

# A STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (SPP) FOR AFGHANISTAN

BY

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**A STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (SPP) FOR AFGHANISTAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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A National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) for Afghanistan will advance Afghan security and stability, build partnership capacity, enhance local governance and development, and promote a long term, enduring relationship in support of a US strategic partnership with that country. The SPP would be conducted as an integral part of US Central Command's (USCENTCOM) Security Cooperation strategy which has already established successful SPPs with nearby Central Asian states Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Research reveals that a SPP is consistent with both US National Military Strategy (NMS) and with USCENTCOM's Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP); and that positive SPP results in neighboring countries bodes well for similar success in Afghanistan. This project examines the congruence of U.S. strategy in regards to the role of stability and cooperation operations, how SPPs complement such strategies, and how SPPs have already contributed positively to other countries in that region. Finally, it recommends a state partner that would be beneficial to that country and to US national interests.

## A STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (SPP) FOR AFGHANISTAN

The United States' Global War on Terrorism commenced in October 2001 with offensive strikes throughout Afghanistan. As Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) has continued across seven subsequent years, the United States reversed initial opposition<sup>1</sup>, and has undertaken a nation-building effort aimed at long term security and stability. Recently a new upsurge in Taliban and Al Qaeda activities has emerged. This makes it critical for us to redouble our efforts to eliminate the threats on the ground, and to ensure long term security and stability in that region.

National Guard State Partnerships have been facilitating secure and stable environments across the globe since 1993 when Commander-in-Chief, European Command (CINCEUR) decided to staff military liaison teams with Reserve Component personnel. State Partnership Programs (SPP) initially focused on former eastern bloc countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) that emerged from the Cold War independent, but potentially precarious following the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> SPP has multiplied to include 60 partner relationships between foreign nations and individual states within the United States. The strength of the SPP is in the decentralized nature of the assistance provided (i.e. an individual State direct to a sovereign nation) and that it provides not only military to civilian, but civilian to civilian assistance by leveraging both state and local government and private sector subject matter expertise to the host nation. These aspects are further enhanced by the civilian capabilities of National Guard soldiers. Moreover, SPP is consistent with fundamental US strategy in the region. Namely, to ensure Afghanistan never again is a sanctuary for terrorism.

## Overarching Strategy

Promulgated by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates in June 2008, the National Defense Strategy (NDS) lists five key objectives: defend the homeland, win the long war, promote security, deter conflict, and win our nation's wars.<sup>3</sup> These objectives are necessarily interrelated, and of note in regard to our discussion here, is the aim of "promoting security." In articulating the need for promoting security, the NDS makes a case for building a broad spectrum of capacities and *partners* (italics mine) in the international community. NDS cites regional and local conflicts as threats with potentially transnational implications due to their potential to spread beyond the confines of their initial geographic proximity. In discussing how to best preclude such conflicts the NDS emphasizes that building the *internal capacities* (italics mine) facilitates promoting security by reducing the risk of internal instability and collapse.<sup>4</sup> SPP has played a vital role in building internal capacity.

In laying out the "how to" for achieving these objectives, the NDS describes a multi-faceted approach that strives to combine deterrence with proactive initiatives. One of those shaping actions revolves around "strengthening and expanding alliances and partnerships." Specifically, this policy imperative carries with it the intent to integrate joint, interagency and *state and local* (italics mine) partners in a "whole government approach" to improving the capabilities of friendly nations in terms of both military and non-military capacity.<sup>5</sup>

In looking at a vertical trace of national policy and strategy downward from the global to the regional, and ultimately to a focused view on Afghanistan, it is instructive to see how the theater level strategies seek to effectively support the pursuit of national

objectives for that region. The US Central Command (USCENTCOM) Central Asia Security Cooperation Plan is illuminating view in this regard. It is one which provides a significantly meaningful role for partnership activities all ready ongoing, and for further expansion into new ones as well. Regarding Afghanistan, that document notes the strategically crucial geographic position of that country bordering both Iran and Pakistan and establishing a National Guard State Partnership Program with the Afghan National Army (ANA) as a means of “encouraging voices of moderation” within that country.<sup>6</sup> Based on the inherent nature of SPP, such a program would not be limited to merely interaction with and support of ANA, but would provide assistance across Afghanistan.

In 2006 the United States Institute of Peace published a special report regarding resolution of the Pakistan-Afghanistan stalemate. It chronicled the centuries old strife and border disputes (including the British brokered Durand Line in 1893), the Soviet-Afghan war and also identified the recent re-emergence of Taliban and Al Qaeda insurgencies. The report asserts that today Afghanistan serves most effectively as a “land bridge” rather than a buffer state between South Asia, Central Asia, and the Persia Gulf.<sup>7</sup> The report contends that this has been brought about by the deterrent impact introduced by the United Nations’ mandated, largely U.S. sponsored, coalition efforts under NATO command since 2003. The affect has been to facilitate within the region increased cross-border movements of capital, trade, populations, and identities. This in turn makes an internally stable and secure Afghanistan an imperative in order to ensure that this “bridge” is secure against potential insurgent opportunists.

