

# Strategy Research Project

## State Partnership Program: Enduring in Post Conflict, Fiscally Constrained Environment

by

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United States Army War College  
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## **Abstract**

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## **State Partnership Program: Enduring in Post Conflict, Fiscally Constrained Environment**

Following each period of protracted military engagement in the 20th century, the United States has significantly reduced its armed forces end-strength and defense spending. The Department of Defense (DoD) was dramatically reduced at the conclusion of both world wars, and capabilities were slashed following operations in Korea and Vietnam.<sup>1</sup> With all U.S. combat forces out of Iraq and the cessation of kinetic operations on the horizon in Afghanistan, the U.S. begins its historic transition between war and what comes after.<sup>2</sup> The current drawdown is proving to be a greater challenge than its predecessors, in part because pervasive security threats are increasing in scale and scope, but also because of a shift in national interest to the Asian-Pacific region. Add to this complexity an ongoing global economic crisis that has prompted Western allies to sharply curtail defense spending, this period of retraction appears grave even by historical standards.<sup>3</sup>

The United States is burdened with far more debt now than during any previous retrenchments.<sup>4</sup> The nation's challenging fiscal situations will demand significant reductions in discretionary spending and a reprioritization of global strategic objectives. While the pentagon is postured to cut 100,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, and reduce the base budget \$487 billion over the next ten years, it must remain focused on the national security strategy and the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of the global security environment.<sup>5</sup>

The State Partnership Program (SPP) is a DoD security cooperation program administered by the National Guard Bureau (NGB). It supports the National Security Strategy (NSS) and achieves U.S. national security objectives and corresponding end-

states through planning, coordinating, and conducting SPP activities. The mission of the SPP is to improve the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC's) ability to create military-to-military, and in some cases civil-to-military relationships that develop "long-term global security while building enduring partnership capacity across all levels of society."<sup>6</sup> The program partners the military of a nation requesting assistance with the National Guard of a state or territory that meets pre-determined compatibility requirements.

This paper will argue for the SPP enduring in a post conflict, fiscally constrained environment, faced with the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the looming "fiscal cliff" of sequestration expected to take effect on January 2, 2013. I will expound upon the mandated Congressional Research Service (CRS) study, as well as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) directed Government Accountability Office (GAO) study, and will culminate with recommendations for areas requiring improvement prior to expanding and fully resourcing this low cost, strategically relevant program.

The original intent of the SPP was to develop relationships and assist in reforming the defense establishments of the former Soviet states, primarily through military-to-military engagements. This engagement would also provide valuable training for the National Guard. Today, organizations conduct these activities for the complementary purposes of promoting national security cooperation objectives through mutual understanding, supporting the Department of State (DOS) and GCC's theater security cooperation strategies and building enduring relationships and interoperability.<sup>7</sup> As noted by Terrence Kelly in the Rand Security Cooperation study, security assistance programs that provide advice or assistance, like the SPP, "forms the bedrock of security

cooperation and helps to lay the groundwork for building relationships with allies and other partners.”<sup>8</sup>

The NSS has emphasized the importance of strengthening security cooperation with other countries. It utilizes the DoD as a way of promoting stability and building partner capacity around the world.<sup>9</sup> The SPP is one of several competing efforts in the area of partnership building and security cooperation, but the only one that has the capability to integrate military and civilian capabilities providing a variety of low-cost, high value returns in the counterinsurgency environment.

For over 20 years, the program has demonstrated sustained accomplishments on a remarkably small budget. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, the program persevered on \$12 million;<sup>10</sup> in FY 2011 it operated on just \$13.2 million.<sup>11</sup> As DoD prioritizes military spending to adjust to a new era of fiscal austerity, they will have to decide whether to reduce or eliminate funding of programs and missions that while beneficial, are not value-added enough to be retained in the FY2013 and future budgets.<sup>12</sup> Will the SPP be such a program?

The evolution of SPP from its roots in the emerging Baltic countries, to enduring partnerships in 70 nations has long surpassed ad-hoc operating procedures and directives. The maturity of the program merits statutory authority and governing regulations to take full advantage of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) corroboration and derive maximum results. The congressional inquiry and resulting directive type memorandum (DTM) was the beginning of a succession of efforts required to codify SPP activities towards becoming a future program of record (POR).

