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Executive Summary

Title: Creating Partners and Allies – The National Guard Leading the Way

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Thesis: The United States leverages many programs to enhance the global collective security. The State Partnership Program (SPP) is a program that has a high return on investment when compared to more costly world-wide programs. Increased and consistent funding for the SPP will enhance U.S. relationships with partners and allies improving collective security.

Discussion: For more than twenty-five years the SPP, working with every state and territory, has developed partnerships with nations around the world. The SPP partners Army and Air National Guard Units with foreign militaries with whom they exchange, information and ideas. These exchanges build long-term relationships upon principles of trust and stability. The guard construct lends itself to these types of relationships as guard members typically carry out lifelong careers at their units, providing a consistent cadre to fill roles within the SPP. This provides partner nations with consistency and stability, allowing them to achieve readiness improvements and interoperability milestones. To date, the SPP has created seventy-six partnerships. With increased funding the SPP could further develop existing partnerships and be prepared to extend membership to more states who wish to partner with the most powerful nation in the world.

Conclusion: The United States has the most powerful military in the world; however, partners and allies play a significant role in the United States' global reach capabilities and enhancing the global collective security. Increased and consistent funding for the SPP will ensure there are long-term relationships, built on trust, the United States can call upon should there be a need to invoke collective security.

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State Partnership Program

In an unstable world, the quality *and* quantity of alliances and partners the United States maintains are paramount for an effective collective security. One method of generating new partnerships and maintaining current ones is through the State Partnership Program (SPP). The SPP is a program that partners Army National Guard and Air National Guard units from all over the United States and its territories with nations across the globe. Guard units and partner nations cooperate to resolve issues and enhance their readiness by visiting each other's operating areas and exchanging ideas and best practices. These efforts produce trusting, stable, long-term relationships and more capable forces. The National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Defense Strategy (NDS) each emphasize partnerships and alliances as strategic goals for the United States and the National Guard. The SPP has a history of developing partnerships and alliances during the past quarter century. The SPP produces a considerable return on investment based on the relatively small portion of the defense budget invested in it. The Department of Defense should expand the SPP so the National Guard can capitalize on its unique ability to create and maintain partnerships and alliances, thereby directly contributing to U.S. national security through proven SPP successes.¹ Outlining the creation and history of the State Partnership Program (SPP) will provide background information and an understanding of the SPP's mission. Then, armed with an understanding of the SPP, examples will demonstrate results of partner nations' accomplishments, products of years of collaborative effort. Real-world perspectives on the SPP and its accomplishments gathered by interviewing personnel at the Air National Guard Readiness Center and the Vermont Air National Guard provide seasoned observations and perspectives. Other programs will be discussed along with their associated costs highlighting the funding disparity between the SPP and those programs. There is room for

improvement within the SPP; improvements highlighted by previous government audits and ideas discussed during interviews. The SPP is a proven program creating partners and allies built on trusting, long-term relationships. Increased and consistent funding for the SPP will ensure these relationships and new ones will be available for the United States to call upon should there be a need to invoke collective security.

Background

The United States founded the State Partnership Program in 1992 in response to its concern for the newly freed Eastern Bloc countries. Even after the fall of the Soviet Union, it still threatened the region including these countries. The United States explored options to stabilize the region but did not want to draw Soviet attention. In 1992, President George H.W. Bush worked closely with then Secretary of State James Baker to engage the Eastern Bloc countries, and by May of the same year had diplomatic relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.² Concurrently, the National Guard was posturing itself to assist in any way it could to support the Eastern Bloc countries. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau at the time, Lieutenant General John B. Conaway, sent a letter to the then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin L. Powell, informing him of the construct the National Guard envisioned. He conceived a reserve force based on the citizen-soldier, trained and equipped to support civil and military taskings, all at a cost much lower than a standing Army. General Powell shared this with then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, who agreed with the approach and consequently briefed it to Foreign Ministers at North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) headquarters in Brussels in April 1992.³

Since the early 1990s, the SPP has expanded to include seventy-six countries around the world. Each state and territory has at least one partner nation, with some larger states having more than two. The United States exclusively controls all aspects of the SPP. The Adjutant General, the highest-ranking National Guard member of any state or territory, reporting directly to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, oversees all aspects of both the Army and Air Guard for their state or territory. Adjutant Generals work closely with the geographic combatant commanders, who control the region where the partner nation is physically located. Currently six of the ten combatant commands have nations enrolled in the SPP within their geographic area of responsibility. They are the United States European Command (USEUCOM) with twenty-two partners, United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) with fourteen, United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) with six, United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) with nine, United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) with twenty-four, and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) with one.⁴ See Annex A for a visual depiction of the current state partnerships. The combatant commanders ultimately approve all SPP activities within their geographic region. The combatant commanders, on an annual basis, generate a list of any proposed new state partnerships from their respective geographic region. If there are multiple aspiring nations, the combatant commander prioritizes and submits the list to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Additionally, the submission includes a request from the Ministry of Defense, Chief of Defense, or Head of State of the nominated nation as well as coordination with the nation's U.S. ambassador. The combatant commander also explains the strategic objectives and long-term U.S. interests that would be gained through the new state partnership. Once a SPP is established, the combatant commander coordinates with United States Department of State personnel within the partner country to approve any SPP events.