## Supporting Strategies and Doctrine

As we delve further into the U.S. strategic and operational intent for Afghanistan we see recognition of the points made above. In coordination with the Department of State, and consistent with the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, in June of last year the Department of Defense reported to Congress the *U.S. Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*. In addition to developing ministerial institutions, respect for rule of law and reduction of corruption, this report catalogues other essentials for the security forces: recruiting, retention, promotion and pay of Afghan military personnel; the organizing and equipping of their units; the professional development of an officer corps; instituting accountability measures for the tracking property and fiscal activities and like measures for the Afghan National Police (ANP). These measures are aimed at creating and being able to sustain an ANA in excess of 80,000 troops by the end of 2009, and a viable ANP (which by March 2008 approached 18,000 personnel against an authorization of 82K).<sup>8</sup> The desired end state is to provide to the people of Afghanistan a security force capable of ensuring the internal stability and external security that is recognized as necessary to regional stability. Given the dual capability, military and civil, intrinsically resident in State Partnership Programs, there is every reason to believe that the type of assistance required to assist in meeting desired objectives can be provided not only from U.S. Federal government resources, but also by a proactive state government.

At the lower echelons, that American doctrine is reflecting congruence with higher strategy recognizes that actions are louder than words when it comes to creating a stable and secure environment. The U.S. Army's Field Manual (FM) 3.07, *Stability*



*Operations*, focuses on just such intent. The manual forthrightly asserts that the greatest threats to U.S. national security are from other nations who are either incapable or unwilling to meet the needs of their own people. It makes the case for operational and tactical doctrine not only in the broader context of DoD's role in "reconstruction and stabilization efforts", but also in terms of doctrine for such traditionally non-military activities as "building partner capacity, strengthening legitimate government, maintaining rule of law, and fostering economic growth."<sup>9</sup> This fundamental reference explains that "capacity building", to include institutional development and the building up of managerial systems (military to civilian activities) within partner nations, is essential to preclude "fragile states" (i.e. a nation unstable to the degree that their central government is threatened – a definition certainly descriptive of Afghanistan) from putting themselves and the region at risk. Such states can be at varying degrees of fragility ranging from "failed to failing to recovering. States can be moving either toward or from those differing degrees. Whether to stem a downward slide or to facilitate continued recovery, stability operations are aimed at activities within a given country that are not limited to military security, but include economic, educational, civil governmental, medical, rule of law, and social activities.<sup>10</sup>

These are precisely the type of activities and areas of focus that State Partnership was not only designed to embrace, but that have successfully been undertaken in Central Asia already. SPP was further codified in the Defense Reform Initiative (1997) as one the several proactive programs the U.S. diplomatic and defense community have relied on to foster stability in regions critical to our national interests.<sup>11</sup>

Reinforcing its linkage with fundamental national policy, FM 3.07 details a policy review that articulates, at the National Command Authority (NCA) level, President Bush's intent in National Presidential Directive 44 (NSDP-44) to improve not only coordination, but also implementation of "reconstruction and stabilization assistance."<sup>12</sup> That review also shows that the doctrine accurately reflects Department of Defense guidance promulgated in DoD Directive 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations* (2005) which has not only immediate goals of restoring "security, essential services and humanitarian needs", but longer term goals of fostering a "robust civil society".<sup>13</sup> Longer term goals are where SPP is best suited to provide valuable aid. DoDD 3000.05 is instructive in noting that that guidance puts emphasis on a civil military teaming that includes a multitude of stakeholders that can be considered non-traditional. Stakeholders particularly suited to benefiting from SPP assistance include foreign governments and forces, host nations, community and civil society organizations, regional intergovernmental organizations and interagency partners. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates' public pronouncements on the issues of building and fostering stability in key countries and regions clearly denote a conviction toward utilizing non-traditional approaches. An example is found in the secretary's remarks published in *Foreign Affairs* (January 2009). Here is an excerpt: Where possible, U.S. strategy is to employ indirect approaches -- primarily through building the capacity of partner governments and their security forces -- to prevent festering problems from turning into crises that require costly and controversial direct military intervention. In this kind of effort, the capabilities of the United States' allies and partners may be as important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important as, if not more so than, the fighting the United States does itself.<sup>14</sup>

This expressed approach is especially relevant in that the Obama Administration has decided to retain the incumbent defense secretary for an undetermined period into the future.