Addressing the student body of the Naval War College on the subjects of the nation's commitment to its all-volunteer force, the Pentagon's budget recommendations to Congress, and a noticeably overdue renovation of the defense logistics program, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates addressed the issue of post-conflict troop reduction's:

Every time we have come to the end of a conflict, somehow we have persuaded ourselves that the nature of mankind and the nature of the world has changed on an enduring basis, and so we have dismantled both our military and intelligence capabilities. My hope...is that we not forget the basic nature of humankind has not changed, and there will always be people out there who want to try and take our liberty away or the liberty of our friends and our partners.<sup>13</sup>

#### Post Conflict Environment

As military operations transition to operations-other-than-war, it is not unprecedented for defense fiscal authorizations to be substantially decreased. The nation has historically reduced defense spending when a crisis or immediate threat passes. Following the Korean War, President Dwight Eisenhower severed defense spending 27 percent;<sup>14</sup> Richard Nixon slashed it 29 percent after Vietnam.<sup>15</sup> As the cold war tensions declined in the 1980's, Ronald Reagan trimmed military spending, a practice accelerated by Presidents George H. Bush and Bill Clinton.<sup>16</sup> Given the enormous escalation in spending under George W. Bush, and continued with the current Commander-In-Chief, even if today President Obama made comparable cuts to those of recent presidents, defense spending would remain considerably above the levels of all previous presidents.<sup>17</sup>

While combat operations transition to assistance roles, such as advisors, trainers, and logistical support to the Afghanistan security forces, the Pentagon is toiling in its own complex environment to adjust to a new era of fiscal austerity. They must

establish the proper balance between troop end-strength, military capabilities, and fiscal responsibility to the nation. We must retain a credible means of mitigating risk while we reduce the military capacity and the force projection capabilities of the nation.<sup>18</sup>

Unrelenting combat operations for well over a decade has over-tasked the all-volunteer force and the supplemental contractor support necessary to sustain high op-tempo operations. The stress fractures are showing; Aging equipment requiring extensive maintenance post deployment; pathologies associated with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury are increasing; and costs to support each combat-deployed Soldier have ballooned to nearly one million dollars per year.<sup>19</sup>

#### DoD Budget

The Defense budget is the single largest area of discretionary spending in the federal budget. During the height of the Cold War, defense spending consumed approximately six percent of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP). In FY2000, the amount of defense spending had fallen to two percent of GDP. Since the 9/11 attacks, the defense budget’s share of GDP has continued to grow, more than doubling FY2000 expenditures, ballooning to 4.7 percent. The DoD budget steadily increased for ten years until it saw its first decline.<sup>20</sup>

FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
\$600.9	\$665.9	\$666.3	\$690.9	\$687.0	\$645.7

Table 1. Department of Defense Spending in Billions<sup>21</sup>

FY 2011 saw the first decline in defense spending as combat operations in Iraq terminated. The passing of the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 and post war economic renovation and fiscal responsibility to the nation seized DoD’s attention. The

Congressional Budget Office estimates that defense spending will reach \$645.7 billion for FY 2012, which included a BCA mandated decrease applied to the base budget, and \$613.9 billion for FY 2013 (with a yet-to-be-determined sequestration reduction).<sup>22</sup>

Defense spending is not without its limits. Budgetary pressure from congress will continue to drive significant reductions in future levels of U.S. defense spending in pursuit of other types of federal programs. The nations challenging economic situations will entail significant reductions in the base defense budget as we transition between war and what comes after. Trepidations regarding new equipment acquisitions and overhauling battle fatigued equipment, increased military and civilian pay and benefits for existing and pensioned forces, and organizational and maintenance operating costs will force tough prioritization decisions.<sup>23</sup> The pentagon must work out how to do so without compromising the ability to maintain America's national security.<sup>24</sup>

