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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 04/21/2016	2. REPORT TYPE Master's of Military Studies	3. DATES COVERED (From - To) SEP 2015 - APR 2016
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4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Promoting Strategic Security through Diplomacy, Democracy, and Nation-Building: The United States National Guard State Partnership Program	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER N/A
	5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A

6. AUTHOR(S) Smoot, Marcus A., Major, LG, ARNG	5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A
	5e. TASK NUMBER N/A
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A
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9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Same As #7	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) James H. Joyner, Jr., Ph.D.
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) N/A

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release, distribution unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
The United States DoD transformed GCC M2M programs into the National Guard SPP. The SPP is a bilateral effort that promotes whole of nation sharing between American states and nations burdened with challenges that may threaten their sovereignty and regional security. The SPP supports many interagency international programs and goals as well as partner nation goals and missions. Lastly, the SPP is America's strategic nation-building initiative that forms lasting relationships, fosters regional security, reinforces diplomacy, and supports democratic values in a fiscally constrained environment.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
State Partnership Program, SPP, M2M, National Guard Bureau, Nation Building

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			USMC Command and Staff College
Unclass	Unclass	Unclass	UU	42	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code) (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

AUTHOR: Marcus A. Smoot, Major, LG,

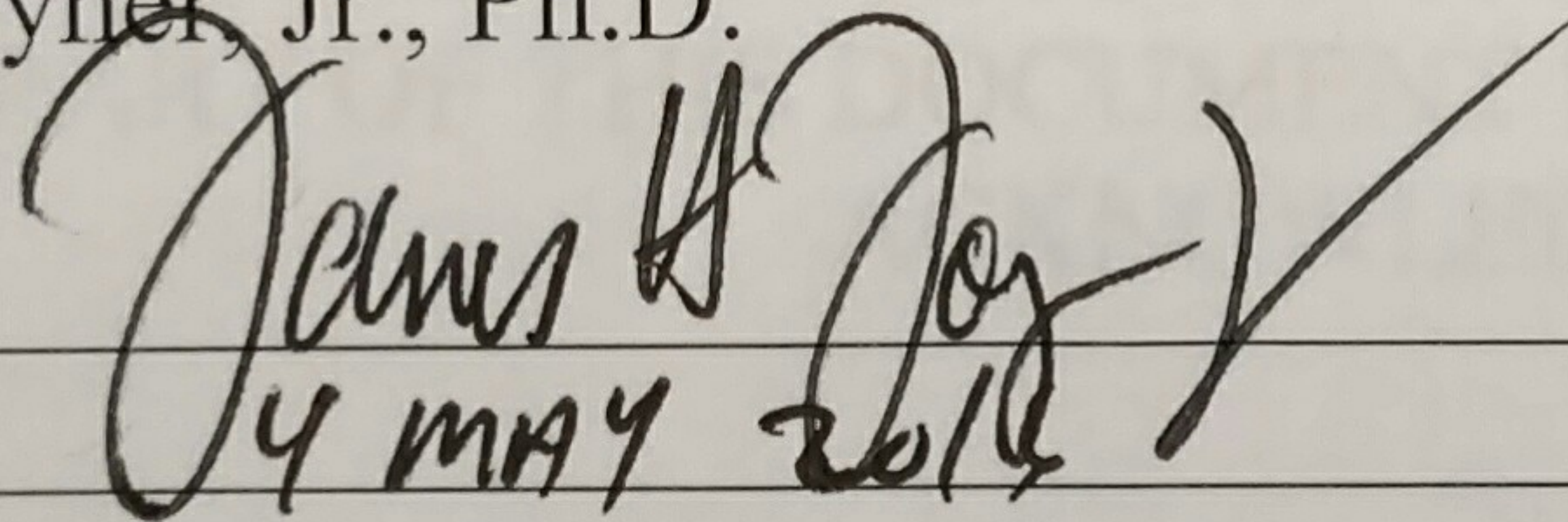
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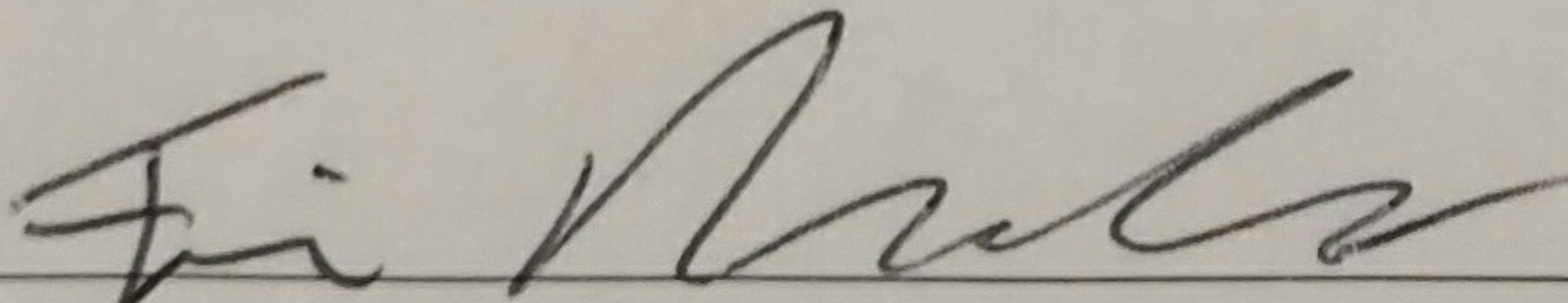


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Executive Summary

Title: Promoting Strategic Security through Diplomacy, Democracy, and Nation-Building: The United States National Guard State Partnership Program

Author: Marcus A. Smoot, Major, Logistics, United States Army National Guard

Thesis: The six United States combatant commands do not have the continuity, manpower, resources, or budget to consistently engage or sustain long term whole-of-nation, military-to-military, or diplomatic mission plans: The United States National Guard State Partnership Program should be expanded to become America's strategic nation-building initiative premised on forming lasting relationships, fostering regional security, performing military-to-military missions, reinforcing diplomacy, and supporting democratic values in a fiscally constrained environment.

Discussion: America has a history of deliberate military collaboration with other countries. Typically limited to military exercises, the United States Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) leads this military-to-military (M2M) program with aligned forces and resources. Many of these M2M opportunities increased partner nation military readiness. M2M programs also improved measures of military successes including wartime coalition cohesion, improvements to public perception, and military professionalism. A key product of the GCC M2M program is the ability to promote regional stability through the partner nation military posture. The United States National Guard welcomed and assumed the M2M mission from the GCC. Newly named the State Partnership Program (SPP), it has evolved and expanded to much more, and now provides 76 nations with whole of the nation-sharing with one of the 54 States and Territories. Programs initiated by the Department of State (DoS), Department of Defense (DoD) and many other interagency partners are now imbedded with the National Guard's SPP. States and Territories government officials, law enforcement and businesses have also joined the SPP. The SPP also assists partner nations with Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) preparedness.

Research Questions: Are the 54 United States and Territory's National Guards postured to perform m2m engagements, democracy and diplomatic projects, or strategic security initiatives of the SPP? If so, why? If not, how can the National Guard develop and execute the DoD and DoS requirements and international demand of the State Partnership Program? Are other DoD service components or DoS agencies able and/or poised to perform the mission? What are the dangers to the sustainability of the program?

Intent: This monograph examines the United States National Guard (USNG) SPP as a ready, relevant, and critical M2M program that reinforces strategic security with nations in a fiscally constrained future.

Conclusion: The United States DoD transformed GCC M2M programs into the National Guard SPP. The SPP is a bilateral effort that promotes whole of nation sharing between American states and nations burdened with challenges that may threaten their sovereignty and regional security. The SPP supports many interagency international programs and goals as well as partner nation goals and missions. Lastly, the SPP is America's strategic nation-building initiative that forms lasting relationships, fosters regional security, reinforces diplomacy, and supports democratic values in a fiscally constrained environment.

Preface

Upon selection to attend Marine Corps University Command and Staff College (MCU-CSC) I was counseled by several senior National Guard (NG) leaders. A common theme was to “tell the NG story,” “don’t lose your identity,” and “don’t be rolled into just giving the Army or Air Force perspective.” Prior to arriving at MCU-CSC the Army component students, which included Army National Guard (ARNG), were required to attend a “primer” course at the Army’s Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Immediately apparent was a complete lack of knowledge of the ARNG. Furthermore, the NG was mocked and described as little more than a domestic force for Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) or Humanitarian Assistance and/ or Disaster Relief (HADR), a poorly run policing force, and an expensive social experiment that routinely embarrasses the Active Component (AC) with substandard, over weight Soldiers.

