

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM: SUPPORTING U. S.
SOUTHERN COMMAND SECURITY COOPERATION PROGRAM**

by

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ABSTRACT

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Since 1993 the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) has filled a strategic vacuum created after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. SPP has provided a meaningful extension of US soft power within the region. It accomplished this by establishing strategic partnerships between National Guard units and various newly formed former Soviet countries. These partnerships provided an extension of democratic values and principles while also establishing stabilizing relationships with these developing countries. Success here has led to the extension of the program to other regions such as the Caribbean and Latin America.

This Paper reviews the history and current status of the National Guard's SPP as an effective means available to Combatant Commanders (CCDR) as they implement their Theater Security Cooperation Plan in order to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism. It describes the process to establish these partnerships with emphasis on the Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) area of responsibility (AOR). Based on the evaluation of the process as applied in SOUTHCOM, this paper makes recommendations for enhancing this program and its effectiveness as a tool for the CCDR.

NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM: SUPPORTING U. S. SOUTHERN COMMAND SECURITY COOPERATION PROGRAM

Security cooperation has become the Combatant Commanders' (CCDR) mandate for prosecuting the Global War on Terror (GWOT) within their respective areas of responsibility (AOR). This mandate adds to an already full plate an overwhelming challenge that brings with it no promise of additional resources. In response to similar challenges at the end of the Cold War and emergence of the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, the National Guard initiated the State Partnership Program (SPP) under the umbrella of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. The SPP filled a new strategic void by providing mentorship to partnership countries to advance democratic principles and values, and to encourage subordination of the military to civilian authority. The Guard's SPP is now a recognized strategic instrument that employs military, economic, and informational elements of power for the CCDRs as they attempt to shape their strategic environments. As this program evolves, it will continue to provide mutual benefits to all involved as a means for establishing lasting strategic partnerships in the current struggle against terrorism.

This Strategy Research Project (SRP) traces the emergence of the National Guard SPP after the Cold War and its utilization to implement CCDRs' Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP). It will describe SPP, showing how it supports the National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), and National Military Strategy (NMS). It then describes the program in general - its start, its successes, and the process for establishing SPPs within a given region. This analysis cites the importance of pairing the right partner country with the right state. This SRP will focus in on the SPP's role in the Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) AOR. SOUTHCOM was chosen because of its proximity to the continental United States and its importance in maintaining an "active, layered, defense" in this forward region of the world.¹ It concludes with recommendations to improve the SPP, especially to support the SOUTHCOM commander's TSCP.

Strategic Foundations for Security Cooperation

Each regional CCDR is charged through the NDS and NMS to set up security cooperation programs in their regions. These programs are designed to support objectives in the NSS, especially to improve and sustain relations with existing and potential partnership countries within the CCDR's AOR. In the NSS, President Bush asserted that the United States has an excellent opportunity to extend freedom across the globe by promoting democratic values.

Promotion of these values would in turn help to strengthen weak states that are susceptible to terrorist networks.

In the war against global terrorism, we will never forget that we are ultimately fighting for our democratic values and way of life...in leading the campaign against terrorism, we are forging new, productive international relationships and redefining existing ones in ways to meet the challenges of the 21st century.²

Both the NDS and NMS support this premise by emphasizing the value of enhancing existing partnerships and developing new ones to better defeat terrorism on a global scale.

“One of the principal vehicles for strengthening alliances and partnerships is our security cooperation program.”³ CCDRs are thus given the primary responsibility to prosecute the GWOT within their AORs. They are also charged with the responsibility to establish and sustain partnerships with key countries in order to better prosecute the GWOT. Theater security cooperation provides a way for the CCDRs to implement their strategy to achieve security cooperation goals and shape the strategic environments in their regions. In order to do this, CCDRs develop their TSCPs consistent with the strategic objectives provided by the Secretary of Defense. They also ensure that their objectives support the diplomatic objectives specified in the country campaign plans developed by the ambassadors' country teams. Figure 1 below illustrates this flow of guidance starting from the NSS, showing how implementation of the TSCP supports the NSS. National security is attained through use of all elements of power, but different goals are identified at each level of support. Some of these goals may include leveraging contributions of various government and non-government agencies through the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) or providing assistance through the sale of military equipment to enable partner countries by means of our Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program. Through all of this interagency coordination, it is extremely important to synchronize efforts at all levels and not to rely excessively on military capabilities. Powers inherent in the US State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) also support the NSS. At the theater level, the National Guard's SPP promotes transparency of operations, military subordination to civil authority, and military support to civil authorities (MSCA), such as supporting FEMA's role in response to natural disasters.

Each level of guidance has its own specific objectives. These objectives are diverse; they include everything from promoting democratic values, securing basing rights, opening up economic markets, military support to civilian agencies, and peacekeeping operations. This process is designed to leverage every element of national power. The different elements of power have various roles at each level. They all contribute to an interagency effort to achieve

the goals of partner countries and the TSCP, which in turn promotes strategic partners that will serve current U. S. interests – hopefully well into the future. The partnerships may develop into coalitions that respond to uncertain contingencies. All involved parties emerge as winners: CCDRs in satisfying their TSCP goals; the ambassadors' country teams in pursuit of objectives cited in their country plans; and the goals of the partner country itself. National Guard SPPs support the CCDRs' TSCPs by providing forces and assets in a number of ways. Through leveraging the different skills and assets available from the various states' local and state-level civilian agencies, the Guard provides expertise for developing and reinforcing democratic institutions and processes in the partnership countries, all in accord with TSCP and country campaign plan objectives.