Completing and reporting of SPP events fall to the Adjutant General and National Guard Unit of the host state or territory.⁵ Complete details for the SPP program management functions are in Department of Defense Instruction 5111.20.

The current administration makes it clear in both the NSS and NDS that partners and allies are vital to continued economic growth, collective security, and ensuring the American way of life continues to prosper. The United States champions partners and allies as success stories that prove its abilities to assist newly formed democratic states and societies, a function listed under Pillar IV in the current NSS – *Advance American Influence*. These partner nations create intelligence networks, economic markets, and potential strategic locations from which the United States can project military power.⁶ The current NDS, aligning with the NSS, also mentions the advantages that alliances and partnerships afford the United States, from deterring aggression to defending freedom by assisting with direct military action or by providing operating areas from which the United States can enhance its global reach capabilities.⁷ The current SPP mission is to “Support the security cooperation objectives of the United States by building enduring relationships between the National Guards of the States and territories and the militaries, security forces, and emergency response or disaster response organizations of partner nations.”⁸ Increased funding is imperative for the SPP to continue progress and fulfill its mission.

State Partnership Program Examples

One of the original state partnerships formed in 1992 between Pennsylvania and Lithuania created a non-commissioned officer (NCO) training program. This SPP was an exchange where the Lithuanian cadre visited the United States to become educated on how to develop their forces through enhanced training methods and programs. Upon their return, the Lithuanians established

an NCO academy, which mirrored the United States' programs. They taught subjects such as "medical specialist instructor course development, field artillery NCO course development, leadership training management, democratic civil-military relations, NCO development, interoperability, and emergency operations."⁹ Partner nations employing uniform training programs create a common foundation for educating their civil-military personnel. Training consistencies improve integration and interoperability of their forces with United States military and civilian employees during coalition operations and disaster responses.

Another example of a long-term partnership is Michigan and Latvia who have maintained an active SPP since 1993. Over the past decades, the National Guard and the Republic of Latvia have partnered to accomplish many milestones. Initially, Michigan guardsmen deployed a small team to assist the Latvians in establishing a citizen-based military as they were recently freed from Soviet control. The SPP team continued to visit and teach the Latvians over the years, first holding small and then large-scale exercises, oftentimes including neighboring Lithuania and Estonia. Maryland, Lithuania's state partner, and Pennsylvania, Estonia's state partner, also participated in some events. The goal of this multi-nation event was to integrate and standardize military forces. Latvia was able to join NATO in 2004 due in part to its participation in the SPP and proving its interoperability during exercises. Eventually, Latvian forces visited Michigan and participated in field exercises, further developing their military skills while also reinforcing the relationship between the parties. The Michigan-Latvia partnership has expanded over the years to include professional development, peacekeeping missions, and development of cyber defense.¹⁰ In 2010, Michigan gained a new state partner: Liberia. The Latvians have embraced the Liberian partnership as an opportunity to assist the Liberians, much the same way they did when they initially entered the SPP partnering with Michigan in 1993. Together Michigan and

Latvia are working with Liberia, sharing lessons learned and best practices to increase their readiness, all while forging another trusting, long-term relationship.

In April 2008, NATO invited Croatia to become a full NATO member proving the SPP assists countries gain NATO membership. LTG Steven Blum, then Chief of the National Guard Bureau, gave credit to the Minnesota National Guard for its efforts in modernizing Croatia's armed forces as he viewed first-hand the work done by the guard members. The Minnesota National Guard's efforts and the resulting interoperability is an example of how the SPP streamlines NATO membership eligibility. The partnership with Croatia is significant as its military forces fought alongside the U.S. military in Afghanistan, directly contributing to global collective security.¹¹

In a January 2012 article, then Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff praised the SPP and stressed its return on investment. Admiral James Winnefeld states how the SPP aligned with then President Obama's strategy: "It's a very high-leverage program where individual states will partner with another nation in Europe or Africa or Asia."¹² He continued, "It's proven to be a very, very valuable high-leverage tool for us, so we plan to build on things like that to help us on these innovative approaches to other parts of the world."¹³ These statements both show how the SPP aligns with strategic initiatives which span administrations. Colonel Joey Booher, the then sitting Chief of International Affairs for the National Guard Bureau, added that the National Guard was an ideal model for emerging countries' military forces to follow as their missions would work at the intersection of civil and military entities. These citizen-soldiers would be responding to events such as natural disasters, civil unrest, and military conflicts.¹⁴