Given the five specified stability tasks delineated in FM 3.07 – establish security, establish civilian control, restore essential services, support to governance and support to economic and infrastructure development – and the concept of integrating those tasks within a framework that includes both military and civilian players - those tasks are to be accomplished within closely related sectors: *security, justice and reconciliation, humanitarian and social well-being, governance and participation, and economic stabilization infrastructure.*<sup>15</sup> Scrutiny reveals that within those imperatives there are excellent opportunities for bringing SPP’s military and civilian capabilities to bear on these sectors. One such sector is *economic stabilization and infrastructure* where doctrine asserts the necessity to “engage and involve the private sector in reconstruction” and also “to secure and protect the natural resources, energy production, and distribution infrastructure of host nation.” Opportunities exist in the sector of *governance and participation* for organizations from a partner state in the U.S. to bring needed support to a partner country in pursuit of “promoting and protecting social, economic, cultural, political, civil and other basic human rights.”<sup>16</sup> These are but two sectors where a SPP can provide capacity assistance. Additionally, the stability tasks of *restoring essential services* and *support to governance* also lend themselves to customary SPP assistance. Perhaps the most telling relationship for the future, considering the ever increasing advances in information management, is the stability dynamic entitled *information engagement* and how that integral piece of the

stability framework will relate to the peoples and institutions of a given country.<sup>17</sup> Given the relatively advanced nature of those same relationships here in the United States, state and local governments and private sector entities are suited to share their lessons learned, provide their subject matter expertise, and generally assist a partner nation with issues of information security and information management.

We have seen that it is the intent of national security and defense policy to embrace a broader spectrum of military and civil objectives and approaches than has traditionally been deemed appropriate. We have also seen that intent consistently articulated from the highest levels, down through departmental and sub-departmental level into doctrine. We shall also see that SPP-based capabilities are well suited to support the security, stability, and cooperation aspects of that doctrine, and have done so. First, let us see if policy and doctrine are being implemented by commanders in theater into operational reality – particularly in Afghanistan

The command overview promulgated by Combined Security Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) establishes four fundamental lines of operation: *ministerial and institutional development, generate capable security forces, develop fielded security forces, and political-military affairs*. Within each line of operation are, respectively, civilian led security structures; manned, equipped and trained security forces; independent self-sustaining security forces; and comprehensive political military leadership.<sup>18</sup>

In elaborating on these basic tenets, CSTC-A does not limit its way ahead to purely military to military support and assistance (such as “continuing to grow” the Afghan National Army), but also identifies goals that are clearly military to civilian or

even civilian to civilian in nature. Examples are *focused police district development as part of the overall Afghan/ISAF campaign plan, continue and accelerate Ministry of Interior reforms, and expand coordination of counternarcotics efforts.*<sup>19</sup> Interagency cooperation from U.S. law enforcement has resulted. CSTC-A is clearly stating objectives that embrace the intent and focus of higher level strategy. As we review the SPP successes in neighboring countries we shall observe that SPP can be expected to provide invaluable assistance to this CSTC-A way ahead.

More than at any time over the last seven years the Department of Defense is recognizing the narco-terrorist nexus around the world, and how it underwrites insurgent aggression in Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup> Beyond mere recognition, the U.S. intends to support the Afghanistan Government's National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS) - aimed at stopping poppy cultivation and trafficking, and dissuading the Afghans from future participation in the narco-economy - with an effort based on five pillars: *public information, alternative development, elimination/eradication, interdiction, and law enforcement/justice reform.*<sup>21</sup> It will take a take an interagency approach to successfully implement programs encompassing these five pillars.

An example of excellent interagency integration is the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) engagement in Afghanistan. Their efforts compliment both the U.S. military strategy and Afghanistan's fundamental NDCS. Predicated on an expansion of their 8<sup>th</sup> Foreign Region office (Afghanistan/Pakistan) this DEA strategy has produced results, and will surge approximately 68 special agents and core personnel into the Kabul Country office (KCO) in FY09, on tours of two years in length.

<sup>22</sup> Primarily focused on the pillar of interdiction, it is expected that their work will result in

a harvest of shared intelligence with the military. DEA's efforts have already borne great success in Afghanistan through their involvement in training the Afghan Counter-Narcotics Police (CNPA), and through introduction of Forward Advisory and Support teams (FAST). Working in close concert with U.S. special operations forces, these small, agile teams comprised of DEA special agents and intelligence specialists have been responsible for the identification and apprehension of High Value targets that have been key figures in the narco-trafficking trade. Between 2005-2008, the integrated work of the KCO/CNPA/FAST/special operations forces resulted in 113 operations seizing over 53 metric tons of opium, 10.7 metric tons of heroin, 363 kilograms of morphine, 383 metric tons of hashish, and over 15 tons of chemicals used to process opium to heroin. Operation *Albatross* in June 2008 is a recent example of this combined-joint-interagency success. Conducted in the Spin Boldak District of the Kandahar Province, DEA FAST personnel in concert with Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF), U.S. Special Operations Forces and NATO International Assistance Forces (ISAF) made the largest single seizure of drugs in history: 235 metric tons of hashish.<sup>23</sup>

Promulgated national policies and strategies regarding security cooperation and stability and partnership concepts, supported by doctrinal approaches, and operationalized on the ground with equal congruence and interagency cooperation, are tailor made for the type of capabilities that a proactive SPP can provide to a host nation.