The MCU CSC curriculum, instructors, and inter-service classmates were no different in their lack of understanding of the force structure, missions, and capabilities of the National Guard Bureau (NGB), Air National Guard (ANG), or the ARNG. I have requested and submitted the “NGB 101” component presentation be included in the MCU CSC service component briefings for future reference. I am compelled to tell the NG State Partnership Program (SPP) story or at least a chapter of it to inform strategic and operational joint military leaders, local to national level leaders, and interagency leaders working with partner nations to promote regional and global security.

During my research of the SPP, the significance of explaining this multi-faceted mission became the natural choice for this monograph. I wanted to provide the reader with a basis to understand how to employ the NG during mission planning and execution by informing reader with examples of NG capabilities, which may improve decision making at the strategic and operational level. I wanted explain to the reader how the regionally aligned SPP augments the

mission of the US armed forces Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC). Also found during research was how the National Guard can build and maintain relationships with nations through years of cooperative work with personnel being the continuity in the program success.

I am proud to be a small part of the modern National Guard “Minutemen” legacy. My Guard family lineage traces back to 1642 Virginia and Maryland. William Smute, a Dutch shipwright, embarked from England and fought in the campaign against the Chickahominy and Pamunky Indians in defense of the York River settlement about 10 miles from where I live today. He was paid 600lbs of tobacco for his service.¹

I am truly inspired by my loving wife, Laura, for her unyielding support during this academic year. A warm “thank you” to the Marine Corps University Command and Staff College for a world class education. Dr. Joyner and Dr. Marlo for their professional mentorship, guidance and patience above and beyond the scope of the academic environment. The superb military faculty and staff, especially the Marine Corps University Library and the Leadership Communications Skills Center staff all enhanced and honed my personal and professional skills. Assuredly, I am a better officer, and I am honored and forever grateful for this opportunity.

Introduction

United States military engagements worldwide will no longer be a massive deployment of forces. Worldwide economic strain is, by itself, a deterrent that will dictate the limits of a WoN response to conflicts. This is not to say that the US will stand idly by or allow their allies and innocent lives to be afflicted. However, the US must continue to evolve approaches to military intervention in order to assure our response does not weaken our security and sovereignty. The measure of response and the nature of preparing partner nations for adversity will be central to US intervention in the future. Proactive programs started by the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC) and AC services were part of normal operations throughout the 20th Century. Many cooperative programs were very costly and manpower intensive and diminished due to costs. Other programs lost favor with the change of command and lack of continuity needed to sustain a lasting M2M relationship. During the 20th Century, the DoD use of the National Guard markedly expanded with Guard units deploying to augment wartime forces worldwide. The Air and Army National Guard, for nearly thirty years, has been postured and consistently called to augment the AC in support of complex WoN missions that promote strategic security to the region. The six United States combatant commands do not have the continuity, manpower, resources or budget to consistently engage or sustain long term WoN, M2M, or diplomatic mission plans: The USNG SPP should be expanded to become America's strategic nation-building initiative premised on forming lasting relationships, fostering regional security, performing military-to-military missions, and supporting democratic values in a fiscally constrained environment.

Background

Before addressing the thesis, a brief history of the National Guard is warranted. On



Figure 1. "The First Muster" by Don Troiani, Oil on canvas

December 13, 1636, The Massachusetts Bay Colony exercised "The First Muster" or formation and call to arm civilians as military forces constituted in Salem, Massachusetts.² Colonial males, age 16 to 60 years old, took up arms and drilled once a week in preparation for attacks from the Pequot Indians.³ Named "the Minutemen"⁴ and nearly four hundred years old, this militia is America's oldest military force. The Massachusetts National Guard units, still active today, are the direct descendant units to the first militia in 1636. After the American Revolution the militia was recognized in the Bill of Rights, Article II of which calls for "a well-regulated militia."⁵ As written into law, the unit lineage of the ARNG predates all the other services with the Militia Act of May 8, 1792, which "permitted militia units organized before the May 8, 1792, to retain their customary privileges."⁶ This important provision would be perpetuated by the Militia Act of 1903.⁷ The National Defense Act of 1916, and subsequent legislation also anchors the National Guard in the United States DoD strategic plan.

Preambles to the State Partnership Program

The SPP origins stem from the former Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP), commanded by the GCC and performed by AC personnel. The JCTP established professional contacts using M2M engagements between the U.S. military and the militaries of fledgling independent nations of the former Soviet Union. The JCTP was intended to promote subordination to civilian leadership, respect for human rights, and a defensively oriented military posture.⁸ In 1993, NGB joined the JCTP and initiated the first state partnerships. This effort was meant to deter Russian posturing in the region. The assumption was Russia perceive the National Guard as a less provocative threat more than an AC military presence. The M2M with Guard units began and the AC began withdrawing forces due to reductions and missioning priorities.

Since the GCC JCTP, The National Guard SPP has expanded to more than 70 partnerships spanning 76 Countries in all combatant commands and assist in fulfilling the Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) model for the DOD and GCCs. Each state conducts many missions throughout the years and many have created Foreign Area Officer/Liaison Officer slots which are typical filled by post command company grade and field grade officers and noncommissioned officers below the rank of colonel and Sergeant Major. The early SPPs built a foundation with the Balkan and Baltic nations, who were very receptive to having American partners engaging in a variety of activities including:

- Exchanges of subject matter experts,
- Demonstrations of certain military capabilities,
- Discussions of policy issues, and
- Visits between senior leaders of a state National Guard and senior leaders of the partner nation's armed forces.⁹

Subtle expansion of the SPP over the past thirty years has incorporated a Whole of Nation (WoN) approach beyond the GCC M2M engagements that include:

- Diplomatic engagements and ceremonies,

- Key Leader engagements for private business and industry from both the state and nation, and
- Regional security cooperation supporting Department of State(DOS), Department of Defense(DoD), the GCC and United States Agency for International Development(USAID).

The United States National Guard State Partnership Program

The U.S. National Guard Bureau's SPP partners a U.S. state or territory National Guard, government agencies, and private corporations with other nations around the globe. Nearly every US state, territory and District of Columbia National Guard are participants in the SPP with several states requesting multiple country partners across multiple GCCs.

Air Force General Craig R. McKinley, who headed the NGB from 2008 to 2012, described the SPP as “the crown jewel of the Guard's international engagement.” He also cites the program's high payoff in a fiscally constrained environment which is exactly the type of engagement that supports the DOD’s new strategic guidance and supports the last five US National Security Strategies. The NGB's SPP leverages the formation of lasting relationship and formally partners a US state or territory National Guard, government agencies, and private corporations with other nations on every continent and GCC. In 1991, the first SPP informal missioning began in the Baltic Region Nations and the USNG with a formal charter being signed in 1993. Through SPP, the USNG leads M2M engagements in support of regional defense security goals and also leverages whole-of-society relationships and capabilities to facilitate broader interagency and corollary engagements spanning military, government, economic and social spheres. Lastly, SPP partner nations have deployed jointly with NG and AC forces to war zones globally. Several of those joint deployments have strengthened the partner relationship, engaged leaders, and fostered additional levels of cooperation and many will be detailed in the GCC success stories below.

Investing in Future Key Leader Engagements

The SPP remains committed firstly to M2M engagements including all aspects of the state Air and Army National Guard as well as at the Federal level with key leaders from NGB. However, the SPP has significantly expanded and is responsible for bringing leaders from all sectors of society to collaborate globally. Captains of industry, civic planners, engineers, architects, artists, scholars and government leaders at all levels are now part of the exchange of ideas and planning considerations that has greatly enhanced the relationship building of the SPP. The positive narrative foundation to a stronger future is strengthened even further as individual families of the military members have begun formal student exchange programs.

Officers, and Officials from Combatant Commands

Source: GAO analysis of responses to e-mailed questions.

