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Evaluating the Impact of the Department of Defense Regional Centers for Security Studies

Larry Hanauer, Stuart E. Johnson, Christopher J. Springer, Chaoling Feng,
Michael J. McNerney, Stephanie Pezard, Shira Efron





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Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense

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Preface

The U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD's) five Regional Centers for Security Studies are relatively small-scale but highly valued U.S. security engagement tools. Though virtually all U.S. officials who interact with the centers assert that they are key to advancing DoD goals and objectives, neither the centers nor their stakeholders have been able to measure the extent to which they do so. As DoD looks to identify inefficiencies and accommodate reduced budget authority, the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the regional centers themselves expressed interest in developing more effective means of assessing the regional centers' impact on DoD objectives and priorities.

In response to a request by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations, RAND undertook a comprehensive study of the centers' missions and objectives, the contributions that the centers assert that they make to DoD goals, and the ways in which the centers and their stakeholders assess their programs and the resulting outcomes. This report recommends steps that the centers and their stakeholders can take to collect more relevant data for evaluation, improve their evaluations of center initiatives, and better assess the centers' impacts on strategic objectives. This report will be of interest to policymakers and military leaders grappling with questions regarding the most effective use of increasingly scarce DoD resources for promoting U.S. security objectives around the world, particularly by fostering strong military-to-military ties with partner nations. It will also be of interest to policymakers and military personnel with an interest in security cooperation, military education and training, and the implementation of confidence-building measures to mitigate regional security tensions. Finally, the report's analysis of the regional centers' program evaluation methods will be of interest to program managers who design metrics and assessment tools to evaluate the effectiveness of DoD initiatives.

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Summary

The five U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Regional Centers for Security Studies have been helping partner nations build strategic capacity for almost 20 years. They are high-leverage components of overall U.S. security cooperation and engagement efforts, despite their relatively small budgets. However, recent DoD budget constraints have put pressure on the regional centers (RCs) to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and measure accomplishments. Though widely praised, the RCs and their advocates have struggled to provide measurable “proof” of overall RC effectiveness over the years, which has made it difficult to argue for maintaining their funding as overall DoD budget concerns loom. In 2011, in an effort to help the regional center enterprise develop more effective performance metrics, RAND provided the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) with an unpublished analysis of the assessment processes used at the RCs and recommendations for improving them.

By late 2011, OSD’s Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE) identified reductions to the DoD budget that could help DoD save \$500 billion over ten years. CAPE recommended several options for the RCs, including simply eliminating them. In response to this, RC advocates and stakeholders came to the centers’ defense. In January 2012, the Secretary of Defense’s “Defense Budget Priorities and Choices” memo, which directs ways to implement the new defense strategy in a fiscally constrained environment, stated clearly that “We will preserve our key partnership development efforts, including . . . Five Regional Centers for Strategic Study that provide relationship-building opportunities to international students.”¹

The RCs themselves have aggressively sought efficiencies—primarily in administrative, support, and overhead functions—to accommodate recent cuts to their budgets, much as the rest of DoD has done. The Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), for example, has scaled back support for faculty research, cut Portuguese translation, increased reliance on adjunct professors rather than full-time faculty, and reduced throughput in certain academic programs.² The Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) cut its operating budget by 22 percent by halving staff travel, leaving positions vacant while employing more college interns, and negotiating new participant housing that reduced lodging and per diem costs.

The centers have sought to preserve funding for their core programs, but ongoing budget pressures may require the centers to prioritize their programs and scale back or eliminate those that contribute least to the centers’ objectives. To do this well, the centers require much better data on program effectiveness. In the context of ongoing budget constraints, OSD asked

¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Defense Budget Priorities and Choices*, Washington, D.C., January 2012b, pp. 6–7.

² ACSS, “FY12 Program Highlights for the PDASD Review Board for Regional Centers,” briefing, January 30, 2013a, slide 13; interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

RAND in August 2012 to follow up on its 2011 report by conducting a study on the overall impact of the RCs, the centers' effectiveness in advancing DoD policy priorities, and the ways in which the centers and their stakeholders assess their programs and the resulting outcomes. OSD asked RAND to provide recommendations on the steps that the centers and their stakeholders could take to collect more relevant data for evaluation, improve their evaluations of center initiatives, and better assess the centers' impacts on strategic objectives. This report, which attempts to address these issues, is based on an extensive review of documents related to the regional center enterprise, as well as 68 interviews involving 135 officials at the centers, their primary stakeholder organizations (OSD and the geographic combatant commands), and a small number of other interested entities.

Regional Center Histories

The RC enterprise has evolved significantly since the first center was created 20 years ago. The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (GCMC) was created in 1993, just after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union, to foster democratic values in Central and Eastern European countries and promote their integration with the Euro-Atlantic community. By the mid-1990s, as U.S. policy in Asia became increasingly focused on multilateral engagement and nonmilitary issues, DoD commissioned the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) to build partner capacity and foster communities of interest regarding regional security issues. APCSS was patterned on the Marshall Center and was established in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1995.

