

TOWARD STRATEGY FOR BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY: COMBINED OWNERSHIP AND OPERATIONS

BY

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USAWC CLASS OF 2010

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 21-02-2010		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Toward Strategy For Building Partner Capacity: Combined Ownership and Operations				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Kevin L. Berkompas				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Colonel Michael A. Marra, Department of Military Strategy, Plans, and Operations				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT US military operations following 11 September 2001 have demonstrated that US military capacity alone is not enough to meet US security objectives. As a result, the US has renewed its commitment to the endeavors of Security Cooperation (SC) and Building Partner Capacity (BPC). Academic and military research, as well as official strategic guidance and military doctrine have provided priorities and resources for SC and BPC. The Combined Ownership-Operations Program (CO-OP) model is a BPC strategy that expands the potential ends, ways, and means of SC. If resourced and utilized, CO-OP structures can build long-term, transparent, self-sustaining capabilities and capacity among foreign partners that are vectored to support US security, priorities, and values. CO-OP efforts can shape the international environment in favor of the US while they can bridge critical capability shortfalls.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Security Cooperation, Building Partner Capacity					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 34	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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COMBINED OWNERSHIP AND OPERATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Colonel Kevin L. Berkompas

TITLE: Toward Strategy for Building Partner Capacity:
Combined Ownership and Operations

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 22 February 2010 WORD COUNT: 6,588 PAGES: 34

KEY TERMS: Security Cooperation, Building Partner Capacity

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

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TOWARD STRATEGY FOR BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY: COMBINED OWNERSHIP AND OPERATIONS

The US military has experience partnering with other militaries in order to operate together, and to increase the capabilities and military capacities of its international partners. The world wars were fought by coalitions of disparate nations who coordinated at the strategic and operational level. US participation in WWII was preceded by a pronounced effort to increase the capacities of the United Kingdom and Soviet Union, in the form of lend-lease program, even at the expense of US industrial capacity to build US forces.¹ To resist communist expansion in Southeast Asia, the US used Military Assistance and Advisory Groups (MAAG) to advise partner militaries in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia on counterinsurgency operations, although with ambivalent results: irregular warfare advisory efforts were largely neglected after the Vietnam War.² During the Cold War, the US organized, trained, and equipped forces in coordination with NATO and SEATO allies to ensure appropriate interoperability and operational coordination should the Soviet Union invade.

Immediately following the Cold War, the US formed a huge coalition to expel Iraq from Kuwait. Gulf War operations revealed just how far ahead US military capabilities and capacity had advanced relative to its partners; enthusiasm for coalitions seemed not for military capabilities provided by partners, but for international legitimacy. It seemed the US was unlimited in military potential, and inconveniences of coalition operations were a necessary evil to achieve international approval.

US military experience following September 11, 2001 debunked this notion. Persistent challenges of “irregular warfare” and “non-military hybrids” have provided

evidence that US military strength alone is insufficient to fully achieve US security objectives.³ Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM have demonstrated the full capacity of some US military components. Secretary Gates testified to Congress on 15 April 2008 as follows:

The attacks of September 11, 2001 and the operations that followed around the globe reinforced to military planners that the security of America's partners is essential to America's own security...However, even with the plus-up of the Army and Marine Corps, our own forces and resources will remain finite. To fill this gap we must help our allies and partners to confront extremists and other potential sources of global instability within their borders. This kind of work takes years.⁴

Therefore, US partners' military capabilities are operational and economic, and not merely political, necessities. As challengers to the existing nation-state system spread instability further and faster than the US can halt it, and as hostile states confront the US using technologies and strategies that can potentially confound US advantages, the imperative to train our partners to contribute to common security requirements is an imperative.⁵ For these partnerships to extend beyond mere political tools and instead provide actual and increased military capacity, they must be resourced and prioritized as a US military activity. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) summed it up: "US security is inextricably tied to the effectiveness of our efforts to help partners and allies build their own security capacity."⁶

This research will outline and highlight components of Security Cooperation (SC) and Building Partner Capacity (BPC) strategic guidance to respond to this requirement. In large part DoD has responded to the demands for more resources, better interagency cooperation, cogent strategic guidance, doctrinal progress and above all, priority. To build on that progress, DoD policy makers will consider new concepts to operationalize SC and BPC activities. This paper will propose the Combined Ownership - Operations

Program (CO-OP) as strategy that can expand the potential ends, ways, and means of SC and BPC. A CO-OP can bridge functional capability requirement shortfalls for long-term effects in the interest of the US.

