity and provides a framework for states to work within as they implement the program at the lowest level. However, the document needs additional guidance to include selection, evaluation, and disengagement criteria. This additional information will provide the oversight required of a program that spends congressional funds, enhances the program's legitimacy in the eyes of OSD and DoD, and provides states a framework to work within.

Marginalization of the National Guard in Asia Pacific

One aspect governors and Adjutants General worry about is the perceived marginalization of the National Guard within the Asia Pacific region. Consider the USARPAC Fiscal Year (FY) 2012–2015 Exercise Guidance. This document highlights the continued reduction of National Guard participation in exercises and training events within the region, as evidenced in the following extract:

FY13 is the last year USARPAC can support prior agreed upon commitments for RC [Reserve Component] components or find suitable like events. Starting in FY14 requirements for USARPAC Assigned Forces will be given priority of fill for exercise requirements before the events are offered for sourcing by RC components and lock in period for events will reflect Active Duty limitations of one year out horizon for training management. Currently reflected requirements filled with RC components in FY14 and beyond are not binding and must be validated up to a year before execution to be considered locked in.³¹

Following the release of the USARPAC Exercise Guidance, active Army Soldiers replaced Soldiers from Texas, Washington, and Tennessee in support of Keris Strike, Balanced Torch, and Tiger Balm in FY13.³² However, over the past ten years the National Guard supported these exercises when USARPAC assigned forces were deployed in support of OIF and OEF. Efforts by the National Guard supported the Defense Strategic Guidance by providing a stabilizing presence within the region while active component units were deployed.³³ In addition to supporting exercises, the National Guard deployed over 650,000 Soldiers in support of OIF and OEF as of 2012.³⁴ These exercises and deployments contributed greatly to reserve component training and readiness levels.

With tangible gains in readiness, training, and equipment modernization, both military and congressional leaders now view the National Guard as an operational reserve capable of achieving national military priorities. Secretary of the Army John McHugh solidified this view when he announced during the 2012 Association of the U.S. Army's meeting a "total force policy" to better integrate the Active and Reserve Components.³⁵ Secretary McHugh noted:

Since America was first attacked in 2001 one of the most important things we learned is how critical an operational reserve is to our ability to do mission requirements. It is paramount to keep the reserve well trained in order to keep the nation secure.³⁶

The Army now has an opportunity to achieve this end state. Through the continued use of National Guard forces in bilateral training exercises within the USPACOM area of operation, the Army can better align with strategic level guidance, and ultimately keep the nation more secure. These training opportunities would maintain and achieve the readiness and training standards required in Army Regulation 220-1 (Army Unit Status

Reporting and Force Registration—Consolidated Policies) and enable the National Guard to meet future requirements. However, actions within the USPACOM area of operation lead governors and Adjutants General to believe Secretary McHugh's comments are merely rhetorical as opposed to substantive.

The limited use of National Guard Soldiers to execute security cooperation engagements within USPACOM reflects the aforementioned sentiment, and a comparison between the number of SPP engagements within the various GCCs and USPACOM reveal a significant degree of disparity. NGB estimates that 46% of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), 44% of USEUCOM, and 20% of USSOUTHCOM's military-to-military engagements in FY12 were SPP related. For USPACOM, the estimate is calculated at 8%.³⁷ Note.² Of the 241 SPP engagements conducted in USEUCOM during FY12, 31% were resourced using Traditional Combatant Commander's Activities (TCA) funds and another 11% through Building Partnership Capacity monies. These funds are controlled by USEUCOM, which means the SPP funded 58% of the engagements while USEUCOM paid for the remaining 42%.³⁸ Conversely, USPACOM provided \$177,839 from its APRI to support three out of the 58 engagements, which is 5% of the total SPP engagements conducted in USPACOM's area of operation in FY12.³⁹

In addition to the reduction of engagements and funding issues, Adjutants General are not used to their full potential within the region. Lieutenant General Wiercinski, Commander of USARPAC, noted in his *Partnering in the Pacific Theater* white paper