DoD established a similar center for Latin America, the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS), in 1997 in response to the end of military rule throughout the region. New regional leaders expressed concern that their countries' lack of civilian expertise regarding security issues could threaten the stability of their nascent governments. At the request of Secretary of Defense William J. Perry, CHDS began to educate Latin American civilian officials and to provide them with the tools to solidify civilian authority over armed forces in the region. At the direction of Congress, the Pentagon established the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) in 1999 as a means of promoting good governance, enhancing security institution-building, and resolving regional security challenges. Finally, in 2000, OSD endorsed the creation of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) to foster more robust U.S. security engagement in the region, which was (and still is) hindered by both regional political schisms (e.g., Arab-Israeli, Shi'a-Sunni) and by the division of responsibility for regional engagement among multiple U.S. military commands. These last three RCs were situated in Washington, D.C., which enabled them to expose their participants to a wide range of U.S. officials and government agencies, as well as to American culture.

Governance of the Regional Center Enterprise

The governance structure for the RC enterprise has changed repeatedly in the past decade, as have the policy priorities that the centers were directed to advance. A succession of DoD Directives (DoDDs) and policy memos from senior OSD officials have changed the centers' command structures several times, altered their relationships with their key stakeholders, and caused some confusion over whether the centers are primarily educational institutions, security engagement resources, or policy tools.

The Marshall Center and Asia-Pacific Center initially received their funding and guidance through the combatant commands (COCOMs), while the three Washington-based centers were established under the purview of the National Defense University (NDU). Over time, it became clear that OSD needed a more consistent and effective mechanism for providing top-down policy guidance to the centers.

On February 28, 2011, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USDP) Michèle Flournoy ordered a new management and oversight structure for the RC enterprise. It placed the centers firmly under the direction and authority of OSD for both policy direction and management. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations (PSO) would provide global and functional priorities and a framework for region-specific priorities. The regional DASDs would provide regional and country-specific guidance to the centers through PSO after coordinating with the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Forces (DUSD/SPF), the functional DASDs, and the COCOMs and after securing approval from the relevant Assistant Secretaries of Defense (ASDs). The COCOMs—which had previously controlled the centers—were to play a “coordinating” role by providing input to the regional DASDs’ guidance to the centers and to the centers’ annual plans.

In an effort to better synchronize consolidated OSD guidance to the RCs, OSD created a Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Board (PDASD Board) in 2011 that meets twice a year to provide senior-level guidance to the centers. An unstated purpose of the board was to help reduce confusion caused by multiple OSD offices’ provision of guidance to the RCs, as the centers received direction from regional and functional policy offices, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), OSD/PSO, and the OSD Policy Chief of Staff. The board’s roles and responsibilities are not codified in writing, however, and it appears to be more of a consultative mechanism than a decisionmaking or guidance-issuing body.

Regional Center Programs

Resident and nonresident academic programs account for the majority of activities (and resources) at the RCs. Centers engage alumni through both substantive programs and regular communications to maintain active communities of interest.

Academic Programs

- **Core courses:** The centers’ “core” foundational academic programs consist of four to eight residential executive development seminars per year, each ranging from one to ten weeks in duration. Participants gain a better understanding of regional security challenges, develop critical thinking skills, and forge new relationships with participants from neighboring countries. Topics are based on stakeholder priorities and guidance.³
- **Specialized and advanced programs:** Centers offer focused courses that address particular topics or provide discussions suitable for subject-matter experts. Many of these programs are offered in-residence, are shorter and smaller than the core courses, and are typically funded by DoD entities with interests in the specific issues being examined, rather than from the centers’ main operating budgets.

³ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013.

- **Workshops and seminars:** Centers conduct large numbers of short, tailored events that focus on partner nations' needs and are conducted in-country to reach a larger number of participants.⁴ Though these events do not provide participants with direct exposure to the United States or provide opportunities to develop relationships with counterparts from neighboring countries, they enable the centers to reach more partner nation officials for less money, attract participants who might not otherwise be available to attend a lengthy residential course, and address partner nations' specific requirements.
- **Senior-level engagements:** RCs host high-level regional gatherings that foster links between partner nation leaders and senior U.S. officials and provide a window into how partner nation leaders approach shared threats and challenges.⁵
- **U.S. education and training:** U.S. officials with regional engagement responsibilities are authorized to attend RC courses, allowing them to draw on the centers' specialized regional expertise.
- **Instruction for U.S.-based foreign diplomats:** Several of the RCs offer programs that explain U.S. decisionmaking processes, ensure that partner officials understand U.S. policies and priorities in their regions, and develop communities of interest among partner nation officials.

To ensure that all center programs are linked to higher goals, all of the centers are required to develop concept papers for each academic program that identify the stakeholder objectives that each course is intended to advance.

Over time, the academic focus of several of the regional centers has moved away from long-term residential programs and toward shorter, more focused, country-specific programs held in-region. This shift promotes the transfer of tailored information and skills to more partner nation officials than could be achieved in a foundational course, though it constrains participants' exposure to U.S. officials, culture, and government institutions and their interaction with officials from other countries in the region.