Recent Academic Development

Recent academic works on Security Cooperation (SC) and Building Partner Capacity (BPC) reach common conclusions, including the need for more interagency and multinational cooperation in program development and execution⁷, more resources (both materiel and non-materiel) and reorganization for developing partner capabilities,⁸ emphasis on long-term relationships and education efforts targeting the most vulnerable or expeditionary partners,⁹ the requirement for expanded legislative authorities to execute long-term commitments,¹⁰ and finally the priority of BPC and SC to long term security.¹¹ This research largely accepts these conclusions and will attempt to build on them.

Research by military practitioners naturally focuses on the needs of their particular Services. Much of the research from the US Army personnel, for example, addresses the short- to middle-term task of training Iraqi and Afghan national army personnel, with a view to completing these current overseas contingency operations.¹² Research by US Navy personnel is written with a view to drawing on partner capacity to supplement US sea power and maintenance of the maritime commons.¹³ Some US Marine Corps research adapts security cooperation to Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) organization and considers regional studies' effect on combat readiness.¹⁴ In one respect, this shows Services and components have received the guidance and are adapting roles and missions to serve the Nation. In another respect, however, the requirement for extra-Service and –component guidance is necessary to ensure that

programs are prioritized, crafted, deconflicted, executed, and assessed according to best practices.

To respond, US authorities have issued strategic guidance and revised management practices to make SC and BPC mainstream interagency activities.

Strategic Guidance: Recent Developments

The National Security Strategy published in March 2006 highlighted foreign partnerships and the requirement for new bureaucratic tools to execute new BPC concepts.¹⁵ The 2006 QDR followed suit and provided new emphasis on security cooperation, foreign assistance, and building partner capacity.¹⁶ The 2006 QDR Report notes major changes in US defense orientation in the 21st century, including a shift of focus from “the US military performing tasks – to building partner capabilities.”¹⁷ In addition, a specific QDR initiative is to “spearhead steps to transform NATO...enabling the rapid deployment of forces, and extending NATO’s role in Iraq and Afghanistan.”¹⁸ The 2006 QDR directed the development of a “roadmap” on “Building Partnership Capacity.”¹⁹

The BPC QDR Execution Roadmap was signed out in May 2006. The stated intent was to provide “strategic direction and a plan of action for the partnership capacity related set of QDR decisions.”²⁰ The Roadmap contains two areas for DOD emphasis: strengthening interagency planning and operations, and enhancing the capabilities of, and cooperation with, international partners.²¹ Two of the five objectives underscore the latter area: to improve SC effectiveness through “ensuring...partners are sufficiently trained, equipped, and positioned to respond to future crises,” and to improve international partners’ capabilities for stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations (SSTRO), in particular those of NATO allies for deployable forces.²²

The National Defense Strategy (NDS) published in 2008 contains five key objectives to support the NSS, including to “win the long war,” and to “promote security.” To win the long war, SC and BPC received the highest status as “arguably *the most important military component* of the struggle against violent extremists.”²³ [emphasis added] The NDS emphasized “building the capacity of a broad spectrum of partners as the basis for long term security,” specifically to “build the internal capacities of countries at risk,”²⁴ and acknowledges the need to learn “valuable skills and information from others.”²⁵

BPC as a formal, central DOD activity achieved even greater significance when the Deputy Secretary of Defense signed DOD Directive 7045.20, in September 2008. This directive formally established horizontal, functional capabilities-based planning as a template for DOD to consider acquisition and present funding priorities to Congress.²⁶ The directive established nine “Joint Capability Areas” (JCA) and placed oversight on OSD and the Joint Staff.²⁷ Remarkably, “Building Partnerships” is one of the nine JCAs, and the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) and Joint Staff J-5 are assigned as co-leads as BP Capability Portfolio Managers (CPMs); Joint Forces Command is assigned as the Senior Warfighter Lead.²⁸ DoDD 7065.20 requires Services to provide the CPMs visibility on internal Service processes supporting capability portfolio management, and the long-term intention is that Services will someday provide capability-based budget submissions.²⁹ More than any other revised management practice, this recent adoption of capability portfolio management has moved Building Partnerships from a peripheral, ad hoc activity, to a budget-based, and thereby prioritized, Service task.