State Partnership Program Coordinators	Bilateral Affairs Officers	Officials from combatant commands
Provides experience and training for guardsmen	Events are tied to combatant command or country team mission	Events support combatant command mission and objectives
Develops relationship with partner country	Good communication and coordination between stakeholders	National Guard units possess unique skills that are useful for supporting combatant command objectives
Encourages partner countries to co-deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan	Provides information sharing and support to partner country	Encourages partner nation deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan
Improves retention or provides other incentives for guardsmen	Builds relationship with partner country	
Guardsmen benefit from partner country's experiences	Encourages partner countries to co-deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan	

Table 1: Key Benefits of the State Partnership Program, as Cited by State Partnership Program Coordinators, Bilateral Affairs

Senior leaders in several states started their National Guard careers when the SPP was initiated and have grown with their partner nation counterparts. This level of fidelity in relationship building has fostered trust in mutually beneficial processes from sustainable agriculture to modern medicine. As noted in Table 1 above, the SPP M2M in support of GCC and the National security initiatives of the US and the partner nation are the mutually beneficial and a reason for the program success. Next are the details of a SPP from each of the GCC regions starting with the European Command which includes the first SPPs formed as well as

the most SPPs. Each of the SPP detailed has specific nuances that make it worthy of being called out; however, many in a particular GCC do form regional security cooperation and are equally important.

Partnerships for Peace and GCC Regional Security

President Bill Clinton's *National Security Strategy* emphasized a policy of engagement. Detailed as "Shape, Respond, and Prepare," the *National Security Strategy* specified the necessity of global and regional integration using Theater Engagement Plans (TEPs), which "shaped" the battle-space by forming alliances and partnerships through the use of WoN approaches using the US power, diplomatic, military, and economic means. Clinton's Secretary of Defense, William J. Perry, explained his view of a "Preventive Defense" as "actions we can take to prevent the conditions of conflict and create the conditions of peace."¹⁰ Perry furthers his thesis stating that US foreign policy should support regional democracy as a key to U.S. security interests in the GCCs and democratic states are paramount in advancing regional stability and reducing violence. This is especially true of the Eastern Europe fledgling countries which would become the targets of the administration in promoting the State Partnership Program in the region.

NATO established the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994¹¹ to help promote the relationship of a US state with a partner nation. The National Guard was quick to adapt the name to reflect the uniqueness of their role in strategic peace keeping and relationship building. With several newly formed nations in central Europe involved in the program, momentum for the SPP grew in central Europe to over 22 SPPs noted below in Figure 3. Each state continues to expand the program with their partner nation to include civic, government, and business sharing. The benefit to the National Guard is through improved readiness by allowing tactical,

operational and strategic engagements. Additional, units from the partner countries have deployed with National Guard units in support of wartime and humanitarian relief missions.



Figure 2: US European Command SPP Partners in detail..

Specific SPP relationship details by GCC region begin with the Kosovo in the EUCOM GCC and the author’s home state of Iowa.

EUCOM-Iowa and Kosovo

Since 12 June 1999, the onset of the NATO intervention in Kosovo or KFOR, over 700 members of Iowa National Guard have served as peacekeepers in Kosovo. Immediately, Iowa military leadership began key leader engagements with the Kosovo military and civilian leaders and a successful lasting bond was formed. “In October 2008, Kosovo opened an embassy in Washington, DC. Kosovo has 21 diplomatic missions and 13 consular posts worldwide. The country has no standing army, air force or navy though it is working to establish a ministry of defense and functional security force.”¹² In 2011, Iowa and Kosovo formalized their relationship by beginning a SPP and in July 2013 both partners would reinforce the SPP by

declaring a Sister State Relationship, which formalized sharing and engagements beyond the typical M2M. The Iowa Kosovo model is now followed and expected from all SPPs. This SPP and SSR is a unique collaboration and improves the level of integration beyond the M2M by engraining civilian leaders into the partnership. In the past year, in an unprecedented move, Kosovo officially opened a national consulate in Des Moines, Iowa. Iowa is also a pioneer in and formalized a state emissary position along with a bilateral liaison officer and non-commissioned officer position in Kosovo.¹³ The Iowa-Kosovo SPP and SSR collaboration includes:

1. Relationships with education and cultural institutions, universities and centers of research.
2. Exchanges with field professionals promoting cultural, performance, and visual arts.
3. Exchange of information and experience with tourism and sports.
4. Exchange of information and experience in sustainable, agriculture production and food processing.
5. Exchange of information and experience judicial and legal procedure and training.
6. Exchange of information and experience law enforcement, counter drug, and civil protections.
7. Exchange of information and experience healthcare and human rights.
8. Exchange of information and experience environmental protection and practices.
9. The study of transportation, logistics, and communication systems.
10. Exchange of information and experience in economics.
11. The development of relations between local administrations and territories.¹⁴



As noted earlier, the SPP is primarily a M2M engagement that allows key leader engagements at all levels to formulate security cooperation in the GCC region. Lt. Gen. Kadri Kastrati, Kosovo Security Forces commander stated in 2013, “We have a plan

to be a security provider. The U.S. invested a lot, and (we want) to show them we can participate

Figure 3, Maj. Gen. Tim Orr, left, adjutant general of the 9,400-member Iowa National Guard, escorts Lt. Gen. Kadri Kastrati, second from left, of the Kosovo Security Force during training exercises at Camp Dodge on Tuesday, June 1

with America in peacekeeping operations.”¹⁵ Major General Orr has been a part of the Kosovo relationship since his deployment as a KFOR.

The USNG states supports GCC regional security cooperation through the SPP. The engagement with the partner country has improved Guard unit readiness through direct mission support. This is especially true of the states that are partnered with the other fledgling countries in the Balkan region. Ultimately, the entire regional security is enhanced through cross border collaboration. Collectively, the countries have improved national security, natural disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and counter drug operations. National border interdiction techniques have targeted the systemic human trafficking problem in the region, which is now on the decline. All of these GCC and national security initiatives attribute their improved success to the SPP and collaboration with states that have experience in domestic and military interventions. Former EUCOM Commander, Admiral James Stavridis said in 2013, “The SPP is a very powerful tool. It is unmatched. They are, bang for the buck, one of the best things going. Anything that enhances state partnership is money in the bank for the regional combatant commanders.”¹⁶ The continental connection to the south and west is the CENTCOM GCC.

CENTCOM-Colorado and Jordan

The SPP between Colorado and Jordan fosters one of the most critical and strategic allies in the Central Command GCC. In the summer of 2013 the partnership expanded per the request of the CENTCOM commander. The GCC formed the joint coalition effort named Exercise Eager Lion. This Irregular warfare-themed exercise included the Ohio and Colorado National Guards and the US Marines alongside the Royal Jordanian Air Force.¹⁷ Maj Ali Shabana, a Royal Jordanian Air Force Project Officer, commented on the exercise stating, “When we fly together, we fly as one team. If a [Colorado Air Guard] pilot is the flight lead, the Jordanian pilot will follow his command and likewise, if a Jordanian pilot is in command of the

flight, the American will follow his direction.”¹⁸ In addition to the Exercise Eager Eagle the Colorado National Guard and Jordanian leaders at all levels have collaborated on the integrated mission called Operation Unified Protector in Libya, Lieutenant General Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein and Major General H. Michael Edwards, adjutant general of the Colorado National Guard, expressed the importance and success of their SPP relationship. Both generals expressed at length the value of training and performing missions together that inherently builds troop readiness and a strong trust between the two partners.¹⁹ The interview responses of both leaders also expanded on the trust factor being a critical warfighting function of coalition’s engagements. Additionally, the Colorado and Jordanian SPP models positive information operations in the region and has led to other nations in the regions requesting a SPP with the United States National Guard. Lastly, Colorado businesses and civic leaders have engaged in programs that promote education and addresses humanitarian issues. Water conservation and well drilling initiatives in Jordan have been improved by the sharing of techniques and procedures for ensuring safe wells and potable water sources.

Stability in the Jordan relies upon the availability and access to critical resources. The SPP has ensured that the Jordanian military forces are trained and aligned to respond and address humanitarian relief missions. This level of readiness is unprecedented in the region and Jordan is a great example of a country ready able to provide peace and stability to their country because of the SPP. The regional peace initiatives of the GCC is paramount. Whether it is potable water conservation, sustainable and renewable agriculture, or the fishing industry, building upon sustainable practices modeled by the state of Colorado and the NG SPP will be the foundation for a stable Jordan and set the conditions for their leadership role in the GCC region.

PACOM-Oregon and Bangladesh

On October 29, 2008, at the request of the Bangladesh Armed Forces Division, the Oregon National Guard established a permanent partnership under the USNG's SPP. This was reinforcement of the strong bilateral cooperation between U.S. and Bangladesh Armed Forces. The SPP also expanded the existing bilateral relations through more sustained M2M engagements. It also provided Bangladeshi professionals many enhancements, including business modeling, labor relations and work place safety through military to civilian and civilian to civilian exchanges. The SPP WoN partnership reinforces sharing of information, tactics, and techniques on a wide variety of shared security issues, including border security, HADR, combat medical training, combating illegal drugs, military support to civilian authorities, peacekeeping operations, and port security.