² NGB updated their engagement numbers on February 28, 2013. They now assess the SPP accounts for 18% of USEUCOM military-to-military engagements; 14% in USAFRICOM; 26% in USSOUTHCOM; 13% in USCENTCOM; and 8% in USPACOM.

that “building and maintaining credibility and confidence is a deliberate process that occurs over years of interaction after numerous iterations.”⁴⁰ His intent is to meet with and interact with all 27 Defense Chiefs within the region on a regular basis. This effort requires support by other General Officers within the region due to the amount of time and distance it takes to meet with all of the Defense Chiefs. Therefore, the USARPAC staff developed a supporting senior leader engagement plan. Unfortunately, this plan does not leverage the existing relationships, experience, and longevity of some of the Adjutants General. For example, the senior leader engagement plan for Thailand places the primary responsibility for engagement with the Commander of the 25th Infantry Division, supporting responsibility with to the Commander of the 8th Theater Support Command (TSC), and additional support responsibility to The Adjutant General (TAG) for Washington State.⁴¹

This is an interesting support relationship if the intent is to truly build and maintain credibility and confidence. Most Adjutants General remain in their leadership position for years, unlike their AC counterparts who typically command for approximately 24 months. Again, using Thailand as the example, the previous TAG of Washington, Major General Lowenberg, held this leadership position for over twelve years before retiring in July 2012. He maintained a consistent relationship with the Thailand Defense Chief, Thailand government leaders, and Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group Thailand since the establishment of the state partnership in 2002. The current TAG, Major General Bret Daugherty, served as the Assistant Adjutant General–Army for Washington from 2009 to 2012 and built similar relationships within Thailand prior to assuming his role as TAG. In comparison, the 25th Infantry Division Commander, Major General Fuller, assumed

command in April 2012 and the 8th TSC Commander, Major General Lyons, assumed command in June 2012; neither possesses significant experience in the Asia Pacific Theater.⁴²

Limited National Guard involvement within the Asia Pacific region can also be attributed to the lack of Bilateral Affairs Officers (BAOs) assigned within the USPACOM area of operation. Every GCC has BAOs assigned to it except USPACOM. USSOUTHCOM refers to these individuals as (TCA) coordinators. Assigned to the partner nation's U.S. Embassy, BAOs/TCAs typically work in the Security Cooperation Office for the Security Cooperation Officer. The Security Cooperation Officer, in turn, works for the Senior Defense Official/Defense Attaché. NGB agreed to fund the P&A for four USPACOM BAOs, but requested USPACOM pay for the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) costs. This is the DoS billing mechanism for Embassy-provided services. This cost is estimated as \$125,000 per BAO for a projected total of \$500,000 per year.⁴³ To date, USPACOM has been unwilling to assume these costs and NGB and USPACOM find themselves in an impasse. The following update from NGB notes the current status of placing BAOs within the region:

In a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between NGB-J5 and PACOM, the NGB has proposed resourcing four Bilateral Affairs Officers (BAOs) to reside at PACOM-J4/5 for three years. This interim plan provides PACOM J4/5 the opportunity to gain the benefits of employing BAOs in the AO and additional time to program in-country costs associated with supporting BAOs in their partner country. Although NGB has offered to use current-execution-year funding to expedite the MoA, PACOM has not programmed for the long-term in-country costs. To date, the MoA has not been signed—primarily due to uncertainty in PACOM's future resources.⁴⁴

Time is of the essence. Admiral Locklear, current Commander for USPACOM, will retire or move to a new assignment within the next 20 months. With a new commander comes

the task of convincing him or her of the importance of funding the positions. Unless funding for these positions is secured under Admiral Locklear's watch, it is unlikely they will ever be funded.