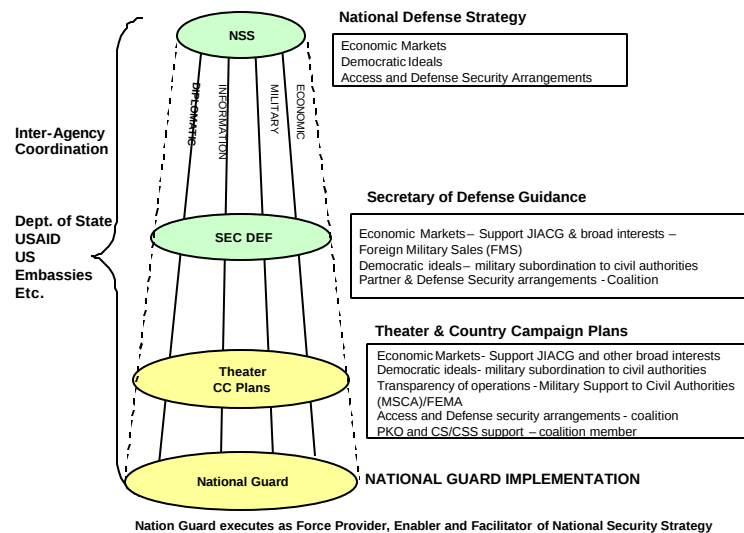


FIGURE 1: DIRECTIVE AND GUIDANCE FLOW IN SUPPORT OF SPP⁴

Security cooperation is thus one of the major strategic ways to prosecute GWOT. The NSS clearly admits that the U. S. cannot win this war by itself: limited availability of U. S. resources and/or forces make it extremely important to build global coalitions with partnership countries. Successful coalitions are formed from countries that adopt and support U. S. values. Security cooperation builds on this premise and represents a multi-faceted, interagency approach to setting the conditions for success. In this context, preemption must be exercised realistically and prudently by placing the military element of power in a subordinate role to all the

other elements, building on the premise that democratic states do not go to war against democratic states.⁵ Accordingly, the promotion of American democratic principles and values provides an example for emerging partner countries in search of greater prosperity and peace.

Figure 2 illustrates many of the major themes and the interplay among the three major spheres that overlap to build security cooperation and support. Even though the use of the military element is not preeminent here, the maintenance of an effective military, ready to fight and win against an aggressive adversary, is still a stated goal of the program. The military works very closely with ambassadors and their country teams to shape the strategic environment within each CCDR's AOR. During this shaping phase, all efforts focus on deterring armed conflicts.

Foreign Policy elements

- Build institutions to keep Americans safe and world peaceful
- Strengthen alliances
- Promote American principles & values

Security Policy elements

- Enhancing our security w/ military forces ready to fight
- Bolster America's economic revitalization
- Promote democracy abroad

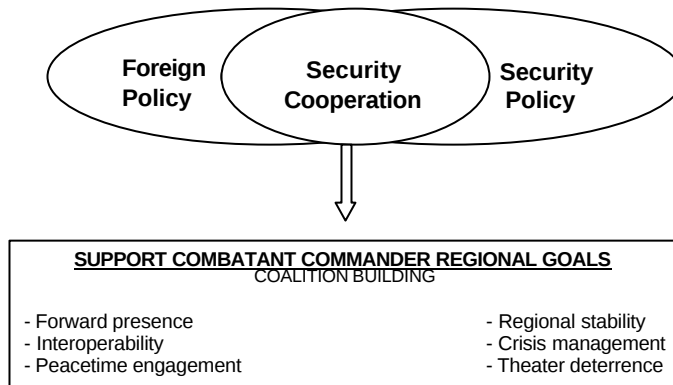


FIGURE 2: SECURITY COOPERATION: KEY POLICY TOOLS FOR 21ST CENTURY⁶

National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP)

SOUTHCOM SPPs build on successes in various other regions, such as EUCOM, where they were initially employed as a subset of the Partnership for Peace and Joint Contact Team Program (JCTP).⁷ In Europe, the SPP filled a "strategic vacuum" identified by both General Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General John Shalikashvili, then

Commander-in-Chief of European Command, after Soviet troops left. The SPP supported the successful shaping of the strategic environment within countries of the former Soviet Union during the early 1990's, immediately following the fall of the Berlin wall.⁸ Through the SPPs, many countries have established successful governmental, business, educational, and medical relationships with counterpart agencies from the partnership states. By working successfully with and influencing their partnership countries to eventually meet criteria for acceptance by NATO, SPPs were, and still are, recognized as an integral part of the EUCOM theater engagement strategy to "foster stability and democracy in Eastern Europe."⁹ SPPs continue to perform these and other vital roles, providing added benefits as they help shape the strategic environment in other regions.