SC strategic guidance has also officially extended to the interagency. In February 2009, Department of State, US Agency for International Development (USAID), and DoD simultaneously issued the “3D” memo to “provide a common understanding on Security Sector Reform, and guidelines for planning and implementing SSR programs with partner nations.”³⁰ An accompanying white paper provided common definitions, guiding principles, tenets for program implementation, and an appendix on department responsibilities.³¹ Guiding principles for BPC activities include promoting host-nation ownership.³²

BPC priority was raised further yet in the 2010 QDR Report. Among the guidance to “rebalance” the US force, with the objective to “prevent and deter conflict,” BPC is directed early, often, and prominently in the document.³³ The Report states that BPC has “never been more important” than today, and “US forces, therefore, will continue to treat the building of partners’ security capacity as an increasingly important mission.”³⁴ The QDR directs specific BPC initiatives including to focus on general purpose forces for internal security, to “expand capabilities for training partner aviation forces,” to “create mechanisms to expedite...transfer of critical capabilities to partner forces.”³⁵ The Report directs specific changes for Service force management.³⁶

Recent Doctrine Development

The Joint Staff and Services have fully supported guidance and responded with robust efforts to construct doctrine. Joint Pub 01 leads off with “Guidance for Multinational Operations,” and emphasizes that the goal of partnerships is not only operations legitimacy, but literal security capacity:

International partnerships continue to underpin unified efforts to address 21st century challenges. Shared principles, a common view of threats, and

commitment to cooperation provide far greater security than the United States could achieve independently.³⁷

Tenets for multinational operations include “respect, rapport, knowledge of partners, patience, and coordination.”³⁸ Joint Pub 3-16, Multinational Operations, builds on these tenets with goals of rationalization, standardization, and interoperability; SC and BPC activities should be built to maximize progress toward these goals.³⁹ Joint Pub 5.0 places Security Cooperation Planning first in priority, in Chapter 1, with Force Planning, and Joint Operation Planning.⁴⁰ Detailed management instructions are prescribed in CJCSM 3113.01A, “*Responsibilities for the Management of Security Cooperation.*”

COCOMs are the forward deployed practitioners of SC and BPC. BPC’s new centrality is illustrated by USAFRICOM, which prioritizes BPC first, as the centerpiece strategy, “U.S. Africa Command’s strategy of security capacity building will support long term African stability, while also fostering the development of African forces that can address contemporary and future conflicts.”⁴¹ USAFRICOM’s daily activities focus on best practices to achieve optimum results from SC activities. The remarkable transition this represents for DoD can be largely taken for granted, until one considers that MAAG-type approach for developing nations has not been the priority since the early years of US involvement in Vietnam.

The Services have begun institutionalizing BPC as a central activity with more dedicated resources. Service staffs routinely provide much of the manpower in support of the COCOMS to plan, fund, organize, and execute SC programs. Services prepare security cooperation strategies by region for OSD and CJCS review to support the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs).⁴² In October 2007, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Chief of Naval Operations, and Commandant of the Coast Guard co-

signed “*A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*,” that called for maritime forces to be used to “build confidence and trust among nations through collective security efforts that focus on common threats.”⁴³ The document directs globally distributed US maritime forces to foster cooperative relationships to realize security of the maritime domain, through the capacity of partners.⁴⁴ The US Air Force published a Global Partnership Strategy in December 2008. The USAF has derived from experience and the Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF) that partnerships are built on relationships, and that “relationships are built on a foundation of interoperability, organizational structures, doctrine, and most importantly shared experiences in training and education.”⁴⁵

Conclusions on Strategic Guidance and Doctrine

Since US military operations commenced after 11 September 2001, both academic and military research, and US government authorities have recognized SC and BPC as essential to the long term US security. SC and BPC have subsequently become priorities in national and DOD high-level strategic guidance documents. The COCOMs, Services and the Joint Staff are executing this guidance with investments in both doctrine and resources.

Strategic emphasis has shifted to the capabilities of less developed militaries against irregular warfare challenges like counterinsurgency and counter terrorism, although an important secondary priority is the capabilities of developed allied militaries (such as NATO allies) who might deploy forward with the US. Consensus on guiding principles for BPC centers on developing capabilities germane to US security interests, long-term investments in training and education for long-term relationships and trust, fostering defense reform, mutual benefits, long-term self-sufficiency and host nation

ownership, and increased interagency and multinational coordination. Joint tenets of respect, rapport, knowledge of partners, patience, and coordination, and goals of rationalization, standardization, and interoperability are essential to underwrite US military benefits. Given this doctrinal progress, the next pertinent question become what types of SC and BPC strategies provide the most benefit per the resources invested. “Strategy is the calculated relationship among ends, ways, and means.”⁴⁶