In comparison, USEUCOM funds the P&A, ICASS, and travel for five BAOs for a total of \$602,200 per year. USEUCOM also assumes the ICASS and travel costs for the remaining 17 BAOs within their area of operation for a total cost of over \$1 million annually. The Army National Guard funds the P&A for 14 of the 17 positions, and the Air National Guard funds the P&A for the remaining three.⁴⁵ Cumulatively, USEUCOM spends over \$1.6 million per year from their budget to support the SPP BAOs, whereas USPACOM is unwilling to support any associated costs at this time.

Given the ambiguity that exists within USPACOM's funding, and understanding of the SPP and its role, there is a potential to create mistrust between the Active Component and the National Guard. This ambiguity is counterproductive and must be eliminated through consensus, open communication, and the establishment of shared roles and responsibility. For example, states with existing or future partnerships that have the capability required to support a training exercise should have first right of refusal for participation in bilateral or multilateral exercises held with their partner country. To build consensus, states must ensure their engagements meet the needs of USPACOM's priorities and not those of the state. NGB and the states must also improve their communication with the appropriate commands when National Guard Soldiers train in the region. Although some governors and Adjutants General may or may not agree, when their Soldiers and Airmen execute SPP engagements within the USPACOM area of operation, they fall under the command and responsibility of Admiral

Locklear when employed in those roles. Extra effort on the part of NGB and the states to ensure USPACOM is made aware of National Guard Soldiers or Airmen training within the theater would go a long way in improving situational awareness. These aspects, along with a feasible senior leader engagement plan which leverages the strengths of both National Guard and Active Component senior leaders, should be outlined and approved by the respective Commanders of USPACOM, USARPAC, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Marine Forces Pacific, and the respective Adjutants General with partnerships in the region on a biennial basis. This plan would create consistency, support the Army Force Generation Model by generating predictability of available Active Component and National Guard units to support engagements, and allow for budgetary requirements to be incorporated into the Programming Data Requirements, POM, and Budget Estimate Submission process. Simple in concept yet difficult to implement, this process will go a long way to eliminating ambiguity, providing concrete evidence to governors and Adjutants General as to the employment of their forces, and providing stability for both the National Guard and the Active Component. Even more importantly, it provides a method through which the DoD can achieve one of its Defense Strategic Guidance's missions: providing a stabilized presence in the region and ensuring continued stability.

Training and Career Path

One way to successfully cultivate effective and long-term partnerships is to train Soldiers and Airmen to understand the region, its people, and their language, and the geo-political issues affecting it. For this reason, the U.S. Army typically spends two to three years training Foreign Affairs Officers (FAOs) before they assume duties within a

host nation. This training includes graduate school with an emphasis in a particular geographical region, language training at the Defense Language Institute or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, in-country training, and in some cases training at the Defense Intelligence Agency's Joint Military Attaché School.⁴⁶ This extensive training is essential in preparing FAOs for their duties and reduces the potential for untrained personnel to make uninformed decisions that may have strategic consequences.

Conversely, the National Guard provides SPP Coordinators (SPPCs), a Soldier or Airman who works with the partner nation if there is not an in-country BAO/TCA, and BAOs/TCAs with a one-week course taught twice a year at the Defense Institute of Security Assistant Management (DISAM). Additional training, which typically includes program and policy updates, takes place during monthly video teleconferences hosted by NGB. In the case of USSOUTHCOM, TCAs return to Florida biannually to receive additional training and guidance.⁴⁷ The gap in the level of training provided for FAOs in comparison to SPP coordinators and executors must be reduced.

The main reason underscoring this gap is a lack of funding. As noted earlier, the \$14.6 million the SPP received in FY13 provided funding for three specific functions of the program; annual engagements, strategic priorities, and new opportunities. Funding for training does not exist outside of the DISAM requirements. Training conducted beyond the one-week DISAM course is the responsibility of the state or is enabled through an Un-Funded Request at NGB. Many states understand the need for trained individuals and, in some instances, pay for the training out of their internal resources.