Trust is the foundation on which the SPP continues to build new partners. The DoD's Annual Report to Congress for fiscal year 2016 summarizes: "The invaluable trust engendered

by enduring SPP relationships has, over the twenty-three-year course of the program, resulted in a total of thirty-eight [Partner Nations] PNs which have deployed personnel in support of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM, INHERENT RESOLVE, [and] ENDURING FREEDOM.” In addition, it also noted “17 [SPP Partner Nations] SPP PNs deployed forces to both Iraq and Afghanistan. Further, a total of 52 SPP PNs – three-quarters of the total – are contributing or have contributed to United Nations peacekeeping missions around the world.”¹⁵ These partner nations bolster the U.S. global reach and are a trusted resource allowing the United States to sustain operations around the world.

In addition to the historical SPP successes, there are also more current examples which proves the program is still engaged. One recent example of the SPP actively engaging a new partner is West Virginia partnering with Qatar in a new partnership in May of 2018. Qatar recently committed to a long-term infrastructure enhancement agreement supporting U.S. and coalition forces. This SPP, not unlike others, hopes to advance military and diplomatic relations as well as share training programs between the countries. The program also aspires to combat terrorist networks in the region and abroad by the information exchanges on emerging threats.¹⁶ The SPP, recently touted by Defense Secretary James Mattis when meeting with the National Guard Association in August 2018 where he clearly conveyed that the Guard is vital in restoring U.S. readiness. The SPP develops current partnerships and alliances while capitalizing on the ability to create new partnerships when possible.¹⁷

Trust is the Foundation

Trust is the foundation on which long-term relationships are built. The SPP success is based on long-term relationships where trust is vital. Lt Col Brent L. Salmans echoed this fact during an interview providing his seasoned perspective on the SPP. Lt Col Salmans currently

works out of the Air National Guard Readiness Center in the International Affairs Branch. Lt Col Salmans previously held the title of SPP Director, where he managed the bilateral relationships for the partnerships for seven years. During a telephone interview with Lt Col Salmans, he spoke of increasing demand of activities and events resulting from the growing number of SPP nations. He emphasized that the foundation and success of the SPP comes from the long-term partnerships built on enduring personal relationships, an area where Active Duty counterparts struggle. Active Duty military members routinely have assignment changes every two to three years, which makes forming and maintaining an enduring, long-term relationship impossible. The other factor impossible to instill in a relationship where one party has rotating personnel is trust, which Lt Col Salmans touted as the key to the SPP's success. In both the Army and Air Guard National Guard it is commonplace to have Soldiers and Airmen carry out lifelong careers with the same unit. This provides the continuity and stability that is ideal for the SPP. Members of a guard unit working through the SPP form long-term and trusting relationships with the partner nation and its leadership.¹⁸ Chief Master Sergeant Steven Zeppi, Vermont's SPP Coordinator, provided another seasoned perspective. In his thirteen years with the program he has worked closely with Vermont's partner nations, Macedonia and Senegal. He also explained that trust is the foundation for the relationships created and ultimately the success of the SPP.

An example of SPP long-term relationships providing continuity is equipping Armenia with an Expeditionary Medical Support System (EMEDS). EMEDS is a modular field hospital system developed and used by the U.S. military when acute medical care is needed in austere environments. EMEDS allows for the rapid deployment of a modern medical treatment facility to any location. EMEDS provides a toxic-free environment enabling medical personnel to work

comfortably and efficiently while treating patients in clean surroundings without having to evacuate or otherwise transport casualties. The EMEDS is a considerable investment which the United States procured using foreign military funding and provided to Armenia in 2005, at which time they accepted and then warehoused the system. Upon follow-up conversations with the Armenians sometime later the United States learned the Armenians did not have the resources necessary to proceed to the next step with EMEDS, so it had remained untouched. The Kansas Air National Guard had an EMEDS as well and began the process of identifying a long-term plan to help develop this capability within Armenia. Through the use of security cooperation tools and combatant command authorities, the SPP helped develop a systematic plan and milestones to achieve both US and Armenian interests, allowing the first joint field test of the EMEDS to occur in 2011. Without long-term advocacy and the Kansas-Armenian relationship, the EMEDS development and actual employment was a lost cause. The EMEDS is a valuable interoperable medical system that needs to be available for the next conflict, not sitting idle in a warehouse. The SPP's longer-term vision for EMEDS produced a deployable medical capability that could support NATO forces and respond to local regional disasters.¹⁹