Optimizing BPC and SC

The varieties and breadth of BPC and SC activities are staggering. Building nation security ground forces are currently foremost in the public consciousness due to tremendous efforts and stakes by the US and coalition partners in Iraq and Afghanistan. Equally beneficial and essential to the US are partnership strategies (and supporting activities) that shape the security environment favorably in the long term, since “preventing wars is as important as winning wars.”⁴⁷ DoD also has the responsibility to plan and execute those less-visible, long-term activities. As more resources and core US force structure are directed for SC activities and tasks, each must be designed with the combination of “attributes” that reconcile the ends, ways, and means to meet US objectives.⁴⁸ The best ones will measurably increase the military capacity of partner nations in compliance with prevalent strategic guidance and doctrine, relative to the US investment. To accelerate return on SC and BPC activities, new concepts and approaches will be necessary, approaches that move beyond merely providing aid to clients, to forging mutually beneficial partnerships. The Combined Ownership - Operations Program (CO-OP) may provide solutions for key capabilities the US seeks to perpetuate among allies and close partners.

CO-OP: Taking Partnerships to the Next Level

The concept of a CO-OP is simple: two or more militaries own and operate capabilities together. In a CO-OP, militaries no longer work in parallel, but in direct contact on a daily, more or less permanent, basis in multinational units. Equipment is literally co-owned by all participating nations. The US can actively participate in a CO-OP, but US membership is not mandatory; there are circumstances where the US will prefer to facilitate a CO-OP of other nations, but not invest or actively participate.

The concept of a CO-OP is not new, but has not been employed widely either. The NATO Early Warning and Control Force (NAEWF) is the longest standing example.⁴⁹ NATO authorized this capability in 1978 to fill a capacity gap in detecting airborne targets for ground conflict. While the US possessed this capability organically, by pooling resources NATO allies could share the expenses and participate in command and control of an increasingly complex air environment. Otherwise known as NATO AWACS, the capability is a fleet of 17 Boeing AWACS E-3A Sentry aircraft owned by fifteen of 28 NATO nations.⁵⁰ Fourteen NATO nations provide military aircrew and maintenance troops, in a permanent multinational military unit stationed at Geilenkerchen, Germany, with four forward operating locations. Fleet logistics support is provided by a dedicated NATO agency, and fleet Command by Supreme Allied Command, Europe (SACEUR), who receives political decisions of the North Atlantic Council (NAC).⁵¹ NATO AWACS have supported many NATO operations including in the United States following the attacks of September 11, 2001. A second example of a CO-OP also involves NATO; this is not a coincidence, due to attributes described later.

The Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) is a second example; SAC was formed to meet strategic airlift shortfalls identified by NATO Heads of State and Government in the

1999 Defense Capabilities Initiative, and reaffirmed in the 2002 Prague Capabilities Commitments under the category of “rapid deployment and sustainment of combat forces.”⁵² The impetus increased as NATO endeavored to support large scale out-of-area operations in Afghanistan through the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).⁵³ The SAC currently consists of three Boeing C-17 Globemaster III aircraft jointly owned by twelve nations, including two NATO Partners (not Allies) Sweden and Finland; the SAC is stationed at Papa, Hungary in the form of a multinational Heavy Airlift Wing (HAW).⁵⁴ Nations’ share of flight hours is directly proportional to their percentage of investment; the US share is less than one-third.⁵⁵ Logistic support is provided using the many advantages of a chartered NATO organization, the NATO Airlift Management Agency (NAMA). Participating nations formed their own command apparatus, a Steering Board via Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). By forming their own operational command structure, SAC capability employment decisions are limited to participating nations and not SACEUR or by non-participating nations in the NAC.⁵⁶ A SAC C-17 flew its first mission in support of Afghanistan operations on 30 Sep 2009, in that case in support of Sweden’s deployed forces.⁵⁷ On 16 January 2010, five SAC nations efficiently combined their flight hours and cargo to fly humanitarian relief supplies all the way to Haiti just days following the devastating earthquake there;⁵⁸ using capabilities and capacity they capitalized themselves, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Estonia projected power globally.

CO-OP Advantages and Challenges

The defining CO-OP characteristics, combined ownership and combined operations, are also its determinate advantages and pertain to the strategic “ends” of SC. A CO-OP is long-term by definition, and can be a highly-effective activity to pursue

joint doctrinal priorities of respect, rapport, knowledge of partners, patience, and coordination, interoperability, rationalization, standardization, and most of all trust and mutual respect that win the long war. NATO AWACS is an example where personnel from many nations interact on the breadth of activities for maintaining and operating E-3A aircraft, with generations of non-US personnel benefiting from training in US air battle management and airmanship practices. Many of these participants continue on to leadership positions in their respective militaries, and the both nations benefit from those contacts and mutual understandings.