A key influential leader at the inception of this agreement, Major General(R) Raymond Rees, former Adjutant General of the U.S. State of Oregon, was also dual purposed as commander of U.S. National Guard air and ground forces for the Pacific Rim. To reinforce the significance of this SPP, MG(R) Rees visited Dhaka, Bangladesh and presented the proclamation from former Oregon Governor Kulongoski



Figure 6: 2013 Key Leader Engagement Bangladesh visit the Oregon National Guard. Source: Oregon National Guard Public Affairs Office

to Bangladesh Lieutenant General Md Abdul Mubeen, Principal Staff Officer, Armed Forces Division.²⁰ This level of KLE extended the influence of the SPP and immediately helped mitigate several systemic national security issues. Of note, the success of the Bangladesh SPP

lead the Oregon state legislation, government officials and the National Guard to formalize another SPP with Vietnam in November of 2012.

SPP M2M efforts have increased the effectiveness and readiness of the Bangladesh forces performing border patrol security and combating human trafficking.²¹ Two more specific sub-programs include implementing sustainable forest and agriculture management that has produced jobs and improved regional security due to improvement to the economy. Improved crop yields have also lessened the burden on food resources and the need for humanitarian assistance in many localized areas of Bangladesh.²² Lastly, this SPP supports and reinforces several national security initiatives in the region; thereby, directly benefitting the civilian population and US strategic goals in the PACOM area of operations.

AFRICOM-North Dakota and Ghana

Once an afterthought region as related to US strategic security, recent non-state actors have forced the discussion on the importance of stability and security in African nations. Once limited in scope and depth, M2M engagements typically only addressed HADR efforts, assisting with pandemics, and supporting larger international aid programs. The US Africa Command (AFRICOM) SPP includes 12 current participants and supports the 2015 *National Security Strategy* (NSS) on a several fronts.²³ Partially fulfilling the NSS in AFRICOM is the state of North Dakota and their National Guard, which is formally partnered with three countries: Ghana since 2004, Benin since 2014, and Togo since 2014.

Since entering Africa in 2003, the National Guard SPP created long-term relationships that are vital to the AFRICOM Theater Engagement Strategy. Former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Navy Adm. James A. Winnefeld Jr., expressed his enthusiasm about the program, stating, "It's [the SPP] proven to be a very, very valuable high-leverage tool for us," he said earlier this year, after the release of the new strategy. "So we plan to build on things like

that to help us on these innovative approaches to other parts of the world."²⁴ The long term use of the National Guard in these countries has formed lasting personal bonds, built trust in the processes, and allowed engagements to expand. As stated earlier, this aspect is unique to the National Guard as many military members do not have the requirement of moving out of an assignment and thereby ensuring mission continuity. In many SPPs the matching of the state's climate or regional threats from natural disaster are just as important as the continuity of the people.

The North Dakota state climate is starkly different than that of their partner nations. However, North Dakota and their SPP partners share the same need to prepare for natural disasters. Recently, the Ghana military was able to experience firsthand disaster response and learned the value of close coordination with civilian to military engagements. Army Maj. Gen. Charles Hooper, U.S. Africa Command's director of strategy, plans and programs, said in 2012, "So that is the kind of experiences, relationships, skills and capabilities that our state partners bring to our African partners."²⁵ Along with military skills training that helps build capacity on the continent, he said the Guard also provides role models for African militaries. In the spring of 2015, North Dakota National Guard members demonstrated to the forces and civilian disaster-management experts in Ghana how the Guard supports civilian-led disaster response efforts -- in this case, during an actual snowstorm and major flooding in Fargo, N.D. The SPP efforts in sustainable agriculture, soil conservation, and practicing drought mitigating techniques has improved Ghana's ability to grow higher yield crops and created thriving local economies once solely reliant on international aid programs.

In 2012, General Carter F. Ham, the AFRICOM commander, reported that he asked the former NGB chief, Air Force Gen. Craig R. McKinley, to add two additional partners within the year, with one for Libya. McKinley referred to Libya by stating, "That might be a place where

we could apply a State Partnership Program to great effect," addressing the US Senate Armed Services Committee in March of 2012. "So we will continue to look for opportunities such as that." Lastly, with no permanently assigned forces and increasing budgetary constraints, General Ham, is proposing "to expand the popular State Partnership Program to increase the command's engagement across the African continent."²⁶ Key leader endorsements of the SPP attest to the value of the SPP in the AFRICOM area of operations.

SOUTHCOM-Missouri and Panama

"We rely on the National Guard's State Partnership Program... [to] provide long-term mentorship to our partner nations to advance democratic principles and values and to encourage subordination of the military to civilian authority."

- *General John F. Kelly, SOUTHCOM Commander*

In 1996, the Missouri National Guard began a SPP with the Republic of Panama. Mutually beneficial and productive, the Missouri-Panama partnership has focused on four key areas of mutual interest: HADR, counter-drug operations and illicit trafficking, aviation maintenance, and hazardous materials emergency response. The benefit to the Missouri National Guard is predominantly in training readiness for full spectrum and security missions in the US. Throughout the 20 year SPP, Missouri and Panama conducted over 108 diverse partnership engagements. MG Danner's complimented, "What started out as security engagements between Panama and Missouri 20 years ago has evolved to so much more today."²⁷ On 15 March 2016, a delegation from Missouri, led by Governor Jay Nixon and Major General Steve Danner, the adjutant general of the Missouri National Guard, visited the senior government and military officials in the Republic of Panama. Governor Nixon led the Missouri contingent of key leaders, engaging in various bilateral enterprises while MG Danner addressed Panamanian military leaders with security and M2M initiatives. Both Missouri leaders espoused the continuation and increase in number of SPP engagements, especially during the current draw down of forces and constrained budget. During the 20th year commemoration ceremony,

both Nixon and Danner detailed the many milestones, achievements and the future potential of the SPP. Most of the milestones related to the building infrastructure that would help the Panamanian forces quell the Transnational Criminal Organizations, TCOs in the area involved in the illicit drug trade.²⁸ The Missouri National Guard engineer units and Panama worked exhaustively since the 1990s through today to improve the transportation network of the country.²⁹ The TCOs immediately felt the pinch from the improved access and have in many cases damaged the network to slow the interdiction of their illicit drug trafficking. Nixon called the National Guard's SPP "a model program of international cooperation."³⁰

Since the 1996 inception of the SPP, the Missouri National Guard and Panama worked bilaterally to modernize the rural infrastructure in Panama. Missouri ARNG Engineers built roads and bridges, constructed five schools, and two medical clinics serving rural areas with their Panamanian partners. In addition, they drilled fresh-water wells and facilitated the installation of 200 water purification systems. During his address, Nixon said, "The partnership program began as a way to promote regional stability around the globe through military-to-military cooperation on shared security objectives. Adapted to reflect Panama's civilian security forces..., the partnership has grown into something much larger, more significant and of greater benefit to the people of both Missouri and Panama."³¹ The SPP expanded past only M2M to include WoN professionals. Danner continues, "Civilian organizations are now working together and building relationships. In 2008, Kansas City Children's Mercy Hospital established an agreement with Panama City's Children Hospital. In 2009, State of Missouri Department of Higher Education established an agreement with Panama's National Counsel of Institute for the Formation and Betterment of Human Resources. In 2010, Missouri Rotary District #6080 and the Panama Internal Rotary Club worked together for a cooperative project."³² Concurrent to the four day visit was an imbedded three day panel of Missouri subject matter experts partnered

with the Panamanian Protection Forces (PPF) exchanging ideas for countering illicit trafficking and surveillance. The latest SPP engagement includes a group of Missouri subject matter experts travelling to Panama for a discourse on ground operations for PPF senior leadership, and implementing early warning systems for natural and manmade disasters. The Missouri Joint Operations Center contingent included ANG and ARNG emergency management personnel.