Nonacademic Programs

The centers engage in a range of nonacademic programs as well. NESAC and APCSS undertake a number of semi-official "Track II" dialogues in which academics, civil society leaders, former officials, and others with informal ties to their governments discuss ways to resolve regional conflicts. Each of the centers also commissions academic research linked to stakeholder interests and publishes scholarly articles in outside academic journals and through publications issued by the centers themselves.⁶ Stakeholders note that these publications allow them the opportunity to express policy views to audiences with influence in their regions while promoting the regional centers as scholarly venues with extensive resident expertise.

Alumni Outreach

All of the regional centers maintain contact with their alumni as a means of executing the 2011 USDP guidance to "facilitate engagement with and among foreign participants to enhance

⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, February 6, 2013.

⁵ Interviews with U.S. European Command (EUCOM) officials, Stuttgart, January 9, 2013.

⁶ APCSS, "Articles Published by APCSS Faculty," webpage, undated(a).

regional security through the creation of collaborative communities of interest among military and civilian officials from States of the region.”⁷ Each center has, in fact, made alumni outreach a top priority.

The centers engage alumni through e-mailed newsletters, social media, and in-country events and workshops. Centers also hold short substantive courses specifically for alumni, which allow the centers to share information of relevance to graduates’ careers, strengthen alumni networks, build networks of decisionmakers, reach out to nontraditional audiences (such as civil society figures), and promote awareness of U.S. policies.⁸ Many of these events are held in-region, where they can reach a large number of partner nation officials, though some centers also hold discussions and short courses online through lower-cost video teleconferences and interactive webinars.⁹ The centers expand their reach by interacting with alumni associations in 124 countries, all of which have been established by the alumni themselves.¹⁰

Although the regional centers send a great deal of information to alumni, they are less effective at soliciting information from alumni beyond career updates that can be published in subsequent newsletters. Though all of the centers send their alumni surveys that ask about their career development and their engagement with the centers, none of the centers have a plan to collect comprehensive data in a systematic way—for example, by posing consistent questions to alumni at fixed intervals in their careers—that could be used to develop a comprehensive assessment of the value of center programs.

Regional Center Resources

The RCs receive funds from a wide range of U.S. government sources (and, in the case of the Marshall Center, from the German Ministry of Defense). The bulk of the centers’ budgets comes from DSCA operations and maintenance (O&M) funds. The centers also receive reim-

⁷ Michèle Flournoy, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, “Policy Guidance for the Department of Defense (DoD) Regional Centers,” memorandum to regional center directors, February 28, 2011.

⁸ Africa Center for Strategic Studies, “Background/Concept Paper: Topical Outreach Program Series (TOPS),” in *ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012c.

⁹ Interview with NESA Center official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013. Also interview with CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

¹⁰ ACSS has alumni associations in 31 countries, including one in Ethiopia specifically for alumni employed by the African Union and other organizations. Alumni also are in the process of forming two more national chapters and another international chapter associated with the East African community (interview with ACSS officials, Washington, D.C., February 19, 2013; ACSS, 2013a, slide 7 notes; ACSS correspondence with RAND, July 22, 2013). APCSS has 54 alumni associations, including one in the United States, one that it runs jointly with the Africa Center (Madagascar), and two that it runs jointly with the Marshall Center and the Africa Center (Mauritius and the Comoros) (APCSS Fact Sheet, December 9, 2012f; APCSS Command Brief, June 2012e, slide 22; ACSS correspondence with RAND, July 22, 2013). As of September 2012, CHDS has alumni associations in 16 countries; alumni were also in the process of forming alumni associations in six additional countries, as well as a Caribbean regional association (CHDS, “Fact Sheet,” September 18, 2012f). The Marshall Center has alumni associations in 28 countries (GCMC, “GCMC FY12 Update,” briefing to PDASD Board, January 30, 2013b, slide 3). NESA has formal alumni associations in no countries, primarily because such associations are illegal in many countries throughout the area of responsibility (AOR). Many NESA alumni, however, collaborate informally with each other and with the center. In addition, NESA is working toward establishing joint alumni chapters with other regional centers (ACSS, APCSS, and GCMC) in 13 countries in which they have both produced large numbers of alumni (NESA website, “Alumni,” undated[b]).

bursable O&M from OSD, the COCOMs, and other government institutions. This money is most often used when the centers conduct additional or unplanned events at the request of these stakeholders.

RCs also received \$16 million—about a quarter of the total enterprise budget—from other sources. This funding enables the RCs to address specialized issues (such as proliferation) that, while important, may not be at the top of the priority list in a particular region. In their search for new sources of funds to compensate for budget cuts, however, the RCs could end up focusing increasingly on specialized topics at the expense of the centers' traditional emphases on good governance, democratization, and civilian control of the military.

All of the RCs have found efficiencies by streamlining operations, renegotiating contracts, and refraining from filling vacant positions. RC leaders feel that further funding cuts will force them to reduce academic programs.¹¹ To minimize the impact of such cuts, the centers will need objective measures of effectiveness. In their absence, each of the centers has prioritized different types of programs: CHDS, NESAs, and ACSS lean toward protecting their core thematic programs, while the Marshall Center places a greater emphasis on shorter in-region programs, and APCSS has cut back core program resources to protect its specialized courses.