These long-term relationships produce cost-effective results, from a simple exchange of an idea or best practice to having a warfighter who is interoperable with U.S. military forces should the need arise in the battlespace. The SPP continues to grow and evolve as more partners and allies are added.²⁰

Congress should increase SPP funding proportionally as more states join the SPP increasing the number of SPP events and activities. Chief Zeppi and his team work with the partner nations to develop five-year plans as a guide for SPP events and activities, which lead to long term goals of the partnership. Even though there are detailed plans, Chief Zeppi explains,

there are oftentimes not enough resources to execute them. There are a variety of shortfalls from not having the money to execute plans to not having the proper staffing levels to support the plans. Funding issues in recent years, due to continuing resolutions, have disrupted the SPP and its missions.²¹

Other Programs

Other programs do similar work as the SPP – but at what cost? Programs, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Partnerships for Peace (PfP) program, and the Wales Initiative Fund (WIF) all have value and contribute on different levels to global security but perform more restricted missions and are less cost-effective than the SPP. The United States should rebalance SPP funding against these programs, increasing the SPP funding.

The NATO Charter was drafted from July of 1948 until April of 1949 and then signed by then Secretary of State Mr. Dean Acheson along with a host of other nations. Each nation's parliament ratified the treaty within five months; the United States Senate would ratify the treaty on July 21, 1949.²² NATO currently has twenty-nine members: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.²³ These members attempt to tackle issues of piracy, terrorism, regional conflicts, and humanitarian crises – all while maintaining defensive and offensive alliances. The fact that the SPP has more than twice as many partner states as NATO has members communicates there is a willingness of states to partner with the United States to reap the benefits of the SPP.

One contributing factor slowing NATO member accessions is the cost of membership. NATO expects member nations to contribute a percentage of their Gross Domestic Product

(GDP) to support NATO missions around the world. Conversely, the United States only invested eighteen million dollars in fiscal year 2016 to execute a total of 908 SPP activities across the seventy-five partner nations.²⁴ Currently, NATO's target percentage is two percent of a member nation's GDP. Unfortunately, only eight members meet this two percent goal. NATO has received plans from the remaining nations for them to meet the target two percent contribution by 2024.²⁵ According to NATO, the United States' 2017 contribution to NATO was 3.57 percent of its GDP.²⁶ The U.S. 2017 GDP was \$19,485,400,000,000 and 3.57 percent of that is \$695,628,780,000; nearly 700 billion dollars was contributed to NATO in 2017.²⁷ The SPP could greatly expand its program with just a fraction of this staggering figure.

There are two additional programs that do similar work as the SPP; they are Partnerships for Peace (PfP) and the Wales Initiative Fund (WIF), both established in 1994 and are programs which engage NATO and Non-NATO countries. PfP was formed during President Clinton's administration as a gradual way to expand NATO membership as the NATO Charter could not agree on how expansion should occur.²⁸ WIF was formerly named the Warsaw Initiative Fund, but was renamed the Wales Initiative Fund after the Wales NATO summit in the fall of 2014.²⁹ WIF was created and solely funded by the United States to assist countries who were also members of the PfP initiative.³⁰ Currently there are sixteen PfP member countries enrolled in WIF: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.³¹ These countries receive assistance interfacing with NATO member nations. The United States Department of Defense exercises statutory authority of sections 168, 1051 and, 2010 of Title 10 – essentially the instructions on how the WIF program can obligate Operation and Maintenance funds to support WIF initiatives.³²

Both PfP and WIF programs assist non-NATO countries in accomplishing goals and milestones paving their way to NATO membership and also provide general support for those who do not wish to join NATO but do embrace democracy.³³ The United States hopes to increase interoperability and efficiency through countries' participation in these programs. These were solidly funded programs during the height of these conflicts. For example, PfP received \$22.5M in 2015; however, as the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts have reduced in scope so has the funding to \$8.3M in 2018.³⁴

As funding decreases for the PfP and the WIF, there should be a corresponding increase in the SPP budget through redirecting previously obligated funds. The United States only invested 18 million dollars in fiscal year 2016 to execute a total of 908 SPP activities across the seventy-five partner nations.³⁵ There is credit to the work done by NATO, PfP, and WIF, but at what cost? The cost analysis clearly shows the disproportions in program funding. SPP should receive more funding as other programs are requiring lesser contributions, and as President Trump has threatened to back out of the seventy-year-old NATO Treaty, significant funding may be available.³⁶