Another reason for the lack of training is time. Most BOAs/TCAs assume their duties immediately after being identified and assigned. With pre-existing partnerships and engagement plans already scheduled, little time is available to accomplish an expanding training program. Unlike their Active Component brethren, BAOs/TCAs do not have two to three years to train before they assume their duties. However, solutions do exist to overcome these shortfalls.

First, NGB and the states have not fully embraced the use of the five Centers for Strategic Studies located within each GCC. For example, within USPACOM, the Asia Pacific Center for Strategic Studies (APCSS) offers a one-week Asia Pacific Orientation Course. The course “focuses on U.S. policy and provides an introduction to regional cultures, politics, protocols, and challenges.”⁴⁸ The APCSS also offers a five-week Advanced Security Cooperation Executive Course. This course “emphasizes the non-war fighting aspects of security and international relations, and challenges Fellows to develop regional and transnational perspectives.”⁴⁹ To ensure the course has a true Asia Pacific focus, only a handful of U.S. individuals participate in each course; the balance of the participants comes from various Asia Pacific countries. This composite allows networking, discovery learning, and the opportunity to work outside normal comfort levels for all involved.

NGB and states should also leverage their relationships with Congress to seek additional funds to support training. With a projected FY13 Defense Budget of \$631 billion, the \$14.6 million NGB received in FY13 equated to 00.00002% of the total DoD budget, or “budget dust” as Colonel (Retired) Tracy Settle, former Chief, International Engagements NGB, refers to it.⁵⁰ A modest increase of \$3 million per year, specifically

allocated to training, would provide vast opportunities to improve the depth of knowledge and capabilities of the SPPCs/BAOs/TCAs. With this modest increase in funding, NGB could send individuals to the DoS's National Foreign Affairs Training Center, also known as the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), where they would receive cultural, language, and regional expertise training. The FSI is located adjacent to Arlington Hall, NGB's headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. Due to its proximity, and NGB's existing relationship with the DoS, NGB should leverage the relationship and secure two to three seats per course at no charge. Since the FSI curriculum is pre-established on a yearly basis, one could assume the immediate addition of a handful of students as insignificant. This concept is similar to that which allows National Guard Soldiers and Airmen to take college courses at major universities and colleges throughout the U.S if there is space within the classroom. Not only does this plan provide additional educational opportunities, it also supports the DoS's efforts in supporting the Chiefs of Missions. A portion of the additional \$3 million secured for training would cover TDY and travel since the P&A for the National Guard personnel is already provided for by the states.

In addition to increased training, the establishment of a career path that allows Soldiers and Airmen to be selected, trained, and promoted in an efficient manner should be implemented. This career path should denote a clear path for promotion, training, and job placement as individuals advance within an organization. For example, once identified to assume a role within the SPP, a Captain or Sergeant First Class would become a part of the state's joint staff, which is typically responsible for the program. These individuals would attend the DISAM course to receive an overview of the SPP,

begin learning the language, and spend three to four years working at the state headquarters learning about the intricacies of the partnership and partner nation.

Following promotion to Major and Master Sergeant, these individuals would then be assigned to the Strategic Plans, Policy and International Affairs (J-5) directorate at NGB for a three-to four-year tour. During their time at NGB they would take courses from FSI or the Centers for Strategic Guidance. This experience would provide national perspectives of the SPP and provide the opportunity to grow professionally. After their tour at NGB, these individuals would return to their state to fill projected BAO/TCA vacancies. This suggested career path includes the time needed to receive the appropriate training, produces mature and well-rounded individuals groomed for BAO/TCA positions, and provides a path for promotion and positions of greater responsibility.