Global Center for Security Cooperation (GCSC)

The GCSC was created in 2007 to help DoD programs focused on defense institution-building (DIB) and international training and education coordinate their activities, prevent duplication of effort, and keep informed of OSD guidance. However, it does not appear that GCSC adds substantial value to the regional center enterprise. Several regional center officials stated that they do coordinate with other DIB programs operating in their AORs, both informally and through annual security cooperation planning events hosted by the COCOMs. Moreover, officials from all of the regional centers claimed that formal guidance documents and their frequent interaction with OSD give them an adequate understanding of OSD's policy priorities without GCSC's intervention.¹² OSD also gave GCSC the authority to conduct curriculum reviews of regional center programs.¹³ However, only one center has asked GCSC to evaluate a course to date, and that center found the GCSC's review to be relatively unhelpful.¹⁴ GCSC officials note that they provide services to a wide range of organizations other than the regional centers whose views were not solicited for this assessment.¹⁵

Regional Centers' Impacts

Interviews revealed universal agreement that the centers make positive contributions to U.S. interests and that they are cost-effective ways of advancing DoD security cooperation and

¹¹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013.

¹² Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013; interview with ACSS officials, Washington, D.C., February 19, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013; interview with senior NESAs Center officials, Washington, D.C., January 17, 2013.

¹³ OSD, "Terms of Reference for the Global Center for Security Cooperation," December 7, 2007.

¹⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013.

¹⁵ James J. Wirtz, GCSC Director, letter to RAND, July 23, 2013.

engagement objectives. In a memo to DSCA, one senior OSD official summarized the RCs as “a prime example of an innovative, low-cost, small-footprint approach to implementing our defense priorities.”¹⁶

However, virtually no one could quantify or measure the extent to which the centers add value in these areas. Given the absence of clear metrics and outcome-focused performance data, the most compelling assessments of the centers’ impacts are qualitative in nature. This fact alone does not negate the value of these success stories, but the absence of quantitative analysis does make it difficult to measure the RCs’ impact over time.

The RAND study team identified 24 ways in which the centers advance U.S. interests, DoD policy objectives, and COCOM engagement priorities.

Centers Build Partner Capacity

1. **RCs impart fundamental national security analysis skills.** Though most U.S. capacity-building programs focus on operational capabilities, RCs address the strategic analytical skills needed by partner nations’ current and future leaders to develop their own national capacity and interact more productively with the United States.
2. **RCs help build partner nation institutions.** RCs help partner nations to develop and manage their defense and security institutions. COCOM-led building partner capacity (BPC) initiatives—which focus primarily on operational training—are far more effective, COCOM officials reported, because these institutional frameworks are in place.¹⁷
3. **RCs develop future partner nation leaders.** RCs provide future military and civilian leaders from around the world with career-enhancing skills and information, as well as with democratic values that can guide their actions throughout their careers.
4. **RCs promote whole-of-government solutions to security issues.** By inviting a mix of civilian and military officials from several countries in a region, the RCs foster multinational interagency partnerships, which can facilitate regional responses to trans-national security challenges.

Centers Build Relationships and Foster Pro-U.S. Outlooks

1. **RCs shape partners’ long-term strategic thinking on security issues.** RCs shape partners’ strategic thinking about security challenges in ways that are consistent with American values by emphasizing critical thinking, democratic principles, good governance, civilian control of the military, interagency collaboration, and regional cooperation.
2. **RCs build relationships that facilitate U.S. engagement.** The centers have built up networks in their regions over time by engaging alumni continuously throughout the course of their careers.¹⁸ These relationships can provide extremely valuable access to senior partner nation officials.

¹⁶ Peter Lavoy, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, in APCSS, *FY13–14 Program Plan*, enclosure 2, Memorandum to Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, undated(c).

¹⁷ Interview with senior U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) official, Miami, January 24, 2013.

¹⁸ Interview with Marshall Center officials, Garmisch, January 14, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

3. **RCs promote policies consistent with U.S. priorities.** By focusing discussions on the values and principles on which U.S. national security policy is based, the centers encourage partners to pursue policies consistent with these principles.
4. **RCs expose partner nations' current and future leaders to U.S. government, values, and policies.** By straddling academic and government worlds, the RCs serve as neutral venues in which U.S. government policies can be communicated and discussed frankly. In addition, the RCs' U.S.-based courses provide extended exposure to American culture.