CO-OP military capabilities can also provide genuine military capacity to the US, capacity not available by the same capability carried out unilaterally. For example, in the SAC, Hungary hosts and provides national markings for the aircraft. Having an additional, self-sufficient C-17 base provides an additional location for emergency maintenance or staging US airlift missions; C-17s have the range to fly to Afghanistan from Hungary unrefueled. In addition, the US has shared ownership and operational authority of aircraft without US markings; these assets can be more effective in sensitive locations where US-marked aircraft may risk negative strategic information effects. There is also surge capacity to consider: the US share of SAC is approximately one aircraft's annual flight hours, but the US can access all three aircraft for a particular mission. Additionally, any partner assets mobilized by SAC as part of coalition operations, or even by a like-minded partner nation alone, are assets the US is not obliged to spend organic lift to deploy it.⁵⁹

A CO-OP's military capabilities put the "capacity" in BPC for partner nations. Among the numerous nations who share US values, many militaries genuinely need US

military know-how. In particular, former Soviet nations grew up in a military culture deficient in maintenance ethic and technological acumen. As their economies grow and military outlays begin to match security requirements, these nations will benefit most from multinational units with the US; personnel who train and operate in these programs will be the personnel prepared to build organic, interoperable capabilities as resources become available. Other candidate nations include US partners in Africa, and South America. Many key enablers and support infrastructure are cost prohibitive on the small scale that matches the requirements of individual militaries. If nations can pool resources and leverage economies of scale, with CO-OPs they can access these essential enablers and support facilities, learn the craft, provide for their own security, foster trust and stability among themselves, and perhaps even deploy with the US far into the future.

The existence of a CO-OP can also precipitate favorable policies from US partners, and thereby expand potential “ends” of BPC. Nations willing to deploy and employ forces in concert with the United States often receive logistics support from the US. Naturally these nations are aware of the many competing force priorities for US-controlled support and enabling capabilities; having organic supporting capabilities is preferable to depending on the US. Partner political leaders are placed in a difficult domestic position to be seen as both exposing their military troops to danger, and also depending on the US for the sustainment and support for these forces. CO-OPs can provide these militaries the ability to sustain and support themselves, and the option to withdraw, surge, or expand by their own sovereign decisions. The implication is that the capabilities CO-OPs provide can favorably influence a nation to join and deploy a

coalition with the US, because they have more sovereign capacity to provide care, feeding, intelligence capabilities, or transportation for their deployed forces. Evidence of this calculus was evident during SAC negotiations. Smaller nations were attracted to the endeavor in some cases because it provided support elements for independent evacuations of their citizens from stricken conflict zones. Other nations were strongly attracted to the new organic ability to provide emergency, medical, and sustainment supplies to forces in theater; this capability made deploying to more remote (and higher risk) areas of Afghanistan more palatable.

Other potential benefits of CO-OPs involve the strategic “ways” of partnerships. These include situations involving technology transfer, or disclosure. This research does not delve into the complex and controversial chasm of US disclosure policy, specifically the Arms Export Control Act, however the surrounding issues constitute constraints on SC and BPC today.⁶⁰ US disclosure institutions were created during the Cold War, with the bipolar power structure, before the information age, and with US military dominance of technology development.⁶¹ With the reversal of that order, US disclosure institutions have proven resistant to adaptation, creating disincentives for other nations to adopt US equipment.⁶² A CO-OP’s attributes can be arranged in a manner that improves technology transfer outcomes in the favor of the US. First, where there is joint development of CO-OP capabilities, the US can benefit from the many technology advances that are taking place among our allies and the commercial sector;⁶³ recall that learning from our partners is both 2008 NDS and 2010 QDR goals. In the case of NATO AWACS, long ago the NATO aircraft diverged from US configuration; in some cases the testing and fielding of alternative equipment has proven beneficial when applied to US

aircraft. Second, if the US is a participant in a CO-OP, US personnel will be present on-site full time, and will be military beneficiaries of the technologies utilized in the CO-OP. The presence of US personnel provides a factor conducive to favorable US disclosure rulings, as well as providing additional physical security options to be part of the formal security agreements. Therefore a CO-OP can be a mechanism the 2010 QDR initiative to “expedite transfer of critical capabilities to partners.”⁶⁴

CO-OP benefits also extend to the strategic “means” of partnerships. By sharing a financial stake in the capability, partner nations are more committed to the program success, and are more willing to exert efforts to overcome the inevitable challenges.⁶⁵ There are also stronger incentives to innovating to keep program costs down. As the US expands and prioritizes SC and BPC efforts, keeping costs down for any single activity will be essential. In the case of the SAC and NATO AWACS, for most participating nations, the first time they ever used national funds to capitalize air battle management or strategic airlift was through their participation in those programs.