NORTHCOM-Florida and the Eastern Caribbean Regional Security System

The only formal SPP, established in 2005, in the NORTHCOM region is between Rhode Island and the island nation of the Bahamas. Additionally and of great value is the Florida National Guard in cooperation with the Eastern Caribbean Regional Security System, a conglomerate of West Indies island nations which includes: Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent & The Grenadines. “The Regional Security System is a "hybrid" organization, in that its security forces comprise both military and police personnel who remain under the command of their respective Heads.”³³

The RSS was formed out of the regional necessity and the collective response to security threats. The trans-national threats that undermined the stability of the region in the early 1970,s and 1980,s were the impetus to the RSS. By October 1982, four members of the “Eastern Caribbean States; Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Barbados to provide for mutual assistance on request. St. Kitts and Nevis joined after gaining independence in September 1983 and Grenada in January 1985. The MOU was updated in 1992 and the RSS acquired juridical status in March 1996 by way of the Treaty which was signed in St. Georges, Grenada.”³⁴ The effect was immediate security stability to the West Indies island region.

Habitually, the RSS is focused on mitigating traditional security threats of an operational nature: illicit drugs, arms trafficking, and internal security. Evolving threats in the international

strategic security environment are addressed in the RSS charter by embracing the need to gather intelligence of other non-traditional criminogenic environments. Border interdiction by sea throughout the West Indies Islands aim to stop the trafficking of illicit drug smuggling TCOs. The USNG and the partners in the region work extensively through the use of the National Guard Counter Drug Program imbedded the SPP. In addition to the prescribed SPP, more than 4000 guardsmen, working closely with partner countries, are deployed to the borders, ports of entry and route of ingress and egress by sea, land and air.³⁵ This effort, undoubtedly improves the national security of the RSS partners and to the region and directly counters TCOs and the illicit drug transnational threat to the United States.³⁶

The MOU established a rapid response, non-bureaucratic, response force available for immediate security needs of RSS partner nations, when requested. First demonstrated in an October 1983 deployment, the AC military forces of the United States of America and Jamaica joined with the RSS troops to intervene in Grenada and restore democracy after political unrest threatened the nation. Without the RSS mutual cooperation and understanding, central to the RSS Charter, Grenada would have spiralled into turmoil. Since this deployment, The Florida National Guard has increased the number of informal engagements with the RSS coalition and has helped improve the RSS specifically in the areas of counter-drug operations and HADR. However, a formally established SPP would improve the cooperative efforts all partners.

Whole of Nation Strategic Security

A brief summary of the SPPs detailed in this paper collectively build the case that the GCCs mission goal of providing the conditions for regional security also builds the foundation for strategic security around the world. The Guard's force structure allows states and countries to build lasting and trusting relationships in regions of the world where stability is critical.

These SPP relationships were successfully tested with several partner nations deploying with the Army and Air National Guard units in support of wartime missions, humanitarian relief and domestic response with higher levels of success and readiness. Enhancing both partners through joint exercises, the United States has also witnessed an increase in the operational readiness of the National Guard forces that participate in the SPP.³⁷ This allows the state and territory governors, the DOD, the GCC commanders, and the partner nations the ability to call upon the National Guard units with confidence, in their time of need. The SPP models how the military bridges the gap between law enforcement and interagency partners too.

Military-to-military to Civilian in the SPP

The National Guard SPP conducts both kinetic or direct military action and indirect, supporting role military engagements to combat the illicit drug transnational threat to partner nations and the United States. Major engagements by the USNG directly involve the Air National Guard (ANG) and the Army National Guard (ARNG). To include fixed and rotor wing aerial surveillance using specific military capabilities typically reserved for traditional war missions. Lastly, SPP countries in a GCC area of operation can directly request support from AC and USNG forces to augment their military and police forces.³⁸

NG SPP encourages collaboration and sharing of tactics, techniques and procedures in the fight against TCOs and the illicit drug transnational threat. Currently, 22 States are actively engaged with 22 nations in the Southern Command GCC.³⁹ The latest agreement between South Carolina and Columbia leads the example of immediate success to combating TCOs and the illicit drug trade.⁴⁰ The NG SPP forms and builds upon trusted relationships that provides Key Leader engagements meant to reinforce policy, ethics and operations to counter the TCOs. “The five National Guard Counterdrug Training Centers hosted 667 iterations of 159 drug interdiction and counterdrug courses to US and international military personnel, law

enforcement officers in FY15. The total number of students trained: 61,173 (22,889 in house and 38,284 through distance learning).”⁴¹ These USNG training facilities span the communication gap between the US military forces, foreign militaries, government and civilian counter drug agencies used to detect TCOs and drug trafficking. The result is a unified and cohesive team trained to fight the TCO and transnational threat with tactics and techniques that are proven daily throughout the entire world. This level of interdiction training through the SPP also involves civic and private leaders of the states and countries spanning from CEOs and the state Governor and country Prime Minister to the local mayor and shop owners.

Civic and Private Corporation Cooperative Agreements

A major enhancement to the military centric SPP is the addition of civic leaders and private business leaders. This level of detail brings relationship building, trust and security efforts that become engrained and modeled for the next generation. American CEO’s from large corporations have accompanied the Guard to their sister state in order to share manufacturing ideas, safety initiatives, and labor relations. Many of these program specifics, once foreign to many partner nations, immediately improve the quality of work, conditions of the work environment, and labor relationships between their government and the people. From sustainable agriculture and animal husbandry practices to complex and high technology manufacturing, the SPP partners offer an unprecedented level of sharing and growth of knowledge.

Noted earlier, the learning from M2M and M2C engagements were the beginning of the knowledge sharing programs within the SPP. Exchanges with students at the high school and university are also common in SPP states and countries. Many of the host families are or were part of the original M2M engagements and are now contributing as civilians. Today, many

nation states are witnessing the various successes of their neighbors and are requesting a SPP with the United States.

The Growth and Expansion of the SPP

The Growth of the SPP, from 1993 to 2015, has been a steady incline with a few minor surges. Below, Figure 4, is a graphic depiction of this steady growth over laid on the GCCs of the world. New partners are eager to engage with the nations in their region that are already SPP members. Many of these trilateral engagements have fostered the new country to form their own SPP. Djibouti and Kenya are two countries that experienced the benefits of the SPP with their neighbors in Africa and immediately requested a SPP in 2015. The same was true of the European Command area with many of the Balkan Countries becoming partners very soon after participating in multilateral missions with countries in their regions.