The trusted relationships between state SPP leadership and that of the partner nation foster a collaborative environment that large organizations like NATO struggle to create. NATO members can be intimidated as they feel like they are on the world stage when they join and deal with NATO. Conversely, the SPP works through long-term relationships and personal interactions - partner nations know the guard members they will be working with accomplishing their goals. Some other concerns have been identified within NATO such as: command authority issues, outdated response plans, and too few NATO Headquarters worldwide.³⁷ Command authority is an area of friction, as during peacetime and wartime, nations and their

commanders oftentimes do not have command authority to mobilize and train military members from other nations and at times their own – this greatly hinders exercises where overall preparedness, coalition integration, and military interoperability are put at risk.³⁸ Moreover, some of NATO’s contingency plans are based on threats from the Cold War era.³⁹ Modernization of response plans is required to effectively counter today’s threats. Aggressive leadership streamlining and downsizing from sixty-five to just twenty NATO headquarters facilities leaves NATO’s response in question.⁴⁰ Insufficient NATO facilities around the globe could hinder a proper rapid response should a global crisis arise.⁴¹

The SPP inherently addresses all three of these areas of concern: command authority, outdated response plans, and too few headquarters facilities worldwide. With respect to command authority, the adjutant general has control over the members of the National Guard in his or her state or territory; therefore, no command conflicts occur when attempting to mobilize members for SPP events. In the event guard units from multiple states are involved, the adjutant generals can easily transfer members from one state to another to assemble the talent required to staff the SPP event.

Outdated response plans are an impossibility for the SPP as the National Guard is always a first responder to state missions and fills critical roles during Federal missions. Army and Air Guard Units from all states and territories have responded to civil crises or natural disasters in their communities or in neighboring states. They have answered their nation’s call when federalized for military operations – oftentimes deploying overseas. The proven rapid responses and mission support from the National Guard validates the response plans they maintain, execute, and share with partner nations. NATO may be preferable to the SPP and its partners as a mechanism to resolve a large-scale conflict. However, the SPP’s response plans are suited for

smaller conflicts including humanitarian relief efforts, environmental disaster responses, and military-to-military and military-to-civilian programs, events which would not command a NATO response.

The SPP rectifies the problem of too few headquarters operations centers. The number of headquarters or command and control centers actually increases when partner nations join the SPP. The increase is a result of the partnership and trusting relationship formed between the United States and the partner nation, which leads to resource sharing. The United States offers the partner nation access to the state or territory's facilities, and more typically, the partner nation offers its facilities to the United States to use for headquarters basing. This allows the United States more options for headquarters or command and control facilities to successfully perform any type of mission in the region.

Improving the State Partnership Program

Any program requires oversight and a system of checks and balances. The SPP is periodically audited, and there are room for improvements as the 2012 Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports. The report highlighted insufficient oversight on SPP activities, and the oversight in place could not ascertain the effectiveness of SPP activities due to the absence of measurable goals and corresponding metrics. The program's goals and objectives are not clear, although participants claim the SPP is working toward and achieving partner nations' mission goals, providing experience to National Guard members and building relationships enhancing U.S. security.⁴²

Another concern identified by the auditors was incomplete historical records pertaining to SPP activities, to include the frequency and types of activities. What information was collected

was stored in non-standardized data systems hampering coherent information collection and subsequent data analysis.⁴³ National Guard Units assigned non-standard nomenclature to SPP activities, making it unclear what the activity was to those attempting to perform data analysis. The mission or activity could be similar to that which many other units perform but remained orphaned or improperly tallied due to the variety of nomenclatures employed. Not unlike what was found at the unit level, reconciling the funding was nearly impossible as combatant commands and Department of Defense staff also used dissimilar systems and nomenclatures to initiate and track SPP activities and events.⁴⁴

The GAO also highlighted that states and territories were failing to fully engage United States and foreign civilian partnerships. The SPP guidance does not prohibit civilian activities; however, many active SPP participants fearful of violating Department of Defense guidance and fiscal law have avoided civilian involvement. This was a major finding by the GAO because much can be accomplished when states and territories work with civilians within the partner nation. Such activities include maritime border security and information exchanges between military and civilian authorities. These exchanges explore and develop how a partner nation's military can work more closely with civilian authorities during civil unrest or a disaster response.⁴⁵

The State Partnership Program Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to Congress provides a detailed itemization of SPP events by each state for FY2016. The report includes where states invest SPP funds and describes the type of event, number of participants, duration, and cost. This level of detailed reporting, apparently not used in 2012, possibly resolves a portion of the accountability and fund tracking concerns.⁴⁶ The SPP should receive more funding as other

programs are requiring lesser contributions, and as noted previously the United States' commitment to NATO may be changing.