CO-OPs are not easy to arrange, of course, otherwise they may have proliferated long ago. A chief challenge lies in the complexity of the arrangements, and timing funding milestones among democratic nations whose legislative bodies determine and execute budgets in as many ways. The agreements must be signed by all participants, and the funds made available all at the same window of time, to execute the program. The challenge here cannot be understated: any delays put agreement at considerable risk because every participant must more or less simultaneously agree. This may not be possible given the national authorities’ positions and priority for the program, and if a

participant withdraws, the others' cost shares shift, in many cases requiring authorizing processes to begin again.

Constructing multinational institutions that reconcile differing national legal practices and definitions, financial instruments, military personnel and command systems, technical standards, and a host of other standards, is difficult and tedious work. However, precedent agreements such as the SAC MOU have been successfully agreed and executed now, and can be used as templates.

A third challenge lays with US domestic and military constituencies competing for resources providing the same capability for immediate missions, with bureaucracies constructed to thrive in different circumstances. Consider the hypothetical illustration of the US entering a mine-sweeper CO-OP with several like-minded partners that heretofore had no mine-sweeping experience. Fleet Forces Command would naturally chafe at spending (what they consider US Navy) funds for a capability they already carry out efficiently; in fact FFC could probably prove they can provide more immediate mine-sweeping capacity with the same funds. Perhaps US personnel will even scoff at the much smaller, economical effort, assuming the US will bear most costs and do the hardest work. Should the CO-OP consider locating their home port with US minesweepers, the host unit would be concerned about any commitment to share excess facilities. Congressional staffers from Navy-friendly districts might pointedly question why the Navy was considering "giving away" new minesweepers, disregarding the shared costs among partners, additional capacity, and other factual information. Despite like-minded allies involved, the US technology-transfer regime would have procedures to agree a security agreement with a multinational consortium that had US

participation, and may rule unfavorably as a default position. The political incentives at play are as natural as they are frustrating: the benefits are lost in a system stressed by scarcity, with presumptions that BPC is aid, and its recipients are clients.

Therefore the final challenge lies in US and partner mindsets. For a true CO-OP, partners must trust and respect each other as professionals. Many US SC and BPC activities are implicitly constructed with a “patron-client” construct, where the US is providing something to dependent recipients in exchange for little. Many US allies have grown accustomed to getting the best of arrangements because the US is large and rich. To leverage the benefit of CO-OPs, the mindset of both parties must shift to that of equal partners with equal burdens. That is not to say that the US should not be a leader in a CO-OP: in most cases US experience and success will underlie the rationale for BPC. However, equal experience, dedication, and commitment are premises required by all participants for CO-OPs to succeed.

Challenges notwithstanding, there are myths about SC and specifically CO-OP programs that unnecessarily discourage their use. The first is that partners will not agree to pay their equitable share. However, while “equitable” can be reasoned several different ways,⁶⁶ by determining objective criteria based on quantitative output, the SAC CO-OP demonstrates that the US does not have to receive less than their investment. The second myth is that command relationships are irreconcilable in multinational squadrons. Experience dispels this myth as well: there are several options for workable and valid command relationships in doctrine (such as Joint Pub 3-16), and demonstrated by the NATO AWACS (through NATO) and the SAC (through MOU), even as national militaries retain ADCON and COCOM of forces. A third myth is that co-

ownership programs cannot be built without debilitating industrial participation demands, which dominate the agenda and squander economic efficiencies; both the SAC and new NATO AGS programs demonstrate industrial participation may no longer be mandatory. In the SAC program, with a mature weapon system providing critical capabilities, nations specifically excluded industrial participation from the official program and documented this in the MOU.⁶⁷ A fourth myth is that consensus-based bodies cannot agree to undertake tough, messy missions. In reality, the NATO experience contradicts this myth and demonstrates that tough missions can be agreed, as NATO Training Mission, Iraq, Operation ALLIED FORCE, and ISAF will attest. In the specific example of the SAC, participating nations institutionalized incentives to provide that missions are a “go” except in the most unusual circumstances.⁶⁸

Potential CO-OP Applications

CO-OPs may provide new ends, better ways, and economical means to solve the most persistent US and partner capability and capacity shortfalls. CO-OPs, however, are best applied when six circumstances are present.