#### State Partners in the Region

In fifteen years SPP has grown from a handful of partner relationships in the region of the Baltic to 60 partnerships across the globe. Reviewing existing partnerships in Central Asia (Kazakhstan with Arizona, Kyrgyzstan with Montana, Turkmenistan with

Nevada, Tajikistan with Virginia), under the auspices of U.S. CENTCOM, sheds light as to what we might expect from a SPP with Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup>

Kyrgyzstan is a country of approximately 5.3 million people about 66% Kyrgyz, nearly equal portions Uzbek and Russian (14% each), and other minorities of Dungun (Chinese Muslim) and Tatar. Independent from the Soviet Union since 1991, an official language has been a sensitive issue. Kyrgyz is the official language with Russian an official “second language” and of commerce and higher education. While 80% Muslim (largely Sunni), the country is also 16% Christian with the vast majority of the Russian population making up that latter group. The literacy rate is in excess of 98% due to a compulsory education system for children between ages seven and fifteen.<sup>25</sup>

With a topography dominated by sharp peaks and deep valleys (94% of the country over 1000 meters above sea level) this rugged country is the second smallest of the Central Asia states. Bordered by Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and China, unresolved border disputes persist with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (southwest in the Isfara Valley). This issue of unresolved borders has had implications for SPP involvement. Largely not suitable for agriculture (only 6.5% arable), and with no navigable rivers, this austere land does contain large deposits of gold, and some mercury, tin and tungsten. Lack of a transportation system and infrastructure combine to preclude economic exploitation of these resources.<sup>26</sup>

Having lost critical inputs in the post-Soviet era and suffered economically for it, in 2001 the Bishkek government established a Comprehensive Development Framework that was designed to meet and make annual economic goals. Since 2003 about 7,000 enterprises have been shifted to the private sector with agriculture, despite

its limited regional base, remaining vital to the country's GDP.<sup>27</sup> The landlocked nature of the country and problems along the borders have restricted economic growth. From a strategic point of view, Kyrgyzstan has grown in importance to the U.S. relative to Afghanistan. The Manas Air Base in the capitol city of Bishkek has become important in terms of conducting air operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The U.S. CENTCOM Security Cooperation Program for Kyrgyzstan has identified that country as a key security partner and as such has marked it for receipt of specific assistance for "building partnership capacity" in the areas of Ministry of Defense, the National Guard, The Interior Forces, the *Border Service*, the Drug Control Agency, and the Ministry of Emergency Situations.<sup>28</sup>

Initiated in 1996, the State Partnership Program between Kyrgyzstan and Montana has progressed in terms of that country ensuring a secure and stable environment with its sovereign territory. This is in accordance with a specified CENTCOM security cooperation objective for Kyrgyzstan to "enhance border security."<sup>29</sup> Funded by the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics through CENTCOM Counter-Narcotics, Montana assisted Kyrgyzstan with the establishment, in 2008, of a Mobile Interdiction Team (MIT) to assist in stopping counter-narcotics traffic along that country's southern border with Tajikistan.

The Montana Air National Guard provides 30 personnel from their 120<sup>th</sup> Security Force to that team.<sup>30</sup> The following are Montana SPP contributions: regional emergency support exercises, student exchange program, numerous NCO Professional Development exchanges, Kyrgyzstan president state visit to Montana, "farmer-in-the-dell" agricultural visit to Bishkek, sister city relationship between Great Falls and Naryn,



U.S. State Department grant for exchange between University of Montana and the Osh Law School, and exchanges and visits in the areas of health care services, teacher/student relations, agriculture and mining, and justice, law enforcement and border security.<sup>31</sup>

Other border issues impact security cooperation and stability in the region. Bordered on its south and east for approximately 500 miles by Afghanistan and along the Caspian Sea, Turkmenistan has treaties with Kazakhstan (2001) and Uzbekistan (2004) aimed at resolving disputes to their north. Concerns persist in regards to division of the Caspian seabed (which contains significant oil deposits) with Kazakhstan.<sup>32</sup> With a subtropical desert climate and terrain Turkmenistan's most abundant natural resources are oil and natural gas. Accordingly agriculture is not a tenable economic enterprise. Instead industry based on their natural resources provides the mainstay of the economy.<sup>33</sup>

A rural (55%) population of less than five and a half million, Turkmenistan is comprised of 85% Turkmen, 5% Uzbek and about 4% Russian peoples. Close to 75% speak the official language of Turkmen. About 90% are believed to practice Sunni Islam and about 9% Russian Orthodoxy. In 2002 the literacy rate was estimated at 98%. These demographic and cultural factors combine to make the country one of the most homogeneous nations in the region. Since declaring independence from the Soviet Union in October of 1991 the government has eliminated a variety of programs from the public education curriculum. Additionally, a large number of Russian trained teachers have left the country. The government has limited tuition to some institutions of higher learning. The abolition of public health care in 2004, and the reduction of

number of hospitals (beds to every 10,000 people ratio dropped by 50% since 1996) have combined to produce a downward trend in education and general welfare levels.<sup>34</sup> In regard to border issues with their neighbors and internally, situation presents multiple areas for SPP assistance.