#### Budget Control Act

The BCA of 2011, enacted by the 112<sup>th</sup> United States Congress, brought to close the debt-ceiling crisis on which the United States was perilously close to defaulting. In exchange for increasing the debt limit to \$2.1 trillion, a \$900 billion increase, the bill specified discretionary spending cuts of \$917 billion over the next ten years, of which \$21 billion must be applied to FY2012 budget.<sup>25</sup> The goal of the legislation was to cut at least \$1.2-\$1.5 trillion of discretionary spending over the period of 2012 to 2021.<sup>26</sup>

The bill created a joint committee of congress (three of each House Republicans, House Democrats, Senate Republicans, and Senate Democrats; appropriately named the "super-committee") to craft a proposal that would reduce deficits by a minimum of \$1.2 trillion over 10 years.<sup>27</sup> This bipartisan congressional committee was mandated to make a recommendation to congress by November 23, 2011.<sup>28</sup> If a quorum of seven

committee members agreed to the drafted legislation, Congress was required to vote on it, without the admission of any amendments, and without any filibusters.<sup>29</sup> If the “super-committee” failed to produce a deficit reduction bill with a minimum of \$1.2 trillion in cutbacks by January 15, 2012, the discretionary spending limits would be revised, and the discretionary appropriations and direct spending would be reduced.<sup>30</sup> This would also trigger automatic across-the-board-cuts, also known as sequestrations.<sup>31</sup>

### Sequestration

Sequestration would be shared among DoD and non-defense spending accounts.<sup>32</sup> For the DoD, sequestration would mean roughly a ten percent reduction in spending, except for personnel accounts, on top of the \$487 billion already proposed. The Pentagon would have to reduce spending \$600 billion over the next nine years, to include almost \$54 billion in FY 2013 alone, bringing the total to nearly \$1 trillion over the next decade.<sup>33</sup> Air Force Chief-of-Staff General Norton A Schwartz said that this “cannot be done without substantially altering our core military capabilities and, therefore, our national security.”<sup>34</sup>

Sequestration will significantly impact the Armed Forces. It will reduce the active component end strength, impact the industrial base, and significantly reduce modernization programs. The Army is already planning on eliminating 80,000 active-duty Soldiers over the next five years, resulting in an end-strength of 490,000 Soldiers. If the BCA goes into effect, consideration to dipping below that to 450,000 is already in discussion.<sup>35</sup> Such considerations will the reassessment of the national security strategy and the ability of DoD to respond and to shape the global environment in order to protect the United States.<sup>36</sup>

DoD has commenced a wide-ranging review of all areas of the budget for future savings. A number of proposals under consideration determine how we can reduce spending without harming national security.<sup>37</sup> This sensible approach would reach new efficiencies by eliminating unnecessary redundancy and overhead, reevaluating modernization programs, and renovating the defense logistics program which will increase contract competition.<sup>38</sup> This approach enables DoD to get an unbiased review of all service components, assess risk, set priorities, and make smart choices. Lessons learned from prior drawdowns are that it is difficult to generate sufficient savings just through increased efficiencies.<sup>39</sup> DoD must prioritize cost reductions by reducing or eliminating missions and programs, which while beneficial, are not value-added enough to be retained in the defense budget. Will the SPP be such a program?

The “super-committee” failed to provide to congress sufficient deficit reductions to stave-off automatic cuts. On January 2, 2013, when the President orders a sequestration required by the BCA, what will be the impact on the ability of DoD to conduct full spectrum operations required to support the implementation of U.S. national interests abroad?<sup>40</sup> How will the United States continue to build security assistance and partnership capacity across the globe and be sought-out as the security partner of choice?

### Security Assistance/Cooperation

Security assistance (SA) is interwoven throughout the nation’s history. Since the Revolutionary War, security assistance has been an institutionalized and enduring program utilized to advance U.S. interests in a global environment. The relatively recent development and use of the term Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) now incorporates all security assistance programs and activities that DoD administers.



Security cooperation is not just an interim program designed as a stop-gap measure. The program and supporting activities have been in existence since the 1700's in one form or another, and will remain as the foundation of building partner capacity.