Since its beginning in 1993 as a way to provide strategic outreach to countries of the former Soviet Republic, the SPP has built on its success in EUCOM by partnering with other countries in US Central Command (CENTCOM), US Pacific Command (PACOM), and in SOUTHCOM. This program provides additional means to facilitate strategic engagements with partnership countries by taking part in a number of different activities to include: military-to-military subject matter expert exchange (SMEE), disaster planning and response, environmental protection, and city and state contacts at all levels.¹⁰ These engagements serve to foster ongoing good relations to promote good governance and to foster democratic values – all supporting the NSS and GWOT.

The SPP currently includes fifty worldwide partnerships: twenty in EUCOM, six in CENTCOM, three in PACOM, and seventeen in SOUTHCOM.¹¹ The SPP's focus has widened from originally assisting former Soviet countries seeking entry into NATO to supporting other CCDRs' security cooperation objectives through coalition-building for the GWOT and other activities.¹² The NMS adds the War on Terrorism to the CCDRs' baseline security posture in addition to other ongoing operations and commitments.¹³ But this addition comes with no relief from existing missions and provides no additional resources. CCDRs must therefore find cost-effective ways to implement their TSCPs as a means to support regional GWOT objectives.¹⁴ Building these coalitions places greater emphasis on shaping the strategic environment through non-kinetic means such as influence – this ability to influence is sometimes referred to as "soft power."

One of America's greatest powers is its ability to shape the preferences of others around the world. This shaping offers the best way for America to continue its world dominance, to remain a global hegemon without being perceived as imperialistic. Joseph Nye refers to this ability as "Soft Power."¹⁵ A nation's soft power is derived primarily from three sources: its

culture, its political values, and its foreign policies.¹⁶ U. S. culture continues to provide the greatest amount of soft power. Indeed international concerns about U. S. values and foreign policy have recently contributed to a global distrust of the U. S. Some examples of particular events are our “unilateral” attack on Iraq in 2003, the Abu Ghraib incidents, and alleged desecration of the Koran.

The National Guard SPP is a viable tool to help rebuild U. S. soft power around the world. It does this by supporting the implementation of CCDRs’ Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) and US ambassadors’ country plans through the strategic relations it builds. Commanders use these plans to satisfy their regional objectives to shape the strategic environment and form effective partnerships to win the GWOT. The U. S. must rely more on its soft than hard power to build a security framework that addresses the current security concerns within this region. This approach requires strategic restraint and reassurance; it cannot succeed without the cooperation of sub-regional leaders.¹⁷

The SPP also provides a cost benefit to both the CCDR and partner countries. The CCDR does not have to use his own funding to support most SPP activities since the National Guard is already funded through the federal government. As part of their statutory requirement, National Guard Soldiers can perform many partnership activities in an Annual Training (AT) status.¹⁸

Establishment of SPPs

While much of what follows applies to establishing all SPPs, the process described is used specifically within SOUTHCOM. The current process for selection of partnership countries and states is based on the same premise used during the establishment of the original SPP with the countries of the former Soviet Union: development of strategic partnerships with countries that show a desire to support democracy and its values. The Secretary of Defense gives priority to countries that provide the greatest potential for becoming future partners and allies in support of US interests.¹⁹ The National Guard Bureau established the optimum conditions for a SPP:

- The host nation demonstrates a sincere interest in establishing a partnership.
- US theater security cooperation and host nation objectives are satisfied.
- The force protection risks are low.
- A minimum of additional resources are required to execute exchange.
- National Guard core engagement competencies are heavily incorporated.²⁰

This set of conditions expanded the original Partnership for Peace (PfP) and SPP criteria for partner nation involvement, which initially focused on countries working to attain membership in

NATO. This expansion became necessary as the SPP expanded to become a vital part of shaping other strategic environments for which ascension into NATO was not a goal. SPP also serves as a conduit to leveraging multiple elements of national power.

There are three phases in the approval process for the establishment of a SPP.²¹ Below, Figure 3 depicts the current Phase I approval process for both partner countries and selection of a state to partner with that country. The process starts with a formal request from the potential partnership country to the US ambassador and his country team. The ambassador's country team reviews this request and ensures that the requesting country's goals for taking part in the SPP meet the objectives in the country plans. The request is then sent to the CDR for review to ensure that the requesting country would be a good fit for his TSCP goals and objectives and contribute to effectively shaping the strategic environment. The Senior Guard Advisor's staff (at the CDR level) then sends the CDR-endorsed request for nomination of a partner state to the International Affairs Office of the National Guard Bureau (NGB-IA). NGB-IA first conducts a country study of the partner country and an analysis of potential state partners. An initial screening criterion identifies states interested in the region and interested in the partner country, with the capacity and resources necessary for establishing a successful partnership. NGB-IA also considers geography, economics, trade, and demographics as additional criteria for evaluating potential states.²² After this analysis, a group of potential states are identified. A decision matrix (DECMAT) with weighted evaluation criteria then compares the potential partner states, and a highly favored state is identified.²³ NGB-IA then forwards the recommended state through the National Guard's General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC) to the Chief of the