Such assistance must be viewed in relation to CENTCOM's strategic intent for Turkmenistan. Accordingly, we note the stated objectives of Enhancing Border Security Capabilities and Enhancing Security on the Caspian Sea.<sup>35</sup> These objectives have a purpose to pursue "security cooperation" across 83 activities addressing Caspian Sea Security, defense policy and strategy, English language development, disaster preparedness, and professional military education.<sup>36</sup> As a long standing SPP partner (1996) Nevada has consistently provided assistance in consonance with that intent. Most significant is their work in establishing 2 border crossing posts (\$4.26M), with three more planned, along the southern border with Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan.<sup>37</sup> These posts facilitate controlling the flow of human traffic, and with that the potential for illicit drugs, into Turkmenistan, and limit narco-terrorist access into and out of Afghanistan. That latter benefit is in complete accord with the theater commander's intent to facilitate a secure, stable and cooperative Afghanistan and region. Further supportive of that desire, Nevada has provided wide ranging support to Turkmenistan including civil-military emergency planning, emergency medical operations training, fire rescue response training, urban search and rescue, military decision making training, special operations patrolling training, agricultural exchanges, military working dogs, and combat lifesaver training amongst many<sup>38</sup>

An increasingly important country in terms of CENTCOM's security cooperation planning for the region, and as the only nation in Central Asia that is contributing troops to coalition operations in Iraq, Kazakhstan has become a top priority.<sup>39</sup> The location and characteristics of that country make it clear why they hold such a key position in the region.

From the time the Russian Tsar's troops and agricultural settlements arrived in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century until Kazakhstan declared its independence from the Soviet Union in December of 1991, life in that country was dominated by Russian influence.<sup>40</sup> Kazakhstan's strategic importance was recognized early on following the fall of Soviet domination – established in 1993 this country's State Partnership with Arizona was one of the first formed outside of the partnerships in the Baltic. Encompassing over 1.8 million square miles, and with its entire northern border adjacent to Russia, this nation is the largest in Central Asia and clearly of strategic importance. It also boasts a very large and diverse population. It is a nation of over 15 million people. Over 53% are Kazakh about 30%, Russian, 4% Ukrainian, approximately 2.5% German and 2.5% Uzbek and a smaller minority Uyghur. Before 1991 Kazakh and Russian demographics were then about equal. Independence has brought with it a majority in terms of native Kazakhs. Russian influence remains strong. Over 47% of the population are Sunni Muslim, with about 44% being of Russian Orthodoxy, and about 2% Protestant Christian. Because their version of Sunni Islam was developed in isolation from the rest of the Islamic world the Quran plays a less central role in it. With public education officially free and mandatory for nine years the literacy rate in Kazakhstan is estimated at just below 98%. Health care is free and universal. However due to a small

governmental expenditure (2.5% of GDP in 2005) the ratios of both doctors and hospital beds has been in decline for years.<sup>41</sup> The Gross Domestic Product has increased every year since 2000. It was \$47.4 billion (US) in 2005. Oil production accounts for over half of their economic activity. Still suffering growing pains in the aftermath of decades of centralized Soviet planning, privatization has contributed to some growth.<sup>42</sup>

Recognizing the strategic necessity of a secure, stable and cooperating Kazakhstan, CENTCOM, for the first time in 2008, developed an “individual and tailored” program of cooperation with that country focused on each of three ministries (defense, emergency situations, and border service).<sup>43</sup> Encompassing a broad spectrum of initiatives, this intent has been ably assisted by Arizona SPP support. That support includes, but is not limited to *land-coastal border enforcement exchange, disaster response training, casualty evacuation training, reserve forces exchange, vehicle maintenance training/exchange, chemical contamination containment raining, police training, explosive ordnance exchange, hosting of main planning conference for ARCENT exercise “Steppe Eagle 09”, President of Kazakhstan visit to AZ.*<sup>44</sup>

Another country in the region with a longstanding SPP is Tajikistan, partnered with Virginia since 1996. Tajikistan too has had both Russian and Soviet influence through the decades. In the post-Soviet era fighting for control was, despite various peace accords, more on-going than not between the Rakhmonov government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) - a coalition of Islamic leaders and secular politicians. This contributed to large-scale narcotics trade based in the mountainous regions and into Afghanistan and sponsored by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in the early 2000s.<sup>45</sup>

As the smallest of the countries in Central Asia, Tajikistan borders Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, and, most importantly from a strategic viewpoint, Afghanistan with over 800 miles adjacent to that country. Landlocked, it has border disputes with Kyrgyzstan over parts of the Isfara Valley. Over 93% of it is mountainous, rugged, and foreboding (mostly above 3000 meters in elevation).<sup>46</sup>

This environment makes agriculture difficult. About 6% of its land is arable. Natural resources include gold, silver and water from its rivers. These water supplies are critical not just to Tajikistan, as 85% of the land requires irrigation to be farmable, but to the region as well. Due to much of it being siphoned off to support internal agrarian efforts, this impacts neighbors to the south – such as Afghanistan. A poorly managed Russian uranium mine has left an environmental waste hazard in the northwestern part of the country.<sup>47</sup>