### State Partnership Program

Evolving from the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the SPP program grew out of an initiative known as the Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP). Established in 1992 by the United States European Command (USEUCOM), it was a way of creating stability and encouraging the development of democratic governments in new independent states.<sup>41</sup> The JCTP was created as a political and military outreach strategy to the rising new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, now independent states of the former Soviet Union. It presented to the nation petitioning for assistance, the United States example how a civilian controlled military works in a democratic, free-market society.

Shortly after this program was established, DoD made the decision for the National Guard to spearhead this initiative. Former Chief of NGB, Lieutenant General John B. Conway led a thirty-member Military Liaison Team (MLT) to Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.<sup>42</sup> DoD believed that Russia would find National Guard forces less provocative than the presence of U.S. active duty Soldiers, and of greater assistance to the emerging states in their development of a reserve-based defense force.<sup>43</sup> Following the successful MLT mission, creation of the SPP took place when Lieutenant General Conway established the first partnership programs, pairing the Baltic countries of Estonia with New York, Latvia with Michigan, and Lithuania with Pennsylvania.<sup>44</sup>

Since the establishment of the first state partnerships, the SPP has evolved from a USEUCOM regional program into a sustained security cooperation global initiative.

The program is now a key DoD and DOS security cooperation tool, facilitating cooperation across all aspects of the JIIM environment and civil-military affairs.

The SPP has continued to grow into what the National Guard today considers the “crown jewel”<sup>45</sup> of its international relations effort. Today the program involves 64 partnerships with 70 foreign countries throughout all six Geographic Combatant Commands: 22 in USEUCOM, eight in USAFRICOM, five in USCENTCOM, six in USPACOM, 22 in USSOUTHCOM, and one in USNORTHCOM.<sup>46</sup> With the exception of Nevada, every one of the fifty-four states and territories is actively engaged in the program. Several states have affiliations with more than one nation.<sup>47</sup>

The SPP’s rapid growth led to congressional scrutiny of the conformity of select activities within the scope of the law. A congressional study commissioned to explore allegations of fiscal improprieties and inadequate documentation of measurable objectives provided sufficient legislative uncertainties of the program to warrant further consideration. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) report sought to investigate and provide suggested corrective options for policymakers who demonstrated interest in modifying the program.<sup>48</sup>

Three broad areas were of particular interest to Congress: the funding of past SPP activities within the statutory authority; the effectiveness of the program in meeting goals and objectives through the use of established metrics; and the relationship of nested SPP activities relative to the goals and priorities of GCC’s and U.S. ambassadors abroad.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, congressional attention was also tied to broader concerns that select “DoD security cooperation activities may encroach on, complicate,

or conflict with DOS and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) responsibilities and prerogatives.”<sup>50</sup>

The focus of SPP activities varies depending on the application for assistance by the partnering nation, the proficiencies of the supporting National Guard organization, and the overarching country goals of the respective U.S. ambassador and the GCC. Engagements are individually tailored, based upon the needs and requests of the partnering nation, and assessments conducted by the DOS, GCC, and the supporting National Guard unit. Typical missions performed are:

- Subject matter expert exchanges.<sup>51</sup>
- Familiarizations: Demonstrations of specialized military capabilities and/or discussions of policy issues related to those capabilities.<sup>52</sup>
- Visits between senior leaders of a state National Guard and senior leaders of the partner nation’s armed forces.<sup>53</sup>

Traditional SPP activities have a common core of topics, such as disaster management and disaster relief activities, military education, command and control, search and rescue, border operations, military medicine, port security, and military justice.<sup>54</sup> Additional interactions also develop well beyond these common core topics and are tailored to the requests of assistance from the partnering nation, the input from the GCC and the country team, and the abilities of the supporting State’s National Guard.