First, if the US is a participant, the CO-OP should provide a literal military benefit to the US, otherwise the program will not emerge as a winner in the competitive military budget process. While expending resources as aid is necessary for short term projects, the prospect of providing aid to clients on a long-term basis is not effective either in cost or self-sustaining capacity. CO-OPs require commitment for annual O&M funds and personnel slots, usually executed by a Service or component; even when manning documents are approved and sourced, these personnel slots ultimately come from finite sources of talent available to Services and executing Service components. Without a

tangible military benefit to the US, a CO-OP will not survive withering scrutiny by Congressional staffers and Service budget warriors.

Second, if the US participates in a CO-OP, there can be no doubt whether the other partners share US (political and military) values. US military personnel will be operating in close proximity with partner military members, obeying the lawful orders of non-US commanders (per arrangement or agreement if not formal command relationships). Under these circumstances, it will be essential that personnel are confident in the mission ethic and shared security requirements. While the US can withdraw personnel or consensus if desired from activities deemed inappropriate, as the other nations can, for the CO-OP to operate smoothly, partners should share political and military values. For example, during SAC discussions that happened to occur during the Global War on Terror, there was passing concern that the US may use SAC assets for rendition missions; absent allies' trust in US assurances, there may not have been a signed MOU. It is not coincident that the SAC is comprised of NATO nations and NATO Partners who are also EU members.

Which leads to the third characteristic, forming a CO-OP is more achievable where the capability is not directly lethal. Certain state prerogatives cannot be shared, and organized and legitimate application of violence by a military unit is a unilateral activity. A persistent topic during SAC negotiations was how to manage the intangible political risks of association with a rare mission directly contrary to the interests or neutrality of another participant. These concerns were ultimately overcome with common understanding, confidence in the shared values among participants, sharing liability and economic risks in legal agreements, and building institutions with

constructive incentives. In addition, however, the perception of a C-17 airlifter as a non-lethal capability was also important to support the perception that the potential political risks of combined operations were manageable. Here a CO-OP differs from a cooperative development program like the Joint Strike Fighter: nations have proven willing to invest in cooperative develop programs, but jointly owning and operating lethal capabilities is something different, entailing more political risk. Despite this, the number of potential CO-OP applications remains large: as any military professional understands, most military activities such as enablers and support structures are behind the “tip of the spear.”

Fourth, a CO-OP stands a better chance of agreement and success if the subject system or capability is a proven one with a widely understood Concept of Operations (CONOPS). Coordinating budgets and outlays among CO-OP partners is already challenging enough with relatively firm cost estimates, much less capabilities with unknown cost and logistics schedules. In the case of both NATO AWACS and SAC, the weapons systems involved had proven effective in the field, the US had experience operating them, there was general consensus on CONOPS, and most importantly, support and logistics systems were in place and operating. Mature systems are more economical, so incentives and opportunities for making new industrial participation arrangements are reduced, keeping the program focus on delivering capabilities. SAC worked with the US on a Foreign Military Sales (FMS) support case that utilized existing supply chains, component sources, and maintenance processes.

Fifth, a CO-OP will be easier to form if bureaucratic structures and legal agreements already exist to model, and in some cases duplicate or leverage. Some of

these include operating logistics organizations, labor rules, Status of Forces Agreements, financial transaction structures, regulating and enforcement bodies. In the case of SAC, it was very helpful that existing NATO logistics and support structures such as the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA) existed to facilitate the two year process of holding SAC discussions. It became further helpful to charter the SAC's own support organization NAMA with existing NATO rules and processes. Absent the existence of these structures, a CO-OP is possible, but the job becomes much more complicated, and negotiators must fight to retain focus on the emergent, CO-OP-specific issues, while simultaneously re-inventing bureaucratic wheels. This issue will make forming CO-OPs among developing or non-aligned nations more challenging: the ability to build supporting CO-OPs will be a function of the state of functioning bureaucracies in the African Union, for example.⁶⁹

Finally, to overcome the challenges of forming CO-OPs, the military requirement must be urgent and genuine. At the end of the day, it will cost all the partners of a CO-OP to form and operate it. To some extent, a nation must sacrifice some measure of freedom of action to conduct operations with the capability. A good illustration of this concept is the NATO Allied Ground Surveillance (AGS) program experience. Soon after Operation DESERT STORM, NATO allies recognized the efficacy of the US JSTARS system and ground surveillance radars, and pursued a similar capability through the AGS program.⁷⁰ With the end of the Cold War, however, the military requirement for NATO to track conventional ground formations diminished, and the program focus for many participants became industrial participation. NATO AGS languished in a state of negotiations for seventeen years, despite most other factors described above being

favorable. The situation changed with NATO took charge of ISAF and the ground ISR requirement was renewed. Over those intervening years, UAS capabilities were fielded, at a lower cost than large fixed wing aircraft system contemplated by NATO AGS to that point. As NATO AGS participants primarily concerned with industrial participation (and operating less in Afghanistan) fell away, remaining nations reformed the Program of Work, and an MOU for a UAS-based system was signed in 20 December 2009, based on six Global Hawk aircraft with initial operating capacity set for 2010!⁷¹ This anecdote reinforces that “necessity is the mother of invention” for CO-OPs, too.