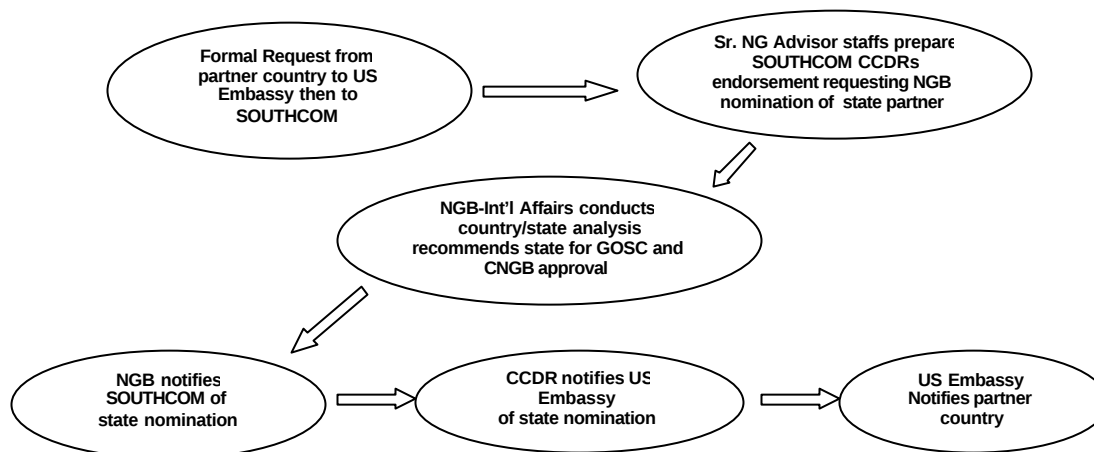


FIGURE 3: PHASE I OF SPP APPROVAL PROCESS²⁴

National Guard Bureau (CNGB) for final approval. Once a partner state is approved, the US Embassy is notified through the CCDR. By examining three of the latest state nominations to partner with Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Bahamas, we see an average time of seven months between the time CCDR forwarded a nomination request to NGB-IA and the time the nomination was approved and returned to SOUTHCOM.²⁵ This situation provides a possible area for improvement in this process.²⁶ A reduction in this time would better facilitate faster implementation of partnerships and meet the expectations of partner countries.²⁷

Phase II is very short (3-7 days), as shown in Figure 4. It begins immediately after the state and partnership countries are approved. This phase initiates a relationship between the leadership of the state National Guard, the CCDR, key US Embassy personnel, and partner nation representatives. During this phase, these representatives visit both the state and partner country for a brief orientation on each partner's facilities and organizations. During this phase key exchange areas are also identified, paving the way for further refinement of target areas and activities during Phase III.

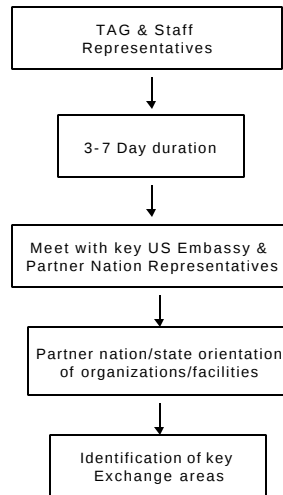


FIGURE 4: PHASE II PROGRAM INITIATION VISIT²⁸

During Phase III of the approval process, the real work is done. Here the overall concept for the SPP is further developed by the selected state and country representatives along with members of the CCDR theater cooperation activities (TCA) coordinating groups as shown in Figure 5. This figure illustrates a fully integrated coordination between the key responsible

parties in the region to include the US Military Group (USMILGRP), military personnel working within the embassy to shape the strategic environment. This coordinated effort assures that the SPP supports the NSS objectives for establishing strategic partnerships and the NMS directives to the CCDRs to execute theater cooperation. We also see the linkages between the military

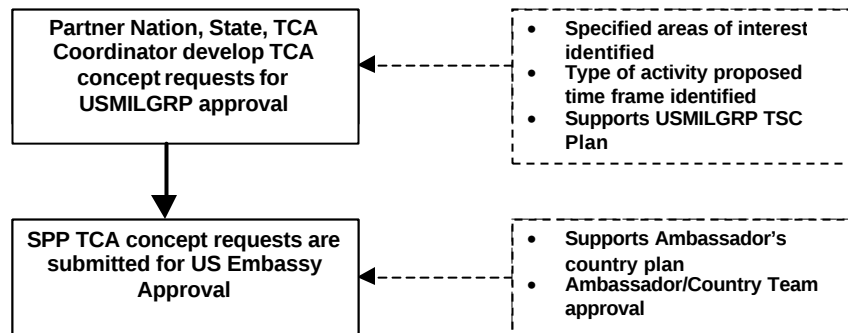


FIGURE 5: PHASE III: STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT²⁹

and diplomatic elements of national power to ensure that the SPP activities and timeline support the TSCP and embassy country plan. SPP activities do not necessarily focus directly on building democratic governments. Rather, they take advantage of the Guard's unique capabilities in a given state to demonstrate effective democratic institutions, promote democratic values, and share best practices to help partner countries achieve their goals. Initially, the activities will be primarily military-to-military. As the partnership matures, activities will eventually include military-to-civilian and civilian-to-civilian activities. Once both USMILGRP and ambassador/country team approve the plan, it is then returned through the TCA Coordinator to the SOUTHCOM J5 for final approval.

SOUTHCOM then adds a new requirement to the execution phase of these activities to better track the execution of these activities. Participant countries' TCA and SPP coordinators must submit a weekly report to the SOUTHCOM SPP office and NGB-IA.³⁰ This is a key to ensuring that approved activities are executed according to plan. However, this requirement does not link these activities to other Theater Security Cooperation activities occurring in the AOR or provide a clear way to determine if they are meeting the CCDR's strategic objectives.