More research is needed to clearly define the best ways for the SPP to improve. An anonymous source mentioned that a revision to the SPP guidance is forthcoming. Many questions and concerns highlighted during this research and the GAO report may be answered or mitigated by the new guidance. Obtaining the updated SPP guidance and understanding the changes will be the initial step in determining what corrective actions remain.

The new guidance will hopefully address the lack of SPP measurable goals. Specific goals must be created such that all contributing SPPs receive recognition for their contributions. These goals will also advance the SPP as they would serve as a roadmap for newly formed partnerships. Oftentimes progress is made, but others may assume there was nothing accomplished as the results could not be measured. Standardized metrics must be created against which states and territories can assess their performance in the SPP.

In addition to standardized metrics, the descriptors for logging the SPP events is not consistent. Standardized nomenclatures for SPP participants to properly document their SPP activities must be created and used when planning and logging SPP commitments, shortfalls, and accomplishments. Updated guidance needs to direct combatant commands and units on the importance of capturing their activities under the correct nomenclature. Again, it is difficult to quantify and measure results if they are not entered and tracked by the proper nomenclature.

Along with standardized nomenclature, the methodology employed for data collection must be standardized. Investments into a consistent SPP-wide database or filesystem where combatant commands and state partners record their activities will pay dividends for SPP development. The procurement and use of such a system affords the standardization of data

collection such that analysts and participants alike could gauge SPP activities against the goals. Chief Zeppi conveyed Vermont uses the Global - Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System (G-TSCMIS) to plan, track, and log SPP events.⁴⁷ G-TSCMIS is a “DoD enterprise-wide technology capability which will facilitate and integrate planning, collaboration, program design, assessment, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting in support of all U.S. security cooperation activities around the world.”⁴⁸ SPP participants as well as the GAO audit highlighted a system such as G-TSCMIS was long overdue. The new G-TSCMIS allows standardized data entry, collection, and analysis, allowing the SPP to quantify and communicate its accomplishments.

Concise guidance on SPP activities involving civilians is needed. There is untapped potential for civil-military and civil-civil events and relationships based on exercising the option of including more civilians in SPP events.

If there has not been another GAO audit or similar detailed audit of the SPP since 2012, one should be requested. This updated audit needs to be reviewed and compared to the 2012 GAO audit to learn of areas where the SPP improved and the areas which still require increased attention – plus any new findings.

When asked about areas of improvement, Chief Master Sergeant Steven Zeppi, Vermont’s SPP Coordinator, offered a few. Chief Zeppi conveyed that consistent funding must be available for the SPP and its events. Events such as continuing resolutions have wreaked havoc on the program in recent years. Even with portions of the DoD funded through the government shutdowns many of the functions and offices that run the SPP were not operating.⁴⁹ Additional funding would help the program as Chief Zeppi mentioned staffing levels in the SPP office are not sufficient to effectively manage the workload. Also, the need for permanently SPP

assigned personnel should be a priority as Commanders are hesitant to commit personnel to the program based on compromising the day-to-day operations of the unit. Additionally, Chief Zeppi mentioned an imbalance between the number of Army Guard personnel assigned to SPP staff positions compared to the number of Air Guard members filling these roles. The adjutant general of each state should equally distribute opportunities both services.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The SPP can, under absolute United States control, create and maintain partnerships around the world at a fraction of the cost to taxpayers compared to other programs discussed. The relationships produced by the SPP are long-term, trustworthy relationships between partner nations and National Guard members and their units. The inherent stability found in the National Guard construct produced by career-members partaking in SPP events lends itself to partner nations having coherent crisis management and training programs for both civilian and military personnel able to respond to any natural disaster or military mission.

NATO has accepted countries which the SPP has assisted, arguably who may not have otherwise gained membership without the mentorship through the SPP. One of Vermont's state partners, Macedonia, joining NATO in February 2019 is recent example of such efforts.⁵¹ The SPP contributes to many militaries around the world - improvements in training programs, natural disaster responses and overall training and readiness of their forces - all while operating on a relatively small budget. Partner nations' military prove their readiness by their ability to respond to, effectively manage and ultimately resolve, their own crises without assistance from the United States. When partner nations form coalition forces, proving their interoperability it also provides proof of another successful partnership.

The SPP produces a considerable return on investment based on the relatively small portion of the defense budget invested. SPP funding increases would allow the program expansion and its ability to advance the strategic goals of the United States. As the current administration outlines, U.S. partner nations create intelligence networks, economic markets, and potential strategic locations from which the United States can project military power.⁵² The SPP creates alliances and partnerships that afford the United States enhanced capabilities. Capabilities ranging from deterring aggression to defending freedom by either assisting with direct military action or by providing operating areas from which the U.S. military can extend its global reach.⁵³ The SPP assists countries by further establishing their military training methods and warfighting capabilities, so they are prepared to join the United States as partners and allies to fight for freedom around the world, strengthening the world's collective security.