Given these characteristics, there are good candidates pairing partners and capabilities, which might be matched using CO-OP models. The US Navy’s and Coast Guard’s requirement for partners to patrol to the commons and littorals quickly comes to mind. Through a CO-OP, US Navy or US Coast Guard (USCG) personnel could build partner maritime capacity, conduct operations with commonly-funded vessels, build relationships with the cadres of developing navies, or share the expense of high-end capabilities with more mature partners. The lethality of many vessels may not be the optimum application, but consider the many non-combatant vessels so essential to both blue-water and littoral operations, such as minesweepers, supply ships, fleet auxiliary ships, salvage and rescue ships, and sea-going tugs. There are currently USCG international teams providing technical training in maritime law enforcement, small boat operations and maintenance, and search and rescue.⁷²

Another activity for potential exploitation is heavy equipment, phase-maintenance depots. Some nations hesitate to invest in more advanced equipment because support structures are not cost effective when applied to the small number of units they require,

and depending on a sole-source contractor is equally unattractive. By pooling resources and operating maintenance depots, long-term relationships can be built, funds can be saved, and partners' capabilities will be enhanced for the long term, with a better understanding of the maintenance culture and practice. This concept could apply to common equipment across the Services, such as aircraft, but also to foster ground equipment maintenance reset with partners in immediate contingencies.

Satellites are very expensive to develop, build, place into orbit, and operate. By jointly developing and fielding satellites with technologically-advanced allies, the US can save costs, distribute risk, and benefit from partners' technological innovations, of course in addition to the relationships enhanced with additional trust. The US can also benefit from technological know-how of allies in the cyber arena; perhaps a combined cyber operations center would be operationally sound, sharing threat information in the fastest way possible, in an environment inherently disrespectful of national borders.

Air-refueling aircraft have been discussed as a potential CO-OP activity, however in this case two of the ideal characteristics are violated. First, air-refueling aircraft are essential for long-range lethal strike missions, placing political risks of partners' missions a step more proximate to national association. Secondly, there is no new, proven air refueling system to utilize; as the US is considering a new tanker, and other nations only operate small fleets, there is no standard to base a CO-OP on. Similarly, ISR UASs might present strong candidates for CO-OPs, indeed, NATO AGS demonstrates the interest. However, tactical UAS systems are a relatively new capability, where we are still coming to consensus on CONOPS, appropriate force

structures, and baseline systems;⁷³ it is advisable that these issues are better understood before submitting those processes to multinational processes.

There are other cases the US interest might be to not actively participate as a CO-OP member, but to facilitate and advise foreign partners. Consider Africa and South America, vast continents with pronounced mobility requirements, but historical legacies that cause many of those governments to regard outsiders suspiciously. The US could facilitate a CO-OP of like minded states with intra-theater airlift assets, perhaps through the AU or OAS. In other parts of the world, CO-OPs for sensors and radars among rivals could be tools for confidence-building, while providing a much needed picture of third-party threats. CO-OPs of this nature contribute directly to the 2010 QDR's initiative of expanding capabilities for partner air forces.⁷⁴

Conclusion

Utilizing CO-OPs requires a mindset change, that of a true “partner-partner” relationship as opposed to a “patron-client” one. With that mindset change, however, CO-OPs promise rich dividends to achieve objectives within current strategic guidance and doctrine for SC and BPC. CO-OPs can provide the long-term venue and operational experience for respect, rapport, knowledge of partners, patience, and coordination, rationalization, standardization, and interoperability. If resourced and utilized, CO-OP structures can build long-term, transparent, self-sustaining, capabilities and capacity among foreign partners toward US priorities and values. CO-OPs and the concepts behind them can underlie strategies for future SC and BPC activities. CO-OP efforts can shape the international environment in favor of the US while they can bridge critical capability shortfalls.

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⁵⁵ Throughout this paper, information on the facts, processes, and politics of SAC are provided by the personal experience of the author, who served as US primary action officer for the project from August 2006 to June 2008, and as the co-chair and then US representative to the SAC Procurement and Finance Committee, lead US negotiator for the SAC MOU and NAMO Charter, and US representative to the SAC Steering Board.

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