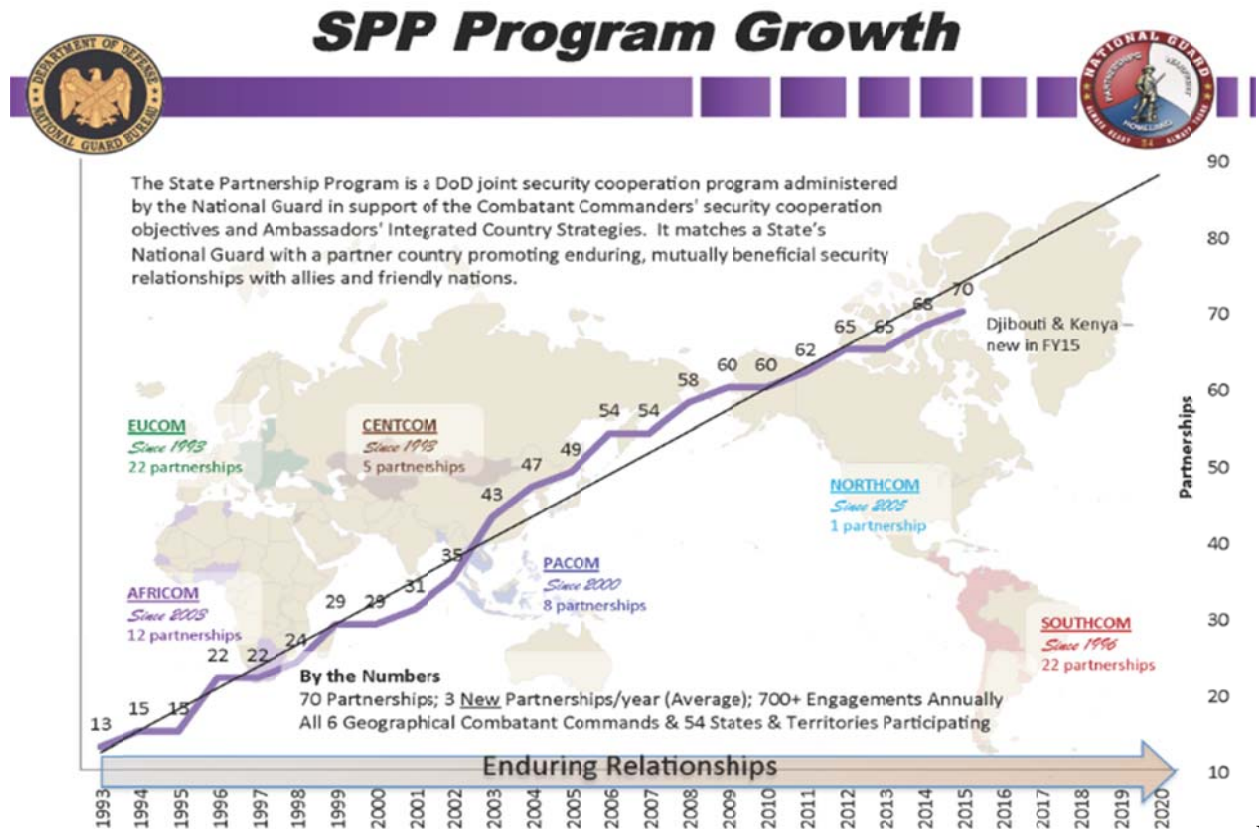


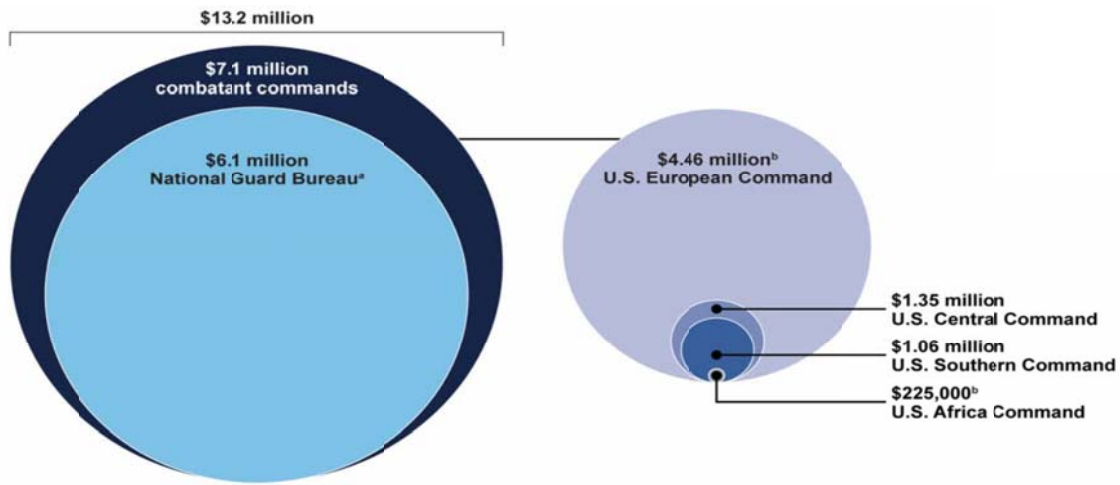
Figure 4. SPP C

The SPP also continues to expand the charter activities as modeled by the Iowa and Kosovo relationship. Although the military aspect remains central to many of the security initiatives of the GCC, the Department of State is sponsoring many new sub programs that individual states created. New and creative ways of engaging nations in a Whole of Nation and Government approach is the model of the future. The chief of the National Guard, General Frank J. Grass, recently said, “We bring an extraordinarily rich tapestry of skills and experience to our overseas partnerships that our partners value tremendously,” Grass said, “and Guard members benefit in return. Iowa soldiers and airmen, for example, have brought home strengthened skills and an invaluable enriched geopolitical perspective.”⁴² The SPP will continue to grow as long as the priority for regional security is matched with the reality of a strained economy and current fiscal constraints.

Fiscal Constraints

The SPP is under the same constraints as the rest of the DOD and has seen its annual budget shrink with blanket cuts. “With an annual cost in the \$9 million to \$13 million range, the SPP sees more than 600 events successfully executed between U.S. states and foreign countries each year.”⁴³ A positive aspect of having the National Guard execute the SPP mission is their use of state budgetary funds that augment the DOD expenditure and allotment to the National Guard Bureau. This additional funding directly supports the aspects of the program that are not DOD centric. Private funding has also augmented the current budgetary needs of the program, but is limited to the engagements but the companies that made the monetary commitment. Shown in figure 5 on the next page is the synthesis of fiscal data and budget and the SPP across the GCCs. GCCs will continue to have an impact of the SPP budget. Prioritization of the various security missions of the GCC region also continues to allow the DOD budget to support the SPP in the region. Lastly, many countries are starting to contribute to the budgetary needs of their side of

the SPP. To many countries in the SPP, this is new and sustainable because of the program success.



Source: GAO analysis of National Guard Bureau and DOD information.

Figure 6. Approximate Expenditures on SPP Events, Fiscal Year 2011

Potential Partners

The process for becoming a partner is depicted in Figure 6 is a linear graphic, but is a closed looped process to ensure all parties and nations are aware that the requirements met do not sustain the program authority. A few countries have started the program, but were forced to end the SPP due to extreme conditions. Countries that have had leadership coups, civil war, and severe fiscal issues have also dropped the program with some rejoining after securing the problematic issues. These challenges are serious, but considered mild compared to the threat from non-state actors and TCO's wanting to impose their will on the country.



Source: GAO analysis of National Guard Bureau information.

Figure 6. Process for Establishing New Partnerships

State and non-state threats constantly challenge the SPP. Sustaining the SPP has hinged on the successful thwarting of these threats and in many cases the SPP collaboration was the reason for the dissolution of the threat. Identifying transnational threats and the criminal element may seem simple from the American vantage point, but becomes very complex and even nuanced when addressing issues in countries where the value and ethics system is different. Additionally, since the military is the central cog in the SPP, some threats are aimed directly at disrupting the military authority in the region. As the SPP matures in the partner country the sub programs begin to create a grass roots following. Some of the bad actors have been expelled or have changed their positions in order to reap the rewards the SPP offers.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is strategic and should be led by The National Guard Bureau and the Department of Defense with input from the Geographic Combatant Commanders. It should define the military-to-military and military to civilian roles in order to secure the necessary federal funding to sustain these central program missions. Ensuring the SPP has a place holder in the United States budget process and cycle will also improve readiness by fostering trust from the partner nations and the states. A portion of the budget, if not an addition to the requirement should also come from the Department of State. This directive would improve programs that are DOS prescriptive and not require the shifting of funds from within the program.

The second recommendation is directed at oversight metrics that are obsolete and mired in out of date doctrine. The SPP metrics for success should continue to be nested with the DOD initiatives and the GCC mission. Key leader engagements and track learning objectives would foster new and improved methods of learning through creative exercises and real life scenario based simulations. These simulated training events can save time, money and lives when done realistically and with the right metrics for measuring success. These tasks should also have partner nation input nested with National Guard capabilities.

Recommendation three is directly related to number two and would require mandatory and centrally funded training for key personnel assigned in the GCCs to have specific training with the National Guard states partnered in their respective regions. This would ensure support for the GCC mission is also nested with the intent of the partnership exercise. Currently the National Guard requires personnel to have similar training in order to perform the role of liason with the partner nation. In some cases centrally funded language training should be included in this course of action.