Annex

Annex A:

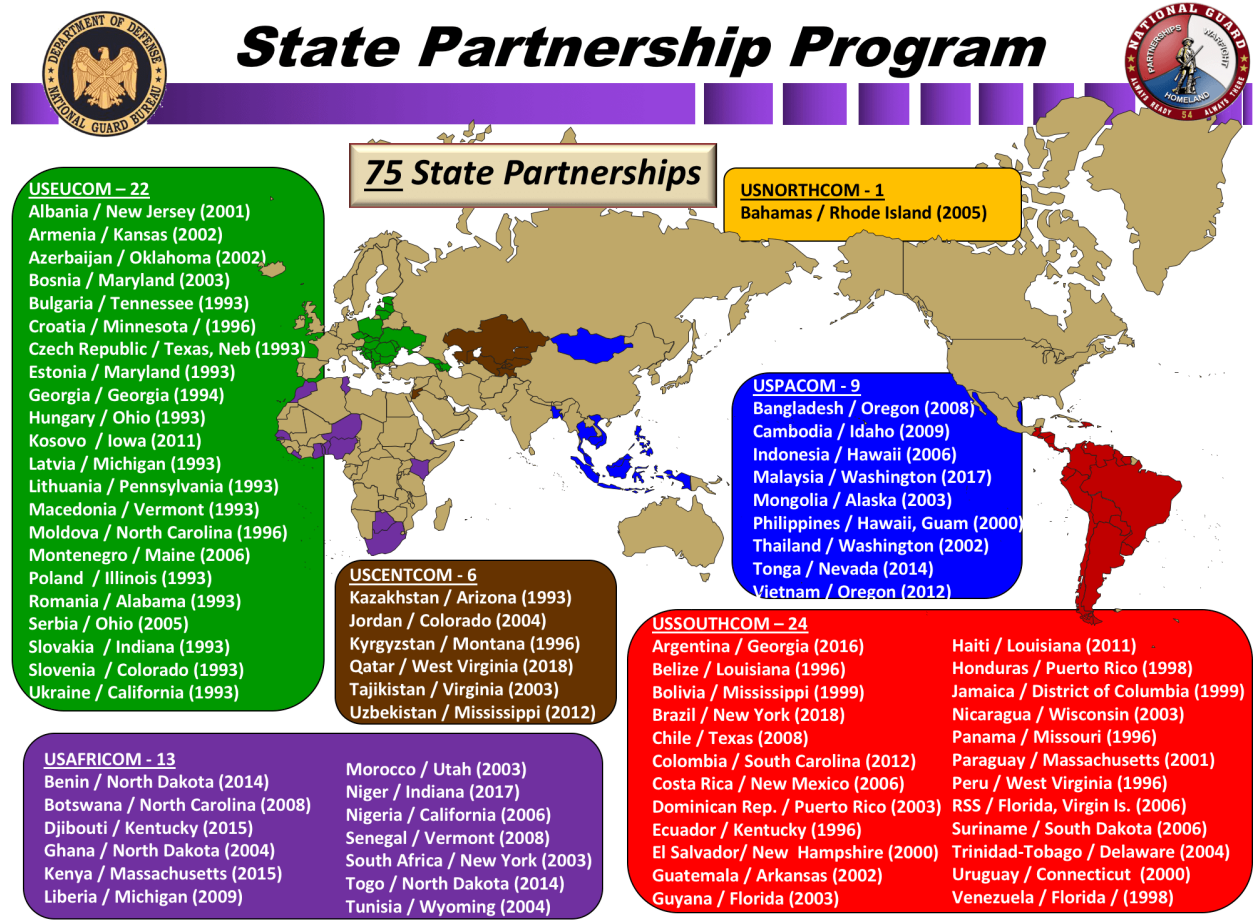


Figure 1: Current State Partnerships

Source: National Guard Bureau, *State Partnership Program*, (Washington, DC: June 2018), accessed November 24, 2018, https://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/SPP%20Partnership%20Map_Jun%202018.png

The country of Burkina Faso in Africa partnering with the District of Columbia National Guard on February 1, 2019 created the 76th partnership, it is not included on this graphic.⁵⁴

Notes:

¹ National Guard Bureau Office of Public Affairs Historical Services Branch, *The National Guard State Partnership Program Forging and Maintaining Effective Security Cooperation Partnerships for the 21st Century*, (Arlington, VA: 2014), 60, accessed November 24, 2018, https://www.nationalguard.mil/portals/31/Documents/spp_publication/The_National_Guard_SPP_Publication.pdf