Congressional concerns were raised that SPP events in the past may have funded U.S. or foreign civilian participation when such funding was outside the scope of the funding authorities. SPP does not have a dedicated statutory authority; rather, it

relies on numerous Title 10 and Title 22 statutory authorities to conduct its activities.<sup>55</sup> Normal activities outside of the United States are conducted in a Title 10 (Active Duty Armed Forces) United States Code (USC) 168 status (10 U.S.C. 168). This code provides the authority to fund “military-to-military contacts that are designed to encourage a democratic orientation of defense establishments and military forces of other countries.”<sup>56</sup> For events conducted within the United States, National Guard members are placed in a duty status under Title 32 (U.S.C 502).<sup>57</sup> Scrutiny of perceived fiscal improprieties resulted from funding for U.S. civilian and foreign civilian participation (non-defense related civilian engagements) when such funding was outside the scope of the funding statutes.<sup>58</sup> Ambiguity of the terminology in the statutory authorities found in the National Defense Authorization Act that mandated reporting on “civilian engagement activities” was being applied differently by participating states and GCC’s.<sup>59</sup> Congress tasked DoD to issue corrected guidance, specifying authorized SPP activities and participants.<sup>60</sup>

In conjunction with the NGB, the DOS conducted a survey of U.S. ambassadors, requesting their position and analysis of the SPP. Of 62 embassy’s surveyed, 41 responded. With the exception of one respondent, collectively they voiced “the SPP was valuable in helping meet [the] Post’s goals and objectives.”<sup>61</sup> Enclosed are two recent posture statements made from GCC’s, testimony delivered to the Senate Arms Service Committee and House Armed Services Committee. The GCC’s made the following salient points:

The SPP accounts for 45% of European Command’s military-to-military engagement. The true value of this program is the enduring relationships that have been built over time, as many of European Command’s state partnerships are approaching their twenty-year anniversaries. We see the

program as integral to the combatant commands' theater engagement plans and the U.S. Ambassadors Mission Strategic Resource Plans.<sup>62</sup>

The SPP is a superb tool that fosters a variety of military-to-military, military-to-civilian, and civilian-to-civilian engagements using National Guard and U.S. states' capabilities. The SPP delivers programs and activities that build broad capabilities with our African partners. The habitual relationship's this builds adds tremendous value to our efforts. This program is very valuable to U.S. Africa Command, and we look forward to expanding it as our African partners request greater participation. I urge your continued support.<sup>63</sup>

Despite written and verbal support from DOS and combatant commanders, written assessments and measurable outcomes have been both elusive and inconclusive. Focus on "outputs rather than outcomes" hamper justification of continued monetary support from program analysts.<sup>64</sup> Supported by a RAND report, security cooperation programs are difficult to assess due to the variance in each organization and scope of the engagement.<sup>65</sup>

The integration of SPP activities has not always been thoroughly coordinated with either the combatant commanders or the U.S. embassy in the partnering nation.<sup>66</sup> This lack of coordination between the partnering state, the GCC, and the country team has resulted in missed opportunities to espouse linked engagement priorities. Regardless of the accuracy of the allegation, the maturity and global influence of the program necessitates standardized event coordination procedures. The state, the combatant commander, and the ambassador must all be involved in every SPP activity planning process prior to any activity in a foreign country.<sup>67</sup>

Last of all, some SPP activities are accomplished in coordination with U.S. foreign assistance programs within both the DOS and USAID, organizations that have a larger scope of responsibility and influence in the partners' country.<sup>68</sup> These intergovernmental agencies affect training and equipping, humanitarian and civic

assistance, and educating military forces. The goals between the competing organizations are inconsistent or even detrimental to long-term partnership building goals and lean in favor the SPP. Deployed overseas, National Guard personnel are equivalent to active duty forces, but possess civilian skill sets, experiences, and increased sensibilities when conducting missions overseas.<sup>69</sup>

#### Directive Type Memorandum 11-010

At the direction of Congress, DoD responded to the CRS report by implementing a DTM (issued 19 August 2011) which applied to all organizational entities within DoD.<sup>70</sup> DTM 11-010 titled, “Use of Appropriated Funds for Conducting State Partnership Program (SPP) Activities” not only responded to each area of concern in the CRS report, it provided definitive guidance and responsibilities for future activities.<sup>71</sup>