Numbering in excess of 7.3 million, the people are mostly Tajik (79%) with about 15% Uzbek. Mostly Sunni Muslim (85%) the official language is Tajik which is of Persian derivative. Literacy is about 96%, but a decline in the overall quality of education has left the younger generation less educated than their parents.<sup>48</sup>

The newest State Partnership in the region (2003), Virginia and Tajikistan have progressed rapidly. Virginia's has provided hazardous material detectors (\$600K in FY07) along the Tajikistan border. This effort is in conjunction with Virginia's support of CENTCOM's border control objective for the region. Augmenting the U.S. State Department's Export Control and Related Border Security Program (EXBS), Virginia's support enables Tajikistan to prevent the transit into their country of both narcotics and materials for producing weapons of mass destruction.<sup>49</sup>

State partnerships have clearly provided worthwhile tailored assistance to Central Asia nations in accordance with CENTCOM intent for the security cooperation of the region. The fact that each nation is directly linked with an individual state government has been instrumental in the success of that respect.

### A Partner for Afghanistan

The United States has proven to be, along with our coalition allies, a committed and fully engaged partner with Afghanistan. While this relationship has manifested itself most recently and most significantly, since 2001, with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the U.S.-Afghan relationship goes back much farther.

Unlike its neighbors who attained their independence in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan dates its freedom to August 1919 when it was freed from British rule. Indeed the Afghan national flag contains, within its coat of arms, the year 1298 – the Muslim equivalent of 1919.<sup>50</sup>

A nation of over 32 million people its border stretches along that of Pakistan for over 1600 mile. That has contributed greatly to not only to current contentions, but to historical ones as well – strife that saw Afghanistan seek Soviet assistance. At the time a constitutional monarchy, it was able to maintain its neutrality in World War II. Afghanistan emerged from WWII with the issue of divided Pashtun tribes resulting in great tension along the Pakistani border. Therefore it shifted its foreign policy toward the Soviet Union until the early 1960s. By that time years of anti-Pakistani rule had damaged the Afghan economy. In 1973 former prime minister Daoud overthrew the king establishing a republic. Conditions did not improve and over the next couple of decades Afghanistan became ripe for communist opportunism and invasion. By the time Soviet

troops left battered and beaten in 1989, over 5,000,000 refugees had been created. Civil war became the order of the day between the government and mujahideen warring factions. This era saw the turning back of the clock on the Afghan people. Previously, Afghanistan had been most westernized country in the region. By 1996 one faction in particular, the Taliban, had gained control and would soon allow the terrorist organization al Qaeda to use Afghanistan as a base of operations for terrorist attacks such as that against the United States on September 11, 2001.<sup>51</sup>

Efforts since that time have been aimed at eliminating the terrorist insurgents, creating a secure internal situation for the Afghan people, and facilitating an environment of security cooperation in which the Karzai government can not only provide basic services, security and opportunity to its people, but also serve as a stable partner for the region. With the third highest illiteracy rate in the world, and a GDP fifth from the bottom, the former is unquestionably a prerequisite to the latter.<sup>52</sup>

Earlier in this paper it was noted that a specified task within CENTCOM's strategic objectives is to "initiate a National Guard State Partnership Program with the Afghanistan National Army ...."<sup>53</sup> The question must then be asked, with which state? There are long standing, and harmonious ties between Afghanistan and Nebraska.

Since 1972, when the relationship was consummated, the University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) has infused into Afghanistan over \$100,000,000 of grant money. Under the able and aggressive leadership of Dr. Tom Gouttierre, Dean of International Studies at UNO, the Center for Afghan Studies at UNO has been at the center of the Nebraska-Afghanistan relationship. Some of the programs include: the UNO Education Press in Kabul (the largest printing enterprise in Afghanistan with

clients including Afghan ministries, President Karzai's office, the US Embassy. All employees are Afghans); education exchange programs which have seen some 500 Afghans come to Nebraska, and over 100 faculty members serve in the other country; the Teacher Training program aimed at training teachers in rural areas of Afghanistan; Literacy Training (funded by DoD); Afghan Immersion Training (a three week intensive training program to train US military and civilian personnel about to deploy to Afghanistan on the cultural, geographic, and language particulars of that country); medical professional training (focused on both trauma care training and medical faculty development), and a multitude of civilian and military exchanges.<sup>54</sup>

Nebraska has extended their assistance and relationship to Afghanistan beyond that provided through UNO. Examples of such support include the "Sister Cities Program between Scotts Bluff/Gering and the Bamiyan province, establishment of a new transportation center, an agricultural development team into Afghanistan to assist in helping them divest themselves from poppy growth, and sponsoring Afghan nurses at local institutions in Nebraska to name a few. Militarily the state has had a continual presence in Afghanistan since 2003 mostly in terms of providing leaders and units as part of Embedded Training Teams (ETTs) to the ANA.<sup>55</sup>

Additionally, and significantly in terms of CENTCOM objectives, in the summer of 2008 representatives from the National Guard Bureau, Nebraska National Guard, Montana National Guard, the Drug Enforcement Administration, State Department and the Kyrgyzstan Drug Control Agency (DCA) conducted training for the Mobile Interdiction team (MOBIT) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. This exercise brought the MOBIT into their advanced phase of development and included a team from the DEA's



Foreign-deployed Advisory Support Teams (FAST) to train advanced tactics and and seizure techniques aimed at culminating with prosecution procedures within the judicial system.<sup>56</sup> This latter effort exemplifies Nebraska's commitment not only to Afghanistan, but to her neighbors in the region as well.