² U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*, (Washington, DC: no date associated in article), accessed December 5, 2018 <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/collapse-soviet-union>

³ National Guard Bureau Office of Public Affairs Historical Services Branch, *The National Guard State Partnership Program Forging and Maintaining Effective Security Cooperation Partnerships for the 21st Century* (Arlington, VA: 2014), 4, accessed November 24, 2018, https://www.nationalguard.mil/portals/31/Documents/spp_publication/The_National_Guard_SPP_Publication.pdf

⁴ National Guard Bureau, *State Partnership Program*, (Washington, DC: June 2018), accessed November 24, 2018, https://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J-5/InternationalAffairs/StatePartnershipProgram/SPP%20Partnership%20Map_Jun%202018.png

⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, *The State Partnership Program Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to Congress*, (Washington, DC: U.S. DoD December 14, 2016), accessed November 24, 2018, <https://securityassistance.org/content/state-partnership-program-annual-report-congress>

⁶ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: 2017), 38, accessed November 24, 2018, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

⁷ The White House, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: 2018), 8, accessed November 24, 2018, <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

⁸ National Guard Bureau, *State Partnership Factsheet*, (Washington, DC: National Guard Bureau, June, 2018), accessed November 25, 2018 [https://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Resources/Fact%20Sheets/State%20Partnership%20Program%20Fact%20Sheet%20\(June%202018\).pdf](https://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Resources/Fact%20Sheets/State%20Partnership%20Program%20Fact%20Sheet%20(June%202018).pdf)

⁹ Congressional Research Service, *The National Guard State Partnership Program: Background, Issues, and Options for Congress*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service August 15, 2011), 5, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41957.pdf>

¹⁰ Rankin, Denise, *Michigan Guard Celebrates 20-year Partnership with Latvia*, Michigan Public Affairs Office, December 19, 2013), accessed February 6, 2019, <https://www.eucom.mil/media-library/Article/25504/michigan-guard-celebrates-20-year-partnership-with-latvia>

¹¹ National Guard Bureau, *National Guard's State Partnership Program helped Croatia join NATO*, (Washington, DC: National Guard Bureau, April 17, 2008), accessed November 25, 2018, <https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/573218/national-guards-state-partnership-program-helped-croatia-join-nato/>

¹² National Guard Bureau, *State partnership program emphasizes building relationships*, (Washington, DC: National Guard Bureau, January 17, 2012), accessed November 25, 2018, https://www.army.mil/article/72048/state_partnership_program_emphasizes_building_relationships

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, *The State Partnership Program Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to Congress*, (Washington, DC: U.S. DoD, December 14, 2016), accessed November 24, 2018, <https://securityassistance.org/content/state-partnership-program-annual-report-congress>

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Defense, *Qatar, West Virginia Guard Establish New Partnership*, May 2018, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1523739/qatar-west-virginia-guard-establish-new-partnership/>

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, *Guard Integral to DoD Effort to Build Lethality, Alliances, Mattis Says*, August 2018, accessed December 5, 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1612817/guard-integral-to-dod-effort-to-build-lethality-alliances-mattis-says/>

¹⁸ Lt Col Brent L. Salmans, telephone conversation with the author, January 10, 2019.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Chief Master Sergeant Steven Zeppi, Interview with the author, March 7, 2019.

²² Ismay, *NATO, The First Five Years 1949-1954*, (Palais de Chaillot, Paris, France: November 1954), 11.

²³ NATO, *NATO Members and Partner Countries*, accessed January 14, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm

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- ³² Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Security Assistance Management Manual*, accessed January 14, 2019, <http://www.samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-11#C11.10.10>
- ³³ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *NATO PARTNERSHIPS: DOD Needs to Assess U.S. Assistance in Response to Changes to the Partnership for Peace Program*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, September, 2010), accessed November 24, 2018, <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-1015>
- ³⁴ U.S. Department of Defense, *The State Partnership Program Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to Congress*, (Washington, DC: U.S. DoD, December 14, 2016), accessed November 24, 2018, <https://securityassistance.org/content/state-partnership-program-annual-report-congress>
- ³⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, *The State Partnership Program Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report to Congress*, (Washington, DC: U.S. DoD, December 14, 2016), accessed November 24, 2018, <https://securityassistance.org/content/state-partnership-program-annual-report-congress>

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³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

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⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

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⁴⁷ Chief Master Sergeant Steven Zeppi, Interview with the author, March 7, 2019.

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⁴⁹ Chief Master Sergeant Steven Zeppi, Interview with the author, March 7, 2019.

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⁵¹ *Relations with the Republic of North Macedonia*, accessed March 9, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_48830.htm

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⁵³ The White House, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: 2018), 8, accessed November 24, 2018,

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