In accordance with the authority established in DoD Directive (DODD) 5111.1 (the directive that establishes the responsibilities, functions, relationships, and authorities of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy), DTM 11-010 established the DoD policy for the conduct of all interrelated SPP activities. It created a formal reporting chain and delineated responsibilities and reporting requirements to as far down as the Ground Combatant Commanders. It is now DoD policy that:

- SPP activities and events shall be planned, coordinated, and executed to achieve the security cooperation objectives of the GCC.<sup>72</sup>
- SPP activities shall be an integral component of the GCC’s theater security cooperation plans, and to the maximum extent legally permissible, supported by the relevant Chief of Mission (COM).<sup>73</sup>

- SPP activities shall be approved by the appropriate GCC, COM, and the U.S. Secretary of State as required.<sup>74</sup>

- National Guard personnel, while in the United States, may conduct SPP activities in a Title 32 status. While conducting activities in a foreign country, National Guard personnel must be on Title 10 status.<sup>75</sup>

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy shall:

- Serve as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for SPP policy and programs, and in those capacities consult with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the GCC.<sup>76</sup>

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall:

- Ensure that each of the GCC's submits a detailed annual fiscal record of the SPP activities conducted that used any source of DoD funds, to include any civilian engagement activities that were conducted.<sup>77</sup>

The GCC shall:

- Coordinate with the Chief of National Guard Bureau to ensure the best use of National Guard and partner nation assets in achieving the GCC's security Cooperation objectives and the national security objectives of the partner nation.<sup>78</sup>

- Incorporate SPP activities as a means to implement security cooperation plans. Review and approve as appropriate all proposed SPP activities.<sup>79</sup>

- Coordinate with relevant U.S. Embassy Country Teams to obtain COM concurrence for SPP activities with a partner nation regardless of where the activities are to take place.<sup>80</sup>

The issuance of the DTM was the first significant step forward in framing an interagency organizational framework for the SPP program. The evolution of the program from its roots in the emerging Baltic countries, to recognized partnerships in 70 nations has long surpassed ad-hoc operating procedures and directives. The maturity of the program necessitates formal protocols and governing regulations to maximize interagency corroboration and collective results. The congressional inquiry and resulting DTM was the beginning of a sequence of efforts to further codify the SPP activities towards a future program of record.

#### Governmental Accounting Office Report

The 2012 NDAA directed the Governmental Accounting Office (GAO) to conduct a review of the SPP. To meet this mandate, the GAO investigated the overall program, conducting surveys and making assessments of SPP activities towards meeting pre-determined goals and objectives. The type and frequency of military-to-military, and civilian-to-military activities and their various statutory authorities were also investigated as were also any challenges DoD encounters while endeavoring to maximize the implementation of the program.<sup>81</sup>

The GAO produced a report to congressional committees titled, “State Partnership Program: Improved Oversight, Guidance, and Training Needed for National Guard’s Efforts with Foreign Partners.” In this document, the GAO produced three significant findings:



- The program lacks clear goals, objectives, and performance metrics.<sup>82</sup>
- Activity and funding reports are incomplete as well as inconsistent.<sup>83</sup>
- Funding activities that included U.S. and foreign partner civilian participants are ambiguous.<sup>84</sup>

### Goals and Objectives

The program lacks a comprehensive oversight framework that includes clear program goals, objectives, and metrics in which to measure progress, effectiveness, and understanding of the end state achievement. The benefits of the program described by all stakeholders focused on the program's contributions to meeting their missions, and supporting combatant command's objectives. "Benefits" per-se cannot be qualified without having established performance standards or objectives (end-states) in which to compare current position to be able to demonstrate progress. This in turn, limits the DoD's and Congress' ability to determine the value of a program beyond the short-term resource investment. Enterprise management requires the development of goals, objectives, and performance metrics in order to be able to assess the program's progress and determine the effectiveness of long-term resource investment.<sup>85</sup>

### Activity Tracking and Fiscal Reporting

The GAO found that several information systems, which were not interoperable, were being utilized to track program activities and funding. The NGB and the GCC's maintain separate databases for tracking events. Each organization documents SPP activities and funding in non-interoperable databases. Additionally, interagency operations lacked common operating terminology and standardized data-field procedures, which further exacerbated conflicting reports of SPP activities.