All of these contributions have had a cumulative effect in producing a specific request that a more formal relationship be established between Nebraska and Afghanistan. In September 2008, the Department of State hosted the U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Review in Washington D.C. The Security Working Group was co-chaired by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Mitch Shivers, and Afghan Minister of Defense General Abdul Rahim Wardak. Senior civilian and flag officers represented DoS, DoD, NSC, the Joint Staff, CENTCOM, DA, CSTC-A, and others. During a presentation to the co-chairs detailing ongoing and proposed National Guard assistance to Afghanistan the flag officer concluding the briefing requested that a bi-lateral relationship, under an accepted CENTCOM program, be instituted between Afghanistan and Nebraska. The CENTCOM J-5, in attendance, concurred.<sup>57</sup> This was a significant step forward.

Planning has proceeded between CENTCOM, NGB and Nebraska resulting in proposed bi-lateral events, closely coordinated with CSTC-A, aimed at a National Guard State Partnership no later than 2012. Within the focus areas of security, agriculture development, health, and legal those proposed events include senior leader visits between Nebraska and the U.S. Ambassador and Afghan MOD; NE-Afghan agriculture exchanges; security exchanges between NE and Afghan National Police and Afghan Border Security Police; visits by the Chief Justice Abdul Salam Azimi and Afghan legal

representatives to the UNO Legal and International Studies Program, to name a few. The intent is to ensure that this bi-lateral relationship is nested within the campaign plans of CSTC-A and the U.S. Embassy Country Team.<sup>58</sup>

### Conclusion

Establishing Afghanistan as a secure, stable partner capable of regional cooperation and free from terrorist influence is clearly not only a key strategic goal for the U.S., but one that is being pursued with renewed vigor. That endeavor is marked by a strategy that goes beyond traditional military approaches to include internal capacity building as a key component to achieving that goal.

Since the early days of the post-Soviet era, National Guard State Partnerships have provided invaluable capability to host nations around the world in building internal capacity, enhancing security, increasing cooperation and facilitating regional stability. U.S. leadership, particularly at CENTCOM, recognizes this and have identified the establishment of an SPP for Afghanistan as a specific theater objective for their security cooperation plan.

Beginning over three decades ago, the State of Nebraska has served as a source of support and aid to Afghanistan and its people. These contributions have not only been across a broad spectrum of assistance, but have consequently forged binding ties and relationships that bode well for future cooperation. Such a future can only be enhanced by the establishment of a formal State Partnership between Afghanistan and Nebraska. Moreover, America's most sacred pursuit - the cause of freedom - will surely be advanced by that relationship.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (Simon and Schuster, 2002), 339.

<sup>2</sup> Mark C. Bour, *National Guard Engagement in the Pacific* (Naval Post Graduate School, 2002); available from [www.ngb.dtic.mil/staff/ia/spp](http://www.ngb.dtic.mil/staff/ia/spp) (accessed November 2008).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy* (June 2008), 6; available from <http://www.defense.gov> (accessed October 2008).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 9-11.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 15-17.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Central Command, *USCENTCOM Theater Security Cooperation Plan (Appendix 1 to Annex A, October 2007)*, A-1.

<sup>7</sup> Barnett R. Rubin and Abdubakar Siddique, *Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate* (US Institute for Peace, Washinton D.C., 2006), 11.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *United States Plan for Sustaining Afghanistan National Security Force* (Washington D.C. June 2008), 16, 26.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3.07 Stability Operations (October 2008)*, vi-vii (accessed December 2008).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 8-10.

<sup>11</sup> Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Green Book* (December 2008) 1-1, 1-16. See parameters of SPP described on 1-16 and this program is one of several engagement initiatives such as *economic support fund, foreign military construction, military international military education and training, foreign military finance program, etc* discussed in Chapter 1. Available from the DISAM website and also from <http://www.ngb.army.mil/ia/Default.aspx> (accessed Jan 2009).

<sup>12</sup> FM 3.07, 13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 1-15.

<sup>14</sup> Robert M. Gates, *A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for A New Age*, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 88 No. 1 (January/February 2009).

<sup>15</sup> FM 3.07, 2-6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 2-8.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 11-14.