Partnerships established as part of the SPP are traditionally not intended to be permanent arrangements. Instead, SPP "was designed to help nations achieve their own specific national goals, such as gaining entry into NATO."³¹ Partner countries also seek to take advantage of

increased economic, technological, and/or military assistance made available through cooperating with the United States.³² Ultimately, through these engagements partner countries will achieve greater economic and political stability while the United States is pursuing its own strategic objectives. Partner countries could also increase their eligibility for broader and deeper military involvement in joint and/or combined exercises. Within SOUTHCOM SPP is currently viewed as a continuous long-term relationship between states and partner countries with no stated end point.

Security Environment within SOUTHCOM

Our Theater Security Cooperation Program (TSCP) is the vehicle through which we extend U.S. influence, develop access, and promote competence among potential coalition partners. These activities directly support the War on Terror and enhance readiness for contingency actions against emerging threats. We also coordinate the TSCP with the country teams in our embassies to ensure our efforts complement their Mission Performance Plans.³³

As indicated by Admiral Fargo's statement above, CCDRs carry out their strategic objectives in support of the NDS and NMS through establishing effective security cooperation with countries within their regions. Through the TSCP and country plans, CCDRs and Ambassadors apply various available means to achieve their security cooperation objectives to shape the environment in support of US interests.

But a view of the ways and means available to accomplish the security cooperation mission reveals a gap between the means required and the means available. Combatant Commanders often do not have sufficient means, especially financial resources, to fully implement TSCP programs to their fullest capability within their regions. As indicated by successes in the implementation of SPP in EUCOM in the early nineties, the National Guard provides a cost-effective way to leverage additional means in support of the current SOUTHCOM Commander's objectives in the region. General Craddock, SOUTHCOM Commander, in his posture statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee described the environment within his AOR and the challenges he faced. He listed as a part of his mission and vision a focus on "achieving regional partnerships with nations to promote commitment to democratic values, respect for human rights, territorial security and sovereignty."³⁴ In addition, he observed that one of his challenges within the region was the perennial problem of weak governmental institutions causing a growing discontent and impatience with democracy among the people of these countries.³⁵

Even though Latin America and the Caribbean are relatively stable regions with regard to the potential threat of conventional cross border conflicts, they are also one of the most violent.

For example, the region's homicide rate is 27.5 per 100,000 people, indicative of a security issue that discourages economic investment from outside that would help to lift much of the indigenous population above the poverty line.³⁶ Ecuador, for example, has a tradition of democratic idealism, but economic and internal conflicts have blocked progress.³⁷ Additionally, within SOUTHCOM the fight against illegal drug trafficking and "narcoterrorism" adds to General Craddock's challenge in prosecuting GWOT. Radical terrorist cells performing support operations within the region are involved in several nefarious activities: money laundering, document forgery, and elicit trafficking. Proceeds from these activities eventually finance terrorist activities in the Middle East and throughout the world and strengthen the overall criminal network within the region. Indeed, the region's violence and international criminality threatens objectives of our security cooperation programs. These threats can be countered, however, by establishing effective partnerships, both individually and regionally. For example, we are addressing the drug trafficking issue by effectively engaging the Republic of Columbia, which is at the center of regional drug production and trade.

General Craddock acknowledges that the Colombian government is making progress in combating terrorism and the drug trade. It has improved security within the country that support establishment of democratic institutions and has increased citizens' trust in their government. The level of violence and terrorist activities has also declined across the board. For the first time, all municipalities within the country have a government presence. The Colombian military is playing a strong role in this progress. Some key areas of improvement include demobilizing and reintegrating into mainstream society members of key opposition groups, to include the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN).³⁸ The government is also reporting gains from cooperative drug eradication programs and extradition to the United States of a number of major drug traffickers.

Other challenges within the region include poor U. S. relations with Venezuela, a leading country in the region. Continued engagement of Venezuela will require an interagency approach that incorporates all elements of power. This integrated approach will help to achieve the objective of promoting development of democratic institutions. Also, of particular U. S. interest is the increased presence of the Peoples Republic of China in the region, which is seeking to expand its economic opportunities and influence. Chinese presence is not seen as a threat to our security interests, but it is nonetheless a reality that we cannot ignore.³⁹

Weak governmental institutions in many nations within the SOUTHCOM AOR are a constant hindrance to democratization. Weak and failing democratic institutions that are not living up to the expectations of the marginalized and indigenous populations are causing deep-

rooted dissatisfaction with most governments in partner countries. Countries such as Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador are experiencing an emergence of anti-US, anti-globalization, and anti-free trade demagogues, encouraged by the distrust of their people in the failed institutions. They are inciting violence against local governments.⁴⁰ The National Guard SPP directly addresses many of these challenges while working with partner countries.