DoD has recognized the use of multiple databases, operating independently and lacking interoperability. A single global data network – the Global Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System – is under developed to replace the multiple information systems currently being used to capture theater security-type information.<sup>86</sup>

Funding is a frequently cited challenge facing the SPP. The “myriad of funding authorizations and their specific peculiarities are a challenge to even the most experienced SPP Coordinator.”<sup>87</sup> Because resources come from multiple sources, the preponderance from either the NGB or the GCC’s, there is frequently misunderstanding and funding uncertainties as the distribution of resources is negotiated by which organization is responsible for funding an event or portion of an activity. The NGB and the GCC’s frequently do not have the necessary funds available to support events. GCC’s state “additional funding for the program is critical for the continued success of the program” and have expressed concerns that funding would be cut in the future.<sup>88</sup>

#### Funding Civilian Engagements

The most obvious challenge cited by the SPP stakeholders is funding activities that include civilian participants. Developing the scope of activities beyond the mil-to-mil interactions, and including the participating state specialized civilian counterparts into other sectors, such as disaster management, law enforcement, and infrastructure development would lead to fruition outlying embassy and combatant command missions.<sup>89</sup>

The NDAA for 2012 provides authority for the use of up to \$3 million to pay for selected expenses associated with civilian participation. DoD guidance, while not

prohibiting civilian involvement activities, is ambiguous regarding the use of fiscal statutory authorities. This has led to the perception that activities planned to promote the engagement with civilians are either prohibited or not copiously supported. This perceived restriction in the DoD guidance prevents states' capabilities from being fully utilized. The responses stakeholders have provided revealed that there is widespread confusion regarding the aspects of proper program funding, and an unwillingness to implement should they be in violation.<sup>90</sup>

The GAO recognized that in the last fifteen years DoD has placed an increasing emphasis on the importance of strengthening security cooperation through encouraging the development of partner capacity and promoting stability around the globe. While many SPP stakeholders cite anecdotal benefits to the program, DoD and Congress do not have a quantifiable means with which to assess the program's effectiveness or efficiency because fundamental elements are missing. The GAO recommended the Secretary of Defense implement the following four actions:

- Direct the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, in coordination with the GCC's and the embassy country teams, to complete and implement a comprehensive oversight framework by using the goals, objectives, and metrics currently being developed as the basis.<sup>91</sup>

- Direct the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) and Joint Staff, in coordination with the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, the GCC's, and the embassy country teams, to develop guidance for all stakeholders that includes common operating terminology and standardized data-field procedures for activity documentation.

Develop standardized procedures for maintaining activity and resource information until the implementation of the global data system.<sup>92</sup>

- Direct the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) to develop guidance that clarifies how to use funds for civilian participation in the SPP.<sup>93</sup>
- Direct the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to develop additional training for SPP Coordinators and Bilateral Affairs Officers (BAO) on the appropriate use of funds for supporting the SPP, especially regarding the use of civilians in program events.<sup>94</sup>

### Recommendations

The State Partnership Program has evolved into the cornerstone of TSC because of its minimal cost investment relative to its considerable return. This program builds enduring relationships, promotes common interests, and enhances partner capabilities to provide safe and secure environments.<sup>95</sup> The SPP is one of several TSC endeavors within DoD. SPP's overarching vision is the long-term development of an enduring relationship with partner countries in support of U.S. national security strategy.<sup>96</sup> To ensure this program endures pending fiscal reform and any further scrutiny from the legislative branch, I offer the following recommendations based on my assimilation of the CRS report, the DTM, and the GAO report.

- SPP should have a dedicated statutory authority.
- Centralized oversight of the program
- Establish clear goals, objectives, and performance metrics.