While this plan briefs well, its implementation is no easy task. NGB and the states will need to work with the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) to change the existing table of distributional allowances (TDA) for the State Headquarters. The TDA is an “authorization document that prescribes the organizational structure and the personnel and equipment requirements and authorizations of a military unit to perform a specific mission for which there is no appropriate table of organization and equipment (TOE).”⁵¹ Without an approved TDA, NGB and the states do not have the official authorization to request personnel and training to support the SPP. However, sufficient examples exist as to the benefits of the SPP; congressional support is strong; and Secretary McHugh’s comments pertaining to a total force provide the leverage needed to make this change.

By implementing these recommendations, the program would have a better-trained cadre with increased skills, which would further legitimize the program. An established career path provides consistency for the partner nations and stability for the Soldiers and Airmen who have chosen this path as their life's work.

Economic Benefit

As noted earlier in this document, it may be impractical for states with existing partnerships to eliminate these relationships and establish new ones in Asia Pacific. To this point, there must be an incentive for governors and Adjutants General to assume an additional partnership in the Asia Pacific region. One such incentive would be economics.

The SPP supports improvements in trade relations between the U.S. and partner nations, benefits both national and state economies, and supports regional prosperity. For example, in 2011 the U.S. exported \$2.1 trillion in goods and services supporting an estimated 9.7 million jobs in the United States.⁵² Therefore, the U.S. must maintain a presence in the Asia Pacific region to enable our trade interests. As Max Weber, a renowned sociologist and political economist said, "National self-preservation and economic growth are two sides of the same coin."⁵³ With the economic downturn of 2008, the U.S. GDP dropped to an annual rate of 6.3% and corporate profits plummeted \$250.3 billion in the fourth quarter of that year.⁵⁴ States and the federal government also suffered significant losses in tax revenue. While the economy has not regained its previous strength as of 2013, the opportunity to increase trade and government tax revenue is one benefit the SPP brings to the table.

The case of Texas is a great example. In 2008, Texas established a partnership with Chile. This was Texas's second partnership; it had established a tri-lateral partnership with Nebraska and the Czech Republic in 1993. From an economic standpoint, this partnership with Chile is shrewd. In 2008, Chile imported over \$2.6 billion in goods and services from Texas, making Chile Texas' 15th largest trading partner.⁵⁵ Three years later, Chile remains Texas' 15th largest importer of goods and services, and exports to Chile have increased by 30%.⁵⁶ The establishment of the partnership is not the sole reason for the increase in trade, but it is one aspect to consider. I would recommend that Texas allow Nebraska to take on the sole responsibility of the Czech Republic, thereby giving Texas the flexibility to establish an additional partnership in the Asia Pacific region. Even if Texas chooses not to graduate from its partnership with the Czech Republic, it should have the capacity to establish an additional partnership in Asia Pacific. With over 22,000 Soldiers and Airmen, Texas has the largest end strength within the National Guard of all 54 states and territories.⁵⁷

Which Asia Pacific country would be a good fit for Texas? One of the nations in the Asia Pacific region that would benefit from an SPP relationship with Texas based on economic factors is Malaysia. Using data from 2011, the most current export data available at the time of this writing, Texas exported \$1.7 billion to Malaysia in goods and services in 2011, significantly higher than the \$153 million in trade with the Czech Republic.⁵⁸ However, Texas may be the exception to the rule since it was the largest exporter of goods and services within the U.S. in 2011 with \$251 billion.⁵⁹

Is Texas the exception? Consider Minnesota, a state with the ninth largest end strength in the National Guard at over 13,000 Soldiers and Airmen. It established a

partnership with Croatia in 1996 and ranks 20th out of 54 states and territories within the U.S. for exports in 2011. That year, Minnesota exported over \$275 million to Malaysia, \$9.5 million to Trinidad and Tobago, and \$2.6 million to Sri Lanka, while exporting only \$2.4 million in goods and services to Croatia.⁶⁰ Minnesota also exported \$14.4 billion to countries within the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, an organization made up of 21 Pacific Rim countries, and \$1.8 billion to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, composed of ten countries that include Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), and Laos.⁶¹ With established relationships in these trade associations, along with the state's bilateral trade efforts within the region, Minnesota could leverage a new state partnership to increase its trade within Asia Pacific. Additional trade would increase employment opportunities and tax revenue, and enhance economic stability.