SPP within SOUTHCOM

Due to the reduced possibility of major theater war within SOUTHCOM AOR, security cooperation is the primary means used to further the goals of the CCDR.⁴¹ The aforementioned regional issues require the involvement of all elements of national power as we attempt to develop long-term relationships to foster trust and cooperation between the US and countries within the SOUTHCOM AOR. Additionally, the US must work with these countries to ensure that they develop the capabilities to act as equal partners in fighting the GWOT, thereby paving the way for future cooperation if necessary. The National Guard provides additional forces to the CCDR, who does not have sufficient resources to commit to the very important task of implementing his TSCP. Within SOUTHCOM over 5000 soldiers supported the program during FY 04 and FY05.⁴² As the lead agent for this program, the National Guard provides a very cost-effective way to work directly with selected countries within the SOUTHCOM AOR to promote the following:

- Military subordination to civilian authority
- Military support to civil authority
- Development of democratic institutions
- Fostering open-market economies to promote stability
- Promotion and representation U.S. of democratic and humanitarian values⁴³

The SPP leverages a small presence into a value-added asset for the CCDR by establishing lasting relationships that may support U. S. interest in future transnational activities.

However, as we examine SPP within SOUTHCOM, it is more than simply a force provider for the CCDR; it is an effective means to support the TSCP in shaping the future strategic environment. This is accomplished through a number of military-to-military, military-to-civilian, and some civilian-to-civilian engagements. These multifaceted activities in the diplomatic, economic, and military spheres are coordinated through the CCDR, ambassadors' country teams, and partner countries to identify objectives that are mutually supportive.⁴⁴ SPP can contribute by providing expertise to partner countries in local law enforcement, counter drug

programs, as well as disaster planning and response. In addition, SPP facilitates contacts between state and partner country local agencies, such as public works departments.⁴⁵

SPPs provide partner countries within SOUTHCOM with an excellent example of military subordination to civilian authority by exemplifying a voluntary, dual-purpose military. The National Guard demonstrates the utility of its dual chain-of-command, its loyalty to state governors in times of natural disasters or civil unrest, while at the same time answering the call of the nation's leader in times of war or national crisis. For the partner countries, the National Guard "part-time, Citizen Soldier" model costs approximately 80% less to operate than one using active duty troops.⁴⁶ This is especially attractive to developing countries since it provides them with a military at a cost far less than that of maintaining a large standing army. The National Guard's reliance on Citizen Soldiers also helps to establish more long-term relationships because of the greater stability of these troops.⁴⁷ These relationships form the basis for future partnerships in pursuit of common interests.

Another benefit comes through the civilian occupations of many National Guard troops. In many cases, members of National Guard units are themselves members of state and local governments or emergency responders, in addition to their military occupational specialties. So they are able to share their first-hand civilian knowledge and skills directly in helping partner countries meet some of their needs and objectives.

Within SOUTHCOM some of the military-to-civilian and civilian-to-civilian TSCP activities conducted as part of SPP included: Information systems Web Master SMEE between Jamaica and the District of Columbia National Guard, disaster response and preparedness between Guyana and Florida, improvement of livestock production operations between the University of Wisconsin and Nicaragua, and community policing SMEE between West Virginia's sheriff department and Peru. SPP is very active within SOUTHCOM, taking part in 66 funded events in 2005, with another 105 projected for 2006.⁴⁸

Effectiveness of SPP

The National Guard SPP has built on its tremendous success in filling the strategic vacuum described earlier after the sudden collapse of the Berlin Wall and dissolution of the former Soviet Union. This success is represented every day throughout the world in many other successful engagements with countries that are emerging as real partners as we prosecute the GWOT. For example, SPP is currently cited in the Secretary of Defense's Security Cooperation Guidance as a key enabler to that program. SPP today does far more than build schools and roads and provide medical readiness teams (MEDRETE) to disadvantaged populations. The

International Affairs Office of the National Guard Bureau (NGB-IA), assisted by THE SPECTRUM Group, conducted a review of the State Partnership Program and identified the following successes and strengths:

- Opening access to Central Asia
- Counter-drug operations in Latin America
- Re-establishing military relations with the Philippines
- Proven track record to adapt
- Increased operational role of the Guard internationally
- Support for civil authorities
- Access to state resources⁴⁹

The report also points out that despite this excellent track record, SPP has not yet identified a definitive set of criteria and metrics to more directly evaluate these successes in terms of their contributions to achieving the objectives of its stakeholders (the CCDR and Ambassadors).

There is also a need for more definitive strategic objectives, strengthened mission statements, and greater awareness of Washington stakeholders. In response to the second issue, the Secretary of Defense and subsequently the National Guard Bureau (NGB) published guidance that specifically addresses SPP.⁵⁰ However, CCDRs must also provide specific guidance to guide TSCPs within their AORs in order to address the first issue identified by the report.

The continued strategic relevance of SPP to the Combatant Commanders is evident by the growth in the number of activities conducted as the program has matured and adapted to a rapidly changing environment.⁵¹ However, SPP must continue to be joint in nature and develop ways to deal with life-cycle issues. One of these very important issues includes ways to leverage the limited state assets available to form new partnerships with other countries of interest. The majority of the partnerships are one-to-one. Currently, states that already have a partner country are not viewed favorably by NGB-IA as candidates for additional partnerships during the partner state approval process. This may change in the future as NGB-IA develops solutions to this problem and the pool of available states becomes more limited.