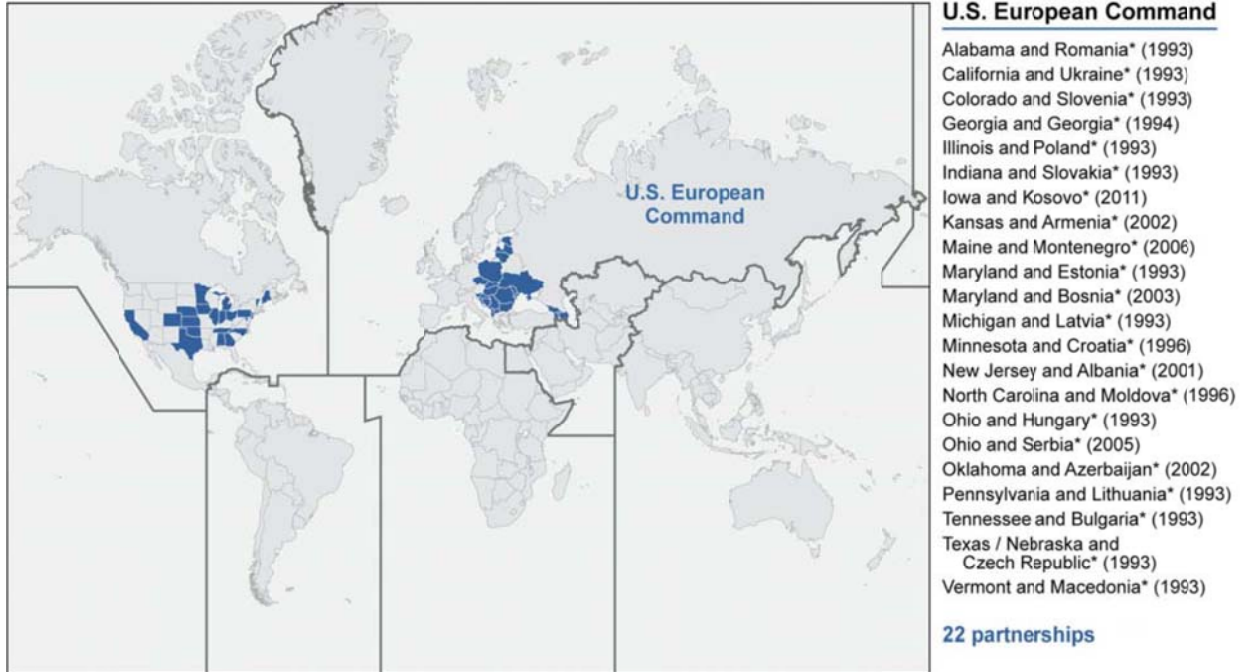
Lastly, the GCC should require input into plans and phases for contingency missions in the region that may want to or require exploitation of the SPP relationship with the partner nation. The Guard perspective in the GCC security mission planning process would formulate plans that represented the force structure of the Guard units that may execute the mission and thereby improve the overall plan.

Conclusions

Since the first settlements in American colonies the volunteer reserve force now known as the United States National Guard has protected America against all enemies foreign and domestic. The creation of the State Partnership Program became an extension of this Guard mission by partnering with fledgling, under-served, and/or under-valued nations in regions of the world the United States deemed strategic and therefore necessary to secure. With over 70 SPP relationships formalized since 1993 and many more in the proposal loop, the SPP will continue to serve the Geographic Combatant Commands with a viable and fiscally sound solution to the military-to-military engagements needed to support security in the region. The National Guard, postured to support the GCC to promote strategic security to the region. The fiscal and manpower constraints on the six United States combatant commands limit the continuity that the NG SPP can provide. Therefore, the US NG SPP is America's strategic nation-building initiative. It endures and is premised on forming lasting relationships which build upon trust that ultimately fosters regional security while performing military-to-military missions, and supporting democratic values in a fiscally constrained environment.

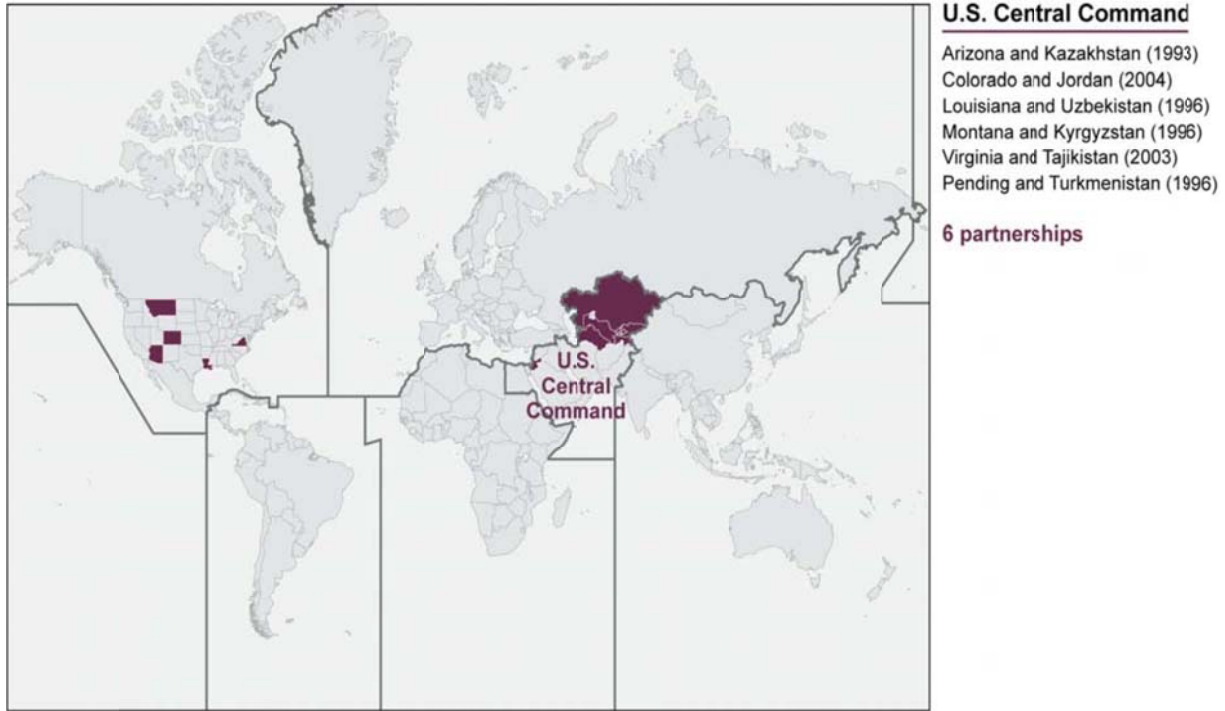
APPENDIX 1: 2016 State Partnership Program Participants and Maps

Graphic 1: US European Command SPP.

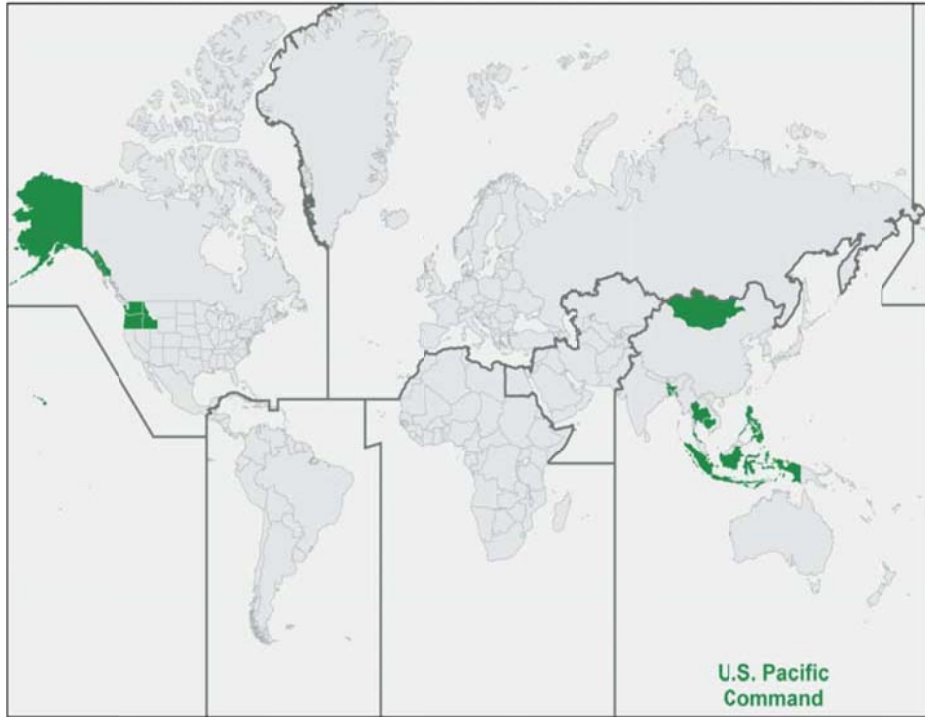


*Indicates country has a Bilateral Affairs Officer.