#### Dedicated Statutory Authority

SPP has no dedicated statutory authority; rather, activities are currently executed under multiple Title 10, Title 22, Title 32, and NDAA authorities that are related to the

multitude of missions conducted.<sup>97</sup> The proliferation of partnerships over the last two decades to 70 nations advocates for the program to be conducted under a new, coherent, overarching SPP statutory authority and become a POR. A single statute would provide a clear, coherent, and permanent framework for the National Guard to conduct SPP activities. It would clarify SPP task and purpose, permitted events, standardized pre-execution interagency coordination, and overarching guidance for the use of funds.<sup>98</sup> Developing a program of record will eliminate any uncertainty of statute ambiguity when executing military-to-military, or civilian-to-military engagements, and ease activity tracking.

#### Centralized Oversight

No single organization is responsible for overseeing and standardizing all activities. Currently, NGB approves activities that it funds, and the GCC's exercise approval over activities that they fund. Requiring a single organization to provide centralized oversight and have approval authority over all activities will facilitate greater standardization in the program improve administration.<sup>99</sup> This will also ensure that training for SPP coordinators and BAO's is conducted, planning activities are fully coordinated with the combatant command, and are in support of established goals and objectives. Events with limited connection to pre-established priorities and not cross-walked with interim goals easily would be identified and disapproved in the initial planning stages.

#### Establish Performance Metrics

GCC's and U.S. Ambassadors have cited the many benefits of the program, but the program continues to lack clear goals, objectives, and performance metrics in which

to assess the program progress. Although determining the effectiveness of security cooperation programs is inherently challenging because of long-term, relationship building goals, “achieving results in government requires a comprehensive oversight framework for assessing progress, efficiency, and effectiveness.”<sup>100</sup> NGB must develop program goals, objectives, and measures of effectiveness that align with the combatant commands’ and country teams’ goals and objectives.<sup>101</sup> These measures of effectiveness should be constructed to encourage long-term performance improvement, and lead to the development of interim goals. Short-term progress objectives will allow incremental measures of progress and justify whether a program is making progress, requires additional resources, or requires corrective actions.<sup>102</sup>

### Conclusion

The United States attains its national interests by applying a JIIM unity of effort that joins the acts of diplomacy with implementation by the military. No example is more pronounced than in the political-military realm of Phase Zero operations.<sup>103</sup> In cooperation, the National Military Strategy and the Quadrennial Defense Review Report recognize theater security cooperation and building partner capacity activities as priorities to this nation. Both documents emphasize the need to promote the development of new relationships, and strengthen enduring alliances. The nation’s commitment to universal theater security cooperation arrangements promotes the idea of shared prosperity globally.<sup>104</sup> The National Military Strategy charges the GCC’s with the responsibility of implementing security cooperation activities as one part of an interagency process led by the DOS. As such, the SPP acts as a force multiplier for the GCC’s theater security cooperation plan.<sup>105</sup>

The National Guard State Partnership Program is a proven, “low dollar, high impact program,”<sup>106</sup> that pairs state National Guard with foreign nations – creating the ability to build enduring relationships while promoting national security objectives, stability, and partner building capacity.<sup>107</sup> These relationships spill over beyond that with the state National Guard, providing a conduit to develop economic ties and civilian engagement opportunities, further developing the resilient relationship between the United States and the foreign nation.<sup>108</sup> This “crown jewel”<sup>109</sup> of global engagement should not be eliminated as the military draws down in a post conflict, fiscally constrained environment. To fully leverage its potential, this program should have a dedicated statutory authority. The terminology in the authority will make an unambiguous and permanent centralized oversight framework authority. That single authority will be responsible for overseeing and standardizing the full spectrum of engagement administration. This organization would be responsible for economic program implementation and tracking, interagency objective and metrics assessment development, and event data reporting and collection. The GCC’s have unanimously espoused the benefits of the SPP and voiced their concern regarding reduced funding. To fully leverage its potential, this program needs to be codified into law.

#### Endnotes

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

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<sup>6</sup> Lawrence Kapp and Nina M. Serafino, "The National Guard State Partnership Program: Background, Issues, and Options for Congress," (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, August 15, 2011), 6.

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<sup>18</sup> Cherly Pellerin, American Forces Press Service, "Service Chiefs: Sequestration Damage Could Be Irreversible," November 2, 2011, linked from U.S. Air Force Home Page, <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123278348>, (accessed November 13, 2012).

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