<sup>18</sup> Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), *Command Overview* (27 August 2008), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* (December 2008), 20. This report to Congress is submitted consistent with Section 1230 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181). It includes a description of the comprehensive strategy of the United States for security and stability in Afghanistan. This report is the second in a series of reports required every 180 days through fiscal year 2010 and has been prepared in coordination with the Secretary of State, the Director of National Intelligence, the Attorney General, the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and the Secretary of Agriculture. This assessment complements other reports and information about Afghanistan provided to the Congress; however, it is not intended as a single source of all information about the combined efforts or the future strategy of the United States, its Coalition Partners, or Afghanistan. The information contained in this report is current as of August 29, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Marsac, *Interview between the author and DEA Country Attache to Afghanistan Michael Marsac in Kabul* (16 November 2008). Conducted during research visit to Afghanistan.

<sup>23</sup> Travis Norvell, *Interview between the author and DEA Analyst Travis Norvell at DEA headquarters* (15 January 2008).

<sup>24</sup> National Guard Bureau, *National Guard State Partnerships* (24 November 2008), 19. This is an informational brief developed by the International Affairs Division of the NGB-J5 in Washington D.C.

<sup>25</sup> Library of Congress, *Country Profiles* (January 2007), *Kyrgyzstan* 4-5. As series of profiles of foreign nations this is part of the Country Studies Program, formerly the Army Area Handbook Program. The profiles offer brief, summarized information on a country's historical background, geography, society, economy, transportation and telecommunications, government and politics, and national security. In addition to being featured in the front matter of published Country Studies, they are now being prepared as stand-alone reference aides for all countries in the series, as well as for a number of additional countries of interest. The profiles offer reasonably current country information independent of the existence of a recently published Country Study and will be updated annually or more frequently as events warrant. **Note:** The month and year in which each profile was created or most recently updated appear after each country name.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>28</sup> USCENTCOM, *Central Asia Security Cooperation Review* (December 2008), 13.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Montana National Guard, *Kyrgyzstan and Montana: People Linked through State Partnership Program* (2008), 8. This information was provided by Colonel Joel D. Cusker, Chief of Staff MTARNG and Vice Chief of the Joint Staff, Montana National Guard.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*,7.

<sup>32</sup> *Country Profiles* (February 2007),Turkmenistan, 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*,4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 5-7.

<sup>35</sup> *Central Asia Security Cooperation Review*, 30.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

<sup>37</sup> COL Craig Wroblewski, *Nevada-Turkmenistan State Partnership Program* (November 2008), 11. As a well developed partnership program the support and training provided has, based on the exchange model, taken place in both Afghanistan and NV.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, 9-10.

<sup>39</sup> *Central Asia Security Cooperation Review*, 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Country Profiles* (December 2006), Kazakhstan, 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 4-5.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>43</sup> *Central Asia Security Cooperation Review*, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Arizona National Guard, *State Partnership Significant Events Brief* (Jan 2008, updated 0 Jan 2009), 2-3. this information was provided by MAJ Eric Christopher, Central Asia desk officer for National Guard Bureau J-5, International Affairs, Washington D.C.

<sup>45</sup> *Country Profiles* (January 2007), Tajikistan, 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*,3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>49</sup> National Guard Bureau, *Counternarcotics Program Overview* (5 June 2008), 1. This information paper was written to provide the joint staff with a status of the various National Guard efforts in each of the countries of the Central Asia region. It was provided to the author by NGB-J5-IA.

<sup>50</sup> *Country Profiles* (August 2008), Afghanistan, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Dr. John F. Shroder, *Remote Sensing and GIS as Counterterrorism Tools for Homeland Security: The Case of Afghanistan* (March 2008), 28. Dr. Shroder is Professor of Geography and Geology at the University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) and has spent numerous years in Afghanistan on behalf of U.S. Geological Survey, the United Nations, private corporations and the university. The work cited here was provided to the author during attendance in November 2008 at UNO's Afghanistan Immersion Seminar conducted by the Afghan Studies center previously cited.

<sup>53</sup> CENTCOM *Theater Security Cooperation Plan*, A-1.

<sup>54</sup> Maj Brenda Fujan, *Nebraska-Afghanistan Bi-lateral Relationship Talking Points (January 2009)*, 1. Major Fujan is the Nebraska state coordinator responsible for bi-lateral planning. Information cited here was provided during interview with the author on 5 Jan 09 in Washington D.C.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Eric Christopher, Senior Leader Brief: Mobile Interdiction Teams* (August 2008), 1. This information paper was provided by the Afghanistan desk officer within NGB-J5, International Affairs division.

<sup>57</sup> As part of this Army War College Fellowship experience the author attended this Security Partnership Security Working Group at the Department of State and personally observed the briefing and discussion described herein.

<sup>58</sup> Hiam Nawas, *NE-Afghanistan Proposed Bi-lateral Relationship: Prelude to a NE-Afghan State Partnership Program* (December 2008), 6-10. Prepared by Ms. Hiam Nawas of the CENTCOM desk, NGB J-5 International Affairs Division and provided to the author during a research visit in December 2008. Available on request via DSN 327-2816.