Graphic 2. US Central Command SPP



Graphic 3. US Pacific Command SPP



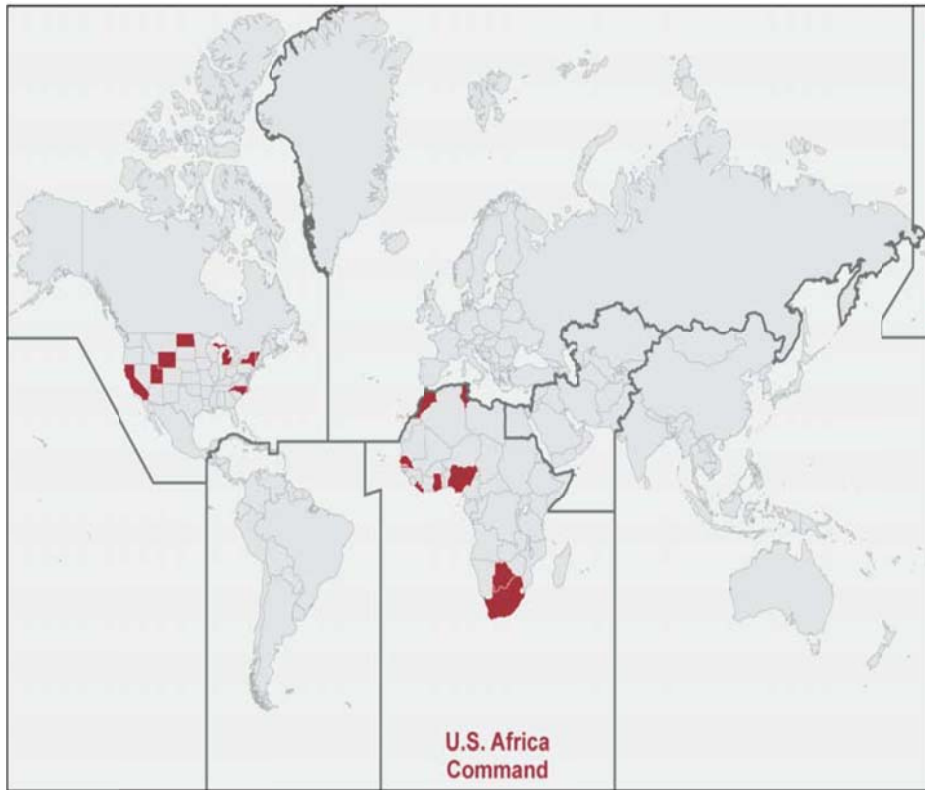
U.S. Pacific Command

- Alaska and Mongolia (2003)
- Hawaii / Guam and Philippines (2000)
- Hawaii and Indonesia (2006)
- Idaho and Cambodia (2009)
- Oregon and Bangladesh (2008)
- Washington and Thailand (2002)

6 partnerships

Source: National Guard Bureau.

Graphic 4. US Africa Command SPP



U.S. Africa Command

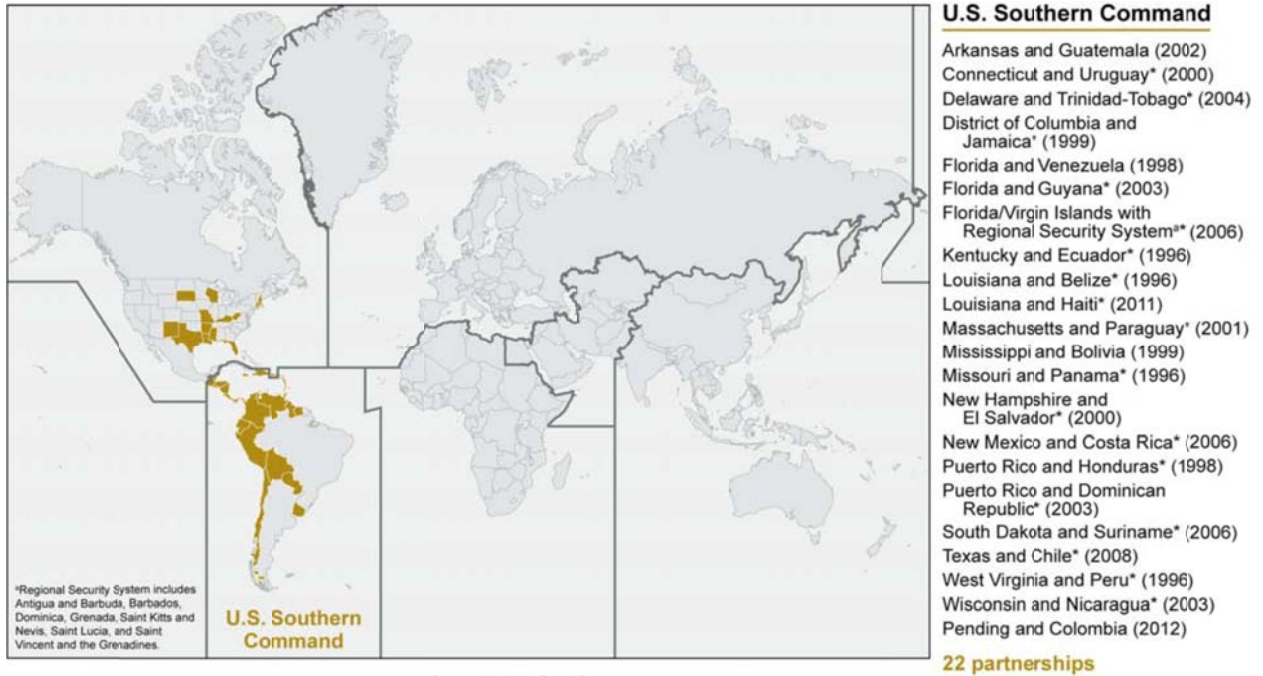
- California and Nigeria* (2006)
- New York and South Africa* (2003)
- North Carolina and Botswana* (2008)
- North Dakota and Ghana* (2004)
- Michigan and Liberia* (2009)
- Utah and Morocco* (2003)
- Vermont and Senegal* (2008)
- Wyoming and Tunisia* (2004)

8 partnerships

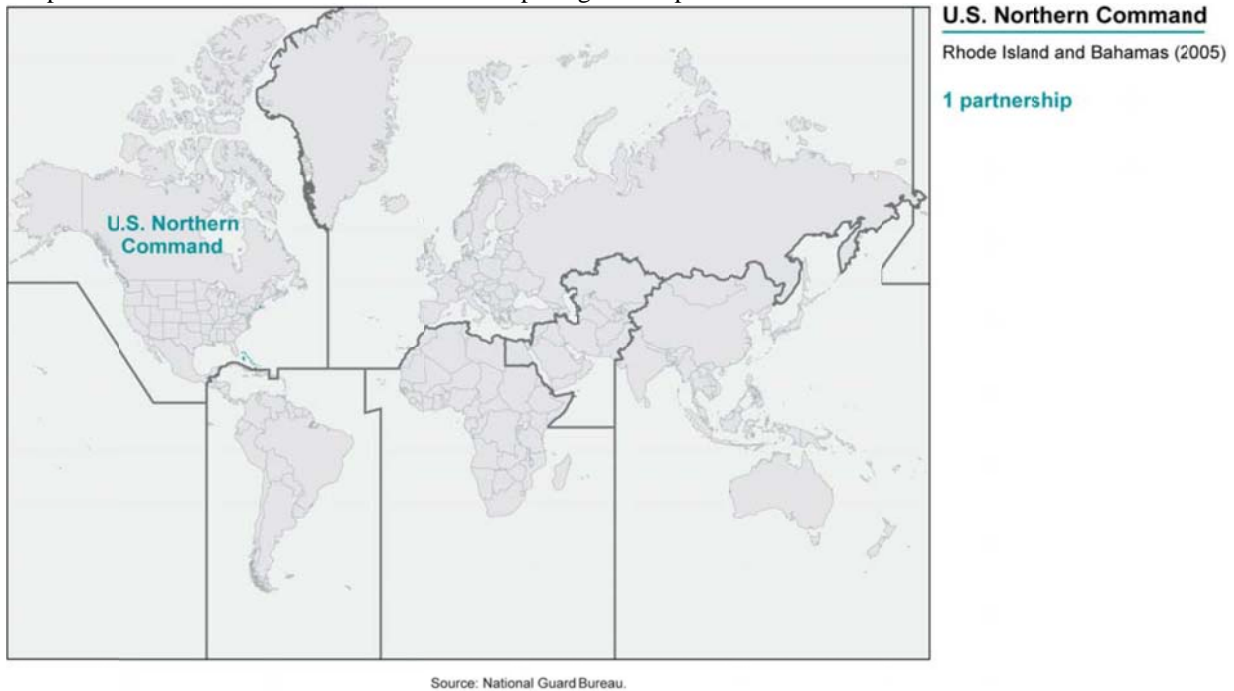
Source: National Guard Bureau.

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Graphic 5. Southern Command State Partnership Program Map



Graphic 6. Northern Command State Partnership Program Map



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