In the SOUTHCOM AOR, the National Guard SPP is a vital strategic asset that provides additional means to the CCDR for prosecuting TSCPs. Properly applied, SPPs also directly support Homeland Defense by establishing and sustaining critical strategic partnerships with countries within Latin America and the Caribbean. As stated before, this region is particularly important because of its close proximity to the U. S. and our strategy to protect the homeland from possible terrorist attacks by defending forward. By developing successful partnerships with these countries we are directly supporting two objectives in the Strategy for Homeland

Defense and Civil Support by deterring, intercepting and defeating threats at a safe distance and by enabling international partners and improving their capacity.⁵² Successful partnerships depend largely on identifying state partners that are willing and available to do what is necessary to actively engage the partner country and help them meet the above objectives as well as their own. So far, the National Guard Bureau has succeeded in matching the right states with the right countries.

Recommendations

Despite the successes of the SPP, three challenges must be overcome to ensure the continued success of the program and to maximize its ability to help the SOUTHCOM Commander meet his strategic objectives: reducing the nomination time for partner states; finding ways to involve more states in the program; and developing CCDR guidance that establishes a criteria for assessing the programs that support the TSCP and improving synchronization of their activities.

As mentioned earlier, NGB-IA should reduce the time it takes to nominate states to partner with countries after receiving the request from the CCDR.⁵³ However, once a state is identified and approved by the CNGB, the process moves along expeditiously. This process must be streamlined to provide a nomination back to the SOUTHCOM Commander and embassy within sixty to ninety days. A streamlined process would also assist in managing the expectations of the prospective partner country, which often grows impatient and expects a quick answer once they submit a request. One potential solution is to pre-screen willing and available states that would match well with SOUTHCOM countries that have not yet engaged in SPP. Through early identification of potential state partners, NGB-IA would be poised to expedite the process.

Currently fifty SPPs have been established throughout the world. Seventeen of these partnerships are currently in SOUTHCOM. But Columbia, Chile, Haiti, and Brazil are among the countries in the region not yet engaged. Many of these countries would be excellent potential partners within the region. One major challenge here is that we do not have enough states available to enter into one-on-one partnerships. One option is to allow states to take on more than one partnership. Currently, five states have more than one partnership.⁵⁴ The increasing demand for this program may require more states to commit to taking on more than one partner country. Another possible solution is to adopt a regional approach to security cooperation.⁵⁵ Identify a group of states that would partner with each of the four SOUTHCOM regions, thereby reducing the number of individual partnerships required.⁵⁶ A regional approach would move

away from one-on-one partnerships to leveraging the assets and resources from a group of states to work with countries in each of SOUTHCOM's four regions. This approach would also help in establishing more regional relationships among neighboring countries within each region.

Finally, a visit to SOUTHCOM Headquarters and interview conducted with SPP and TSC personnel within the J5 and J7, revealed a lack of synchronization among programs designed to support the TSCP. The TSC coordinator was not fully aware and did not formally assess whether the SPP or other programs that supported TSCP were meeting the commander's strategic objectives for security cooperation. Further investigation seemed to indicate a lack of specific guidance from the SOUTHCOM commander establishing the priority, direction, and oversight for these programs. As indicated before, both the Secretary of Defense and NGB publish specific guidance for SPP. However, guidance at the CCDR level is necessary to consolidate the goals and objectives of all TSC programs and synchronize their activities to maximize their effectiveness in shaping the strategic environment. In addition, the guidance must establish formal criteria with precise metrics to also assess if the programs are meeting the stated strategic objectives. This would also address the shortcoming found by The SPECTRUM Group mentioned earlier.

Conclusion

Even though this SRP focused on the SOUTHCOM AOR, similar successes and challenges may exist in other regions. Despite these challenges, because of the hard work by NGB-IA and SPP coordinators at state and CCDR levels, SPP remains a value-added program that supports the NSS, NDS, and NMS mandate to all CCDRs to prosecute the GWOT as part of their daily operations. As this program evolves, the National Guard SPP will continue to leverage state assets and provide mutual benefits to all stakeholders as a means for establishing lasting strategic partnerships. SPP will continue supporting the President in setting the conditions for building not only a safer world but also a better one.⁵⁷

Endnotes

¹ Donald Rumsfeld, *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* (Washington, D.C.: Pentagon, June 2005), 1.

² George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002), 7.

³ GEN Richard B. Myers, *National Military Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: Pentagon, 2004), 15.

⁴ LTG Steven H. Blum, *Security Cooperation: The National Guard Security Cooperation Program* (Arlington, VA.: National Guard Bureau, August 2004), 30.

⁵ Jack Snyder, 54

⁶ Blum, 27.

⁷ John R. Groves, Jr., "Effective Engagement: The Case of Ecuador," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Autumn 2000): 46.

⁸ John R. Groves, Jr., "Partnership for Peace and the State Partnership Program: Fostering Engagement and Progress," *Parameters* 29, (Spring 1999): 45.

⁹ Bill Owens and Troy A. Eld, "Strategic Democracy Building: How U. S. States can Help," *Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (Autumn 2002), 155.

¹⁰ Walter H. Debany, "State Partnership Program: 10 Years of Waging Peace," April 2003; available from <http://www.ngb.army.mil/onguard/common/print.asp?aid=1235>; Internet; accessed 3 September 2004.

¹¹ The National Guard Bureau J5 (IA) Office of International Affairs, *Information Paper: State Partnership Program* ; available from <http://www.ngb-ia.org/public/home.cfm>; Internet; accessed 12 November 2005.