Centers Offer Unique Opportunities for Engagement

1. **RCs have "convening authority."** Because of their long experience in their regions, strong institutional and personal networks, and recognized expertise, the centers are able to gather partner nation officials to address controversial topics in an environment that fosters openness and debate.¹⁹
2. **RCs "show the U.S. flag" and demonstrate U.S. commitment.** The centers demonstrate a continued U.S. commitment to engage, which is particularly important in areas with a shrinking American footprint.²⁰
3. **RCs can engage audiences that OSD and COCOMs cannot.** The centers' ability to engage important nonmilitary and nongovernment audiences enables them to promote solutions to security challenges²¹ that involve both civilian and military government agencies, as well as civil society. In contrast, OSD and the COCOMs—whose engagement is typically limited to official defense establishments—face significant obstacles in engaging nongovernment entities and civilian government agencies.²²
4. **RCs are a critical engagement tool in "economy of force" regions.** RCs are often one of the United States' few tools to engage countries in Africa, Latin America, Oceania, and the Caribbean on a sustained basis. Because the security sectors in such countries are relatively small, outsized numbers of senior security officials have passed through RC programs, enabling the centers to have strategic impacts in these countries.²³
5. **RCs offer unique openings to countries under U.S. sanctions.** The centers' continued ability to engage such sanctioned governments as Fiji, Sudan, and Sri Lanka keeps the door open for dialogue and provides the United States access to these countries' security institutions—particularly on the very issues that the United States is eager to promote, such as human rights, civilian control of the military, and good governance.²⁴

¹⁹ Interview with senior Marshall Center official, Garmisch, January 14, 2013; interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Honolulu, February 6, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013; and interview with OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013.

²⁰ Interview with senior U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) official, Tampa, January 25, 2013.

²¹ Interview with OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013.

²² Interview with senior CENTCOM official, Tampa, January 25, 2013.

²³ Interview with U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) officials, Honolulu, February 5, 2013; interview with OSD official, Washington, D.C., January 29, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

²⁴ Interview with PACOM official, Honolulu, February 5, 2013; interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013.

6. **RCs engage military establishments even when broader bilateral relationships are strained.** As “steady state engagement tools,”²⁵ the RCs maintain relationships with professionals and senior leaders in partner nations’ security establishments that persist despite the waxing and waning of bilateral relations with the United States.
7. **RCs can be used as “baby steps” for engaging security establishments when no military-to-military relations exist.** Because RCs are good fora in which to raise topics of concern with pariah countries—such as human rights, civilian control of the military, and democratization—they are excellent means of engaging countries or military establishments with which the United States has no relations whatsoever.
8. **RCs can overcome diplomatic barriers and bureaucratic boundaries.** By maintaining engagements with all countries in a region, the RCs are able to bridge diplomatic divides among countries (such as China and Taiwan) and bureaucratic lines that hinder engagement by other U.S. government entities (such as boundaries between U.S. geographic combatant commands).
9. **RCs can nimbly shift to cover new issues.** The centers can move swiftly to develop programs regarding emerging policy issues at the request of their stakeholders.
10. **RCs help U.S. officials understand partner nations’ views.** The RCs’ constant engagement with senior partner nation officials provides insights into their perspectives and decisionmaking.

Centers Promote Regional Dialogue that Reduces Tensions

1. **RCs promote regional dialogue and cooperation.** The RCs enable participants from countries with tense relations to identify shared interests and thus reduce the long-term risks of conflict.
2. **Regional centers facilitate U.S. multilateral engagement.** Compared with exercises and other traditional military-to-military events that focus on bilateral engagements, the RCs are particularly well positioned to promote multinational dialogue.
3. **As neutral venues, RCs can host or contribute to regional confidence-building measures (CBMs).** The RCs’ connections to academia and civil society enable them to bring together representatives—both official and nonofficial—from adversaries who would otherwise resist engaging each other or accepting input from the United States.

Centers Serve as Repositories of Regional Expertise

1. **RCs provide valuable expertise to stakeholders.** RC faculty members focus on security challenges of interest to DoD leaders and are informed by regular access to both U.S. and partner nation policymakers over time.²⁶
2. **Academic research adds value for stakeholders and partners.** Many of the RCs’ faculty members publish articles that provide useful information to stakeholders and

²⁵ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., December 19, 2012.

²⁶ Interview with CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

partner nations, raise the centers' visibility and credibility in their regions,²⁷ and position the centers as apolitical academic institutions.²⁸

3. **RCs fill gaps in education for U.S. government personnel.** Some RCs offer short, focused, and practical regional orientation courses for U.S. government personnel that do not exist at other institutions, either civilian or military.²⁹

Recommendations for Improving Measurement of Centers' Impacts

Though it can be difficult to identify the effects of long-term education and relationship-building initiatives, outcomes can often be inferred indirectly from other information. Measuring program impact is valuable for a number of reasons, including the following:

- **Measurement can demonstrate success.** By measuring the degree to which center initiatives have succeeded, a comprehensive measurement effort can demonstrate the impact that the enterprise has had on U.S. strategic objectives.
- **Evaluation can identify areas for program improvement.** By measuring the extent to which regional center programs have or have not advanced DoD objectives, center officials can identify areas for improvement and take steps to rectify shortcomings.
- **Evaluation can help justify budget requests.** When developing program plans and budget requests, centers can use data on program impact to make the case that particular initiatives merit additional resources (or the protection of current resources) by pointing to the contributions that the program makes to U.S. objectives.
- **Comparative evaluations can lead to a better allocation of resources.** If the RCs have empirical information to suggest that program X advances strategic objectives more than program Y, they might decide to divert resources or allocate newly available resources to the effort that has a greater impact. Similarly, if a center must cut programs to adapt to a reduction in available resources, it might want to eliminate or reduce the programs that have the least impact on high-priority goals.

The centers and their stakeholders make few attempts to measure the impacts of the centers' programs, in part because they dedicate few resources to the task. OSD does not assess the centers' impacts in a systematic way, while the COCOMs consider, but do not measure, the centers' contributions to their Theater Campaign Plans' (TCP) objectives. Neither OSD nor the COCOMs systematically evaluate whether or to what extent the centers have implemented the tasks they have been given, nor have they developed objective means of measuring the centers' impacts. The regional centers, for their part, generally feel that spending scarce time and resources on collecting and analyzing data on measures of effectiveness (MOEs) is not merited, either because they believe such measurements are not useful or because they prefer to dedicate their resources to executing programs rather than assessing them.³⁰ While each of the

²⁷ Interview with CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

²⁸ Interview with ACSS officials, Washington, D.C., February 19, 2013.

²⁹ Interview with PACOM official, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013.

³⁰ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

centers conducts its own program assessments using such tools as internal curriculum reviews and student satisfaction surveys, these evaluations are generally focused on the effectiveness of program delivery, not the impact that center programs generate.

The PDASD Board—as the primary senior-level policy oversight body for the RC enterprise—should direct OSD/PSO, DSCA, the regional and functional DASDs, the COCOMs, and the five RCs to undertake a comprehensive strategy-to-task plan for developing and applying MOEs. Such a step would be consistent with one of the principal recommendations in RAND’s 2011 report on the RCs’ MOE Plan, which was to make explicit linkages between the centers’ accomplishments and the strategic goals that the centers are charged with advancing.

To improve data collection and analysis, RCs will need to collect impact-oriented data over time in more methodical ways. The centers should ask consistent questions of consistent audiences over an extended period of time at fixed intervals to permit each center to assess the extent to which near-term acquisition of knowledge and new perspectives translate into long-term impacts. Participants should be surveyed at the beginning of a program, to establish a pre-course baseline; at the end of the program, to identify immediate near-term impacts (as well as to assess program execution); and at specific intervals after completing a course.

The RCs should also consider new tools to collect measurement data, to include the following:

- **Surveying both U.S. and foreign participants in Track II programs** to evaluate initiatives’ effectiveness, identify potential bottlenecks, and identify ways (if any) in which the initiatives help alleviate regional tensions.
- **Soliciting input from U.S. government personnel participating in RC programs**, both to identify areas for improvement and to evaluate whether sending American officials to RC programs is a good use of education and training resources.
- **Conducting regular surveys of U.S. officials who engage RC alumni**, so as to compile third-party insights on the ways in which RC graduates apply their insights, as well as to validate RC graduates’ self-reporting.
- **Encouraging national alumni associations to gather insights from their own members** regarding communities of interest, the value of RC experiences, and feedback regarding U.S. policies.

In the absence of data that allows the direct measurement of outcomes, centers can use indirect data as proxies for value and impact. The centers already collect a great deal of information about alumni that, when properly analyzed, can provide indirect indicators of impact. For example, the centers’ routine alumni outreach activities generate feedback that provides insights into graduates’ perceptions of their experience. One can hypothesize that alumni who more frequently (or rapidly) read or forward outreach materials, click on links in outreach materials, or actively engage on social media sites—all things that software can determine—find greater value in their RC experiences than graduates who do not appear to appreciate the centers’ communications. Such “proxy” indicators—while clearly imperfect—can complement survey data, and even supplement it when questions are too sensitive to pose directly or when self-reporting might for any number of reasons not be reliable.

Once better data are collected, they must be analyzed in ways that generate insights regarding the programs’ impacts. There are many ways to do so, but some of the most fun-

damental involve sorting data to isolate individual factors and analyze their contributions to desired outcomes.

- **Sort data by RC program to compare the impact of each.** By grouping responses by program, centers can both track the impact of individual programs over time and compare programs with each other. When matched with consistent cost data, the centers could conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine which programs could be modified to get the greatest value with the least detrimental impact on U.S. objectives.
- **Sort data by country to compare U.S. access and relationship-building.** Sorting survey response data by country could help the centers identify whether they have greater impact on professional networks in certain individual countries or even certain categories of countries (e.g., U.S. government-funded participants versus self-paying participants).
- **Sort data by demographics to compare programs' impact on different audiences.** The centers should break down survey responses demographically to assess whether RC participation has a more significant impact among civilians or military officers, civilian officials from the defense sector versus the civil sector, or mid-career versus senior-level participants. The centers could use these data to reallocate seats for greater benefit, modify course curricula, or make other program adjustments.
- **Identify potential drivers of near-term and long-term impacts.** Comparing participants' near-term feedback (e.g., pre-course and immediate post-course surveys) with their answers to subsequent questionnaires could enable the centers to identify participant characteristics that correlate with more significant long-term outcomes.
- **Identify potential causes of missed opportunities.** Comparing near-term feedback with long-term self-reporting could enable centers to evaluate whether certain program attributes hinder the achievement of strategic objectives. For example, if graduates of programs with lengthy online components report less success in developing professional networks, centers may wish to alter the programs to facilitate greater relationship-building.
- **Develop systematic ways to collect, compile, and promote anecdotal evidence of RC impacts.** When requesting narrative feedback from alumni, the centers should elicit direct links between their accomplishments and specific outcomes the centers wish to measure. The centers could then present these success stories in ways that link their successes to the advancement of U.S. strategic objectives.

OSD and the COCOMs can create a standard against which RCs' impact can be assessed if they establish clear, measurable objectives for both the intermediate and long terms and provide clearly articulated guidance in written policy and program planning documents. OSD and the COCOMs can then determine the extent to which the RCs met measurable targets.

Recommendations for Enhancing Regional Centers' Impacts

The five RCs have strong track records of running a wide range of programs that are well received by participants, valued by stakeholders, and operated efficiently at a very low cost, although few have been able to measure those contributions with any degree of fidelity.

Future Management and Guidance Considerations

OSD and the COCOMs can improve their oversight and management of the RC enterprise in a number of ways that are likely to make the centers better able to target their activities to the objectives and priorities of their stakeholders.

1. **Maintain RCs' regional focus rather than refashion them to address specific threats.** Although some officials have recommended transforming the regionally focused centers into functional centers of excellence that address specific issues on a global scale, such a change would likely be counterproductive. The RCs' regional orientations enable global threats to be examined in regional contexts, permit intra-regional interactions and relationship-building, foster the development of communities of interest, and facilitate Track II dialogues—benefits that would be diluted, if not lost entirely, if the centers became threat-specific centers of excellence.
2. **Direct the centers to achieve measurable outcomes** in written guidance materials from stakeholders.
3. **Issue guidance in a timely fashion so that centers can adjust their programs.**
4. **Assess the centers' responses to stakeholder taskings on an ongoing basis.**
5. **Address "guidance gaps."** COCOMs should issue guidance to the RCs operating in their AORs, to include guidance regarding such emerging topics as cybersecurity and space policy.
6. **Simplify and clarify the process of providing guidance to the centers.** The existing process is overly complex, is inconsistent with written policies, and makes it easier for the COCOMs (rather than OSD) to provide direction to entities that are supposed to be instruments of policy. OSD should simplify and streamline the governance structure by streamlining the process of developing policy guidance and charging the PDASD Board with deconflicting and approving consolidated OSD policy guidance to the RCs.
7. **OSD regional DASDs should engage the centers more robustly.** Regular interaction with the centers by DASDs and their staffs can help the RCs better advance DoD's policy objectives.
8. **OSD must ensure that RCs have defined lanes and stay in them.** It is OSD's responsibility to define each center's focus areas and regional responsibilities, ensure that the centers do not stray into others' realms without prior coordination, and ensure that all interested parties are kept aware of enterprise activities. The PDASD Board is particularly well suited for this task.
9. **Deconflict RC programs with those of other DoD DIB initiatives.** OSD/PSO should issue strategic guidance on defense reform to ensure that all DIB programs work toward the same overarching objectives while also defining and differentiating each program's specific missions and priorities.
10. **Identify best practices and apply them (as appropriate) across the enterprise.** RC directors should establish a series of working groups in areas in which best practices can be identified, assessed, and shared throughout the enterprise, such as assessments, alumni outreach, information technology, and academic research.
11. **Focus academic research on stakeholder priorities.** Centers should ensure that research and publications focus on topics that are of the greatest interest to their stakeholders and partner nations.

Future Considerations for the RC Enterprise

RC stakeholders in OSD and at the COCOMs have considered a number of ways to reorient, refocus, and restructure the enterprise, both to generate better results from the centers and to respond to a more austere budgetary environment. Some of the proposed reforms would be designed to enhance RC performance, while others would be intended to generate cost savings.

The rebalance will create many more opportunities for military-to-military engagement while reducing such opportunities in other parts of the world. Given that the RCs generate long-term strategic impacts on U.S. interests in these regions for relatively little cost, OSD should carefully weigh the future roles of the RCs and allocate resources accordingly, rather than sweep the centers up in a broader redirection toward Asia.

1. Options to consider for greater impact:
 - a. **Decide whether to rebalance the RC enterprise toward Asia to support the “pivot” or toward other regions to complement it.** It appears as if the decision to augment APCSS’s budget by \$6.2 million annually for five years (fiscal years 2014–2018) was made as part of a sweeping approach to expanding overall DoD engagement in the Asia-Pacific region.³¹ Indeed, DoD’s 2013 Strategic Choices Management Review (SCMR), which was charged with producing a menu of options for dealing with expected fiscal constraints,³² recommended that all of the regional centers—except for the Asia-Pacific Center—be completely eliminated.³³ The four regional centers focused on regions other than Asia should not be so abruptly dismissed, given that they generate long-term strategic impacts on U.S. interests in these regions for relatively little cost—particularly when compared with other U.S. security cooperation programs whose budgets run into the billions of dollars. OSD should ensure that it has carefully weighed the value of greater RC support to the “rebalance” against the benefits of having RCs fill gaps in engagement elsewhere.
 - b. **Evaluate the balance between core residential courses and in-region workshops.** Better performance metrics and more targeted collection and analysis of data regarding program impacts will help each of the centers determine more objectively what the ideal mix would be for their own regions.
 - c. **Determine, as a policy matter, whether and to what extent the centers should pursue outside funding.** In developing customized programs that can attract funds from outside sources, the centers may stray from their core missions and competencies. Such an approach may indeed be an efficient use of DoD education and training resources; however, OSD should indicate whether providing customized instruction to paying customers is a *desirable* use of RC resources or whether the centers should focus on their core activities.
 - d. **Assess the benefit of expanding international organization/nongovernmental organization (IO/NGO) participation in regional center programs.** Although multiple center officials highlighted the value of incorporating IO and NGO representatives into their programs, the regional center enterprise has failed to make

³¹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, February 6, 2013.

³² Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense, “Statement on Strategic Choices and Management Review,” remarks to the press, July 31, 2013.

³³ Email from OSD official, August 27, 2013.

full use of the authority to waive up to \$1 million in reimbursements from IOs and NGOs that send officials to RC programs. OSD, the COCOMs, and the regional centers themselves should evaluate whether additional participation would advance U.S. interests and, if so, make full use of the waiver authorities available.

2. Options to consider for cost savings:

As the RCs have already implemented efficiencies, further cuts will almost certainly affect programs.³⁴ Data on which programs add the greatest or least value would help the centers identify which programs to scale back or eliminate; without reliable data on impact, however, they will have to use other criteria to determine which programs to reduce or discontinue.

- a. **Cut overhead.** Certain overhead elements of the RC enterprise as a whole could be cut with little impact. Elimination of the GCSC would painlessly generate savings for the RCs.³⁵ Four of the five RCs criticize the GlobalNet system (a dedicated computer network used to provide information to RC alumni) as being too difficult to use and object to devoting scarce course time to train students on the system. Moreover, some RC officials note that alumni prefer to engage the centers with widely available social media tools that require no training.
- b. **Cut core programs.** Centers could cut back on their core functions: academic programs, alumni outreach, and Track II initiatives. The centers would want to ensure that they preserve the initiatives that have the greatest impact—a list that will differ from center to center. All of the centers asserted that alumni engagement is a top priority that adds great value, which suggests that they will want to preserve resources for this key function.
- c. **Scale back core programs.** Centers could also execute these core functions on a smaller scale—in other words, to reduce participant throughput numbers, the number of events, or the frequency of alumni outreach. Doing so would enable the centers to continue having an influence in all of the areas in which they currently engage, though to a lesser degree.
- d. **Seek further operating efficiencies.** The centers could also seek additional operational savings by renegotiating contracts, leaving vacated positions empty, and reducing computer support. A limited number of additional small-scale efficiencies may also be possible. Additional staff positions—including faculty, translators, and COCOM liaison officers (LNOs)—could be eliminated, and centers could make greater use of technology to deliver programs at less cost.
- e. **Reorganize the RC enterprise.** To cut overhead expenses further, the centers may need to make more dramatic changes to their management and administration. One way to improve efficiency might be to merge several centers' support functions—such as travel, accounting, contracting, and personnel—although a detailed cost

³⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, February 6, 2013.

³⁵ Although there was widespread support for GCSC's elimination among the more than 100 officials from OSD, the COCOMs, and the five regional centers who were interviewed for this study, RAND did not interview officials from the other 24 DIB institutions that participate in the Global Center Consortium coordinated by GCSC, who may have different views. Some of these institutions also make use of GlobalNet and have different perceptions of the system's value.

study would be needed to identify the actual savings. A more dramatic reorganization, suggested by a small number of stakeholders, would be to consolidate the RCs at two facilities—the GCMC and the APCSS—to take advantage of their dedicated facilities. Few officials, however, thought that such a large-scale consolidation would be a positive step on the whole. Not surprisingly, the regional DASDs and COCOMs—the RC enterprise primary stakeholders—oppose any move to consolidate the centers because such a step would detract from regionally focused security engagement.³⁶

- f. **Pursue burden-sharing.** Some centers can mitigate the impact of such cuts by sharing costs with partners. Developed partner nations might also be asked to contribute faculty or LNOs who can contribute to program content, or they might be asked simply to provide funds to defray the costs of the centers' operations.

Concluding Thoughts

The RC enterprise is widely praised by its stakeholders and its partners for operating innovative programs that build partner capacity, promote professionalism in partner nation security establishments, develop cadres of partner nation officials who are familiar with U.S. policies and values, and advance both long-term U.S. interests and DoD security cooperation objectives—all with relatively small staffs and limited budgets, especially when compared with other security cooperation providers. Still, it is likely that the centers have opportunities to enhance their effectiveness and cut operating costs. While all of them are already pursuing such improvements to some degree, spurred on by OSD's direction, internal management initiatives, and the likelihood of budget cuts, improvements in center measurements would enable identification and prioritization of these opportunities.

One of the most widely repeated criticisms of the RCs is that they are unable to measure their accomplishments. While there is room for improvement, virtually every official connected to the RC enterprise agreed that the centers do