As demonstrated above, an established partnership with nations in the Asia Pacific region can contribute to economic benefits. While this is an important aspect from a domestic standpoint, the partnership also provides an opportunity to increase the economic stability of partner nations. Economic stability and the revenue it generates allow government leaders to focus their efforts on improving infrastructure, education, and institutions. Additionally, as trade increases, the incomes of the poor and less fortunate increase as well. According to economists David Dollar and Aart Kraay, "changes in trade volumes are strongly correlated with changes in growth, with a point estimate indicating that a 100% increase in trade share would have the cumulative effect of raising incomes by 25% over a decade."⁶² It is a logical assumption that improvements in quality of life would limit the efforts of terrorist, anarchist, and organized crime and would enhance regional stability. While improved trade relations

and the establishment of partnerships will not eliminate these factors entirely, they will provide a foundation for increased stability. A population with food on the table, a roof over their heads, and the opportunity to improve their status and the status of their children are less likely to be involved with these kinds of organizations.

Some economists argue that international trade hurts developing nations and benefits only developed nations like the United States.⁶³ However, Dollar and Kraay found that “international trade has in fact contributed to narrowing the gap between rich and poor countries.”⁶⁴ This narrowing effect supports the point that an expanded emphasis in partnerships within the Asia Pacific region will provide for an opportunity to expand trade, which, in turn, will lead to a more stable region. If this stability can be accomplished through the SPP involvement, then the SPP from a strategic standpoint has met one of the GCC' and National Military Strategies end states: stability. However, changes to policy, perceptions, and a modification to the existing program structure are required if the SPP is to expand its emphasis and success within the region.

Policy, Perception, and Modification

Existing perceptions within the DoD and DoS restrict the SPP's ability to engage and influence countries not supportive of U.S. interest or foreign policy. Consider China. The DoD acknowledges it faces challenges “placing the military-to-military component of relationship on a firm foundation”⁶⁵ with China, yet has not sought the establishment of state partnerships. Some argue military-to-military engagements, which are only one component of the SPP, could be susceptible to suspension or cancellation when contentious issues arise, such as future U.S arms sales to Taiwan.⁶⁶ These views do not consider the full breadth of how the SPP influences, engages, and builds long-term

relationships. This perception disregards that the program has been fine-tuning its capabilities for twenty years. As Mr. Thomas Niblock, Minister Counselor and Foreign Policy Advisor to the Chief, NGB, noted, “The past 20 years have been a proof of concept for the State Partnerships Program.”⁶⁷

The deployment of the Polish 12th Brigade to Afghanistan as part of coalition forces in late 2011 demonstrates the success of the SPP. Over a 20-year partnership, a strong relationship between the Illinois National Guard and the Polish Army developed. This partnership included the deployment of Polish Soldiers with elements of the Illinois National Guardsmen when they mobilized for service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Ultimately, the relationship developed through the SPP contributed in Poland’s decision to deploy one of its brigades in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. When the 12th (Polish) Brigade deployed, eighteen Soldiers from Illinois joined them as a part of a Bilateral Embedded Support Team.⁶⁸ This partnership saved the U.S. the cost of deploying a U.S. Army brigade, conservatively put at \$50 million. Engaging China through the SPP could bring about similar results regarding the establishment of trust and a strong relationship.

The current ebb and flow of relations between the U.S. and China contribute to mistrust between the two governments. This mistrust is similar to that which existed between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War. Previous administrations and the Obama administration have attempted to mitigate or moderate the mistrust and improve military-to-military relations with China. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton emphasizes this objective: “We are working to increase transparency and reduce the risk of miscalculations or miscues between our militaries. Both sides would

benefit from sustained and substantive military-to-military engagements that increase transparency.”⁶⁹ However, cultural differences and misinterpretations hamper the development of transparency, yet another example as to why the National Guard should invest in cultural and linguistic training for SPP personnel.

While the U.S. sees continued military-to-military engagements as a means to increase transparency, a dichotomy exists because China believes the U.S. is putting the cart in front of the horse. Chen Zhou, a senior researcher for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Academy of Military Science, noted, “Western militaries seek transparency as the premise for military mutual trust, the PLA saw trust as the requirement for transparency.”⁷⁰ The establishment of a state partnership with China would provide the foundation for building this trust. It would provide opportunities for military-to-military engagements with the PLA, along with civilian-to-military and civilian-to-civilian engagements, the other two components of the program. These different types of engagement provide opportunities to establish long-term relationships and trust. The experiences in Poland and Mongolia validate this point.

How would the SPP go about influencing the U.S–China relationship? Historically, the SPP engages developing nations to build partner capacity. Using the World Bank’s definition of a developing nation, China meets the economic standard.⁷¹ However, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the PLA have continually demonstrated significant military capacity within their armed forces, well beyond the definition of “developing.” In fact, the Fiscal Year 2000 NDAA placed twelve specific restrictions regarding U.S. military and PLA involvement. These restrictions include force projection operations, advanced logistics operations, and advanced combined-arms and joint

combat operations.⁷² Nevertheless, the National Guard could engage with the PLA within the parameters. Leveraging its extensive experience in Defense Support to Civil Authorities, the National Guard could initiate the process to establish strong relationships with China based on a military role in disaster preparedness. Conceivably, if Congress observed tangible results from these relationships, modifications to the NDAA would become more palatable, thereby allowing an expanded U.S.–China relationship.

While a partnership would be beneficial, the PRC is not inclined to establish one. China sees itself as an equal to the U.S. in status and prestige as its influence throughout Asia Pacific and the world expands, and could find the proposal of establishing a partnership with a state potentially insulting and not befitting its status. To overcome this opposition, I propose the establishment of a state partnership with one of the seven military regions within China. Each of these regions incorporates the provincial states, providing access to provincial leaders. Figure 5 illustrates the military regions and the provinces within them.⁷³



Figure 5. Military Regions of China

By engaging the military region and provincial governments subordinate to the central government, the DoD and NGB could establish a sense of parity. This grassroots approach could establish a framework for U.S. access, build long-term relationships, and establish transparency. For example, the State of Washington could collaborate with the Jinan Military Region, encompassing Shandong and Henan provinces, to establish relationships with the long-term goal of advancing U.S. and Chinese security and economic goals. This approach would also provide the framework for possible increased access to senior PRC leadership as demonstrated by the appointment of General Fan Changlong, Commander of the Jinan Military Region, to the position of Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the Communist Party of China.⁷⁴ Imagine the insight and access this would have generated for both the PRC and the U.S. if a long-term relationship had existed between an Adjutant General and General Fan Changlong prior to his promotion. In 2007, General Peter Pace, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, promoted this kind of relationship when he noted the primary goal for establishing a bilateral relationship with China was to eliminate any “miscalculation and misunderstanding based on misinformation.”⁷⁵

If the idea of engaging a Military Region were not acceptable to China, then a secondary approach would be to request a partnership with one of the Military Districts. A Military District is very similar to the way the National Guard operates within its state boundaries because it “is responsible for a single province or autonomous region.”⁷⁶ Commanders of a Military District are responsible for the forces located within the province, which includes active duty, reserve, and militia units, along with working with

local government leaders in an effort to coordinate their efforts with the People's Armed Police (PAP).⁷⁷ The PAP is similar to the National Guard in that it has the primary mission of domestic security and a secondary mission of local defense in the time of war. In addition, the PAP has a dual command structure that includes the CMC and the Ministry of Public Security.⁷⁸

Would this approach work? If one subscribes to the writings of John K. Fairbanks, a renowned academic and author with over 35 years of experience related to China, then yes. Similar to states within the U.S., "Provinces were defined by culture and history, set apart by their dialects, their cuisines, their economics and strategic geography, and the common bond of a folklore and traditions."⁷⁹ Within this vein, there appears to be a strong opportunity to leverage the unique difference, yet striking similarities, of the provincial governments of China. Tony Saich, another prominent academic from Harvard University and Chinese expert, provides further clarification on this opportunity: "The political centre does not control the system throughout and there is significant deviation from central policy across bureaucracies and at the local level. It is at the local level that problems have to be solved concerning economics policy and social equity."⁸⁰ Think of the possibilities and benefits both countries could attain, both socially and economically, if the U.S. and China could establish long term, mutually supporting partnerships. With the establishment of new leadership in China, the time is now and the mechanism is the SPP. This approach, however, will require an adjustment to NGB's, DoD's, and PACOM's thinking.

Historically, the process of initiating a partnership begins once a nation state asks for one. As noted earlier, China will not seek out a partnership because its perception is

that the relationship must exist between a state and the central government of a nation state. Therefore, NGB and the DoD must take the initiative and approach China.

Ambassador Gary Locke, current ambassador to China and the former Governor of the State of Washington, was instrumental in the 2002 establishment of a partnership with Thailand. Ambassador Locke could advocate for this engagement and lead the process of presenting China with this proposal. Ambassador Locke, who is greatly respected within China, since he is the first Asian American to become Ambassador to China, could personally expound on the virtues and benefits of the program. The Ambassador could also point to the seven existing partnerships within Asia Pacific as examples of the soft power approach the U.S. has taken within the region in an effort to build bridges instead of fences. This approach would provide the access and transparency so badly wanted by both countries.

Conclusion

Throughout this document, attempts were made to denote the benefits of the SPP. It is true the program has defects, but efforts are under way to modify and improve the program for the better. However, it is undeniable the program's soft power approach supports the GCC's and the DoS Chiefs of Mission's security cooperation goals. Last year's announcement by the Obama Administration to rebalance U.S. efforts in Asia Pacific, along with the fiscal crisis and downsizing of the U.S. Armed Forces, has caused senior leaders to re-examine how they will implement security cooperation programs as a part of the overall National Defense Strategy. While the Asia Pacific region represents significant economic and security interests to the U.S., especially when China continues to grow as a political, economic, and military regional power, the

U.S. still has responsibilities and requirements within the other GCCs. To influence not only the efforts within all the GCCs, but also a specific emphasis in Asia Pacific, five core issues require resolution. NGBs must develop an SPP Strategic Plan that clearly defines the program's mission, goals, selection criteria, assessment metrics, and disengagement criteria to ensure everyone is working towards a common end state. These metrics and criteria will assist in placing the program's limited resources where they will have the greatest effect. In addition, NGB and the states must work with the USPACOM and USARPAC Commanders to build trust and comprehensive integration of National Guard Soldiers within the region. Otherwise, reluctance on the part of the governors and Adjutants General will limit the future expansion of partnerships within Asia Pacific. The current training methodology and career paths for SPPC, BAOs, and TCAs requires a complete revamp. Foundational cultural and language training and an established career path will build the expertise to prepare individuals before they assume their roles and responsibilities in an SPP engagement. In conjunction with selection criteria, a better understanding of the economic benefits a partnership could bring to the nation and the state needs to be expanded. This understanding will assist not only in the continued prosperity of the U.S., but also will increase the prosperity for the partner nation's populace. Finally, policy, perception, and a modification as to how and whom NGB engages via the SPP must change within DoD, DoS, and NGB itself. The SPP has tremendous capabilities that are not currently being used to their fullest potential. This limitation hampers the program's ability to engage countries like China. Changes in these five core areas will not only make the SPP the security cooperation

program of choice for the DoD, it will ensure the security, prosperity, universal values, and international order within the Asia Pacific region.

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