¹² Col. Cathy Rodriguez, "The State Partnership Program: A Unique Security Cooperation Tool," Briefing slides provided by NGB-IA, Arlington, VA., 2004.

¹³ Myers, 18.

¹⁴ State Partnership Program Coordinator, U. S. Southern Command , telephone interview by author, 6 December 2005.

¹⁵ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Changing Nature of Power* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2004), 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁷ Joseph R. Nunez, *A 21st Century Security Architecture for the Americas: Multilateral Cooperation, Liberal Peace, and Soft Power*, (Carlisle Barracks: U. S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, August 2002), vii.

¹⁸ Annual Training is a Title 32 statutory 15 day requirement for each reserve soldier in good standing and is paid out of funds provided to the State by the Federal Government.

¹⁹ Blum., 6. Prioritization for countries of emphasis relating to Security Cooperation activities is given in the Department of Defense Security Cooperation Guidance. These countries offer the best opportunity for potential for accomplishing U.S. defense policy goals.

²⁰ Owens and Eld, 155.

²¹ Three phases to establish SPP include: (1) Partnership Approval, (2) Program initiation, (3) Program development. COL Colon, "State Partnership Program: A Bridge to North America," briefing slides provided by SOUTHCOM Senior Guard Advisor, Miami, FL., 2005.

²² NGB-IA criteria used in evaluating states: Geography – topography, land usage, natural resources, demography – total population, ethnic composition, division of labor force, trade – exports, imports, major trading partners, and economics – agriculture, industry, services. COL Colon, "State Partnership Program," Briefing slides provided by SOUTHCOM Senior Guard Advisor, Miami, FL., 29 January 2006.

²³ Weighted criteria used include economic data, military force structure, political-military combinations, and shared experiences of the potential states with the partner country

²⁴ COL Colon, "State Partnership Program."

²⁵ Time taken by NGB to return nomination after receipt of request from CCDR: Guyana – 7 months, Trinidad & Tobago – 4 months, Bahamas – 10 months. U. S. Southern Command State Partnership Program Coordinator, email message to author, 7 March 2006.

²⁶ U. S. Southern Command State Partnership Program Coordinator, interviewed by author, 29 January 2006. Recommended time for returning nomination of a partner state should be between 60 and 90 days from receiving letter of request from CCDR.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ COL Colon, "State Partnership Program."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ COL Colon, "State Partnership Program." SPP brief non-TCA events also tracked in Army Training Information Management System (ARTIMS)

³¹ Owens and Eld, 156.

³² Groves, 47.

³³ ADM Thomas B. Fargo, *A Statement of the Posture of U. S. Pacific Command*, Posture Statement presented to House of Representatives, House International Relations Committee (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Navy, 31 March 2004), 13.

³⁴ General Bantz J. Craddock, *A Statement of the Posture of U. S. Southern Command*, Posture Statement presented to Senate Arms Services Committee, 109th Cong. (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of the Army, 15 March 2005), 2.

³⁵ Ibid., 4.

³⁶ Ibid., 3.

³⁷ John R. Groves, Jr., "Effective Engagement: The Case of Ecuador," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Autumn 2000): 50

³⁸ Craddock, 13

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 7

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴¹ GEN Bantz J. Craddock, "United States Southern Command: Security Assistance Training Guide," January 2006; available from <http://www.disam.dsca.mil/itm/CoCom/Documents/Southcom-Guide.pdf>; Internet; accessed 5 March 2006.

⁴² COL Colon, "State Partnership Program."

⁴³ Groves, 49.

⁴⁴ Owens and Eld, 156.

⁴⁵ Debany.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Generally, National Guard soldiers are not rotated between units as often as their active duty counterparts, thereby creating greater stability.

⁴⁸ COL Colon, "State Partnership Program."

⁴⁹ National Guard Bureau-International Affairs and THE SPECTRUM Group, "The National Guard State Partnership Program: Past, Present, and Future" (Washington, D.C.: n.d.), 3.

⁵⁰ Blum.

⁵¹ Between 1998 and 2004 there were 198 events conducted, in 2005 alone there were 66 events and another 105 events are currently planned for 2006. COL Colon, "State Partnership Program."

⁵² Donald Rumsfeld, *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* (Washington, D.C.: Pentagon, June 2005), 15.

⁵³ U. S. Southern Command State Partnership Program Coordinator interview.

⁵⁴ Puerto Rico – Dominican Republic and Honduras, Maryland – Bosnia and Estonia, Florida – Venezuela and Guyana, Colorado – Slovenia and Jordan, and Louisiana – Belize and Uzbekistan. The National Guard Bureau J5 (IA) Office of International Affairs, *Information Paper: State Partnership Program*; available from <http://www.ngb-ia.org/public/home.cfm>; Internet; accessed 12 November 2005.

⁵⁵ U. S. Southern Command Senior National Guard Advisor, Interviewed by author, 29 January 2006.

⁵⁶ The four regions within SOUTHCOM AOR are: **Andean Ridge**: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela; **Central America**: Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and El Salvador; **Caribbean**: Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, The Regional Security System (RSS - Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenadines), Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago; **Southern Cone**: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. U. S. Southern Command State Partnership Program Coordinator email message.

⁵⁷ Donald Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of The United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: Pentagon, March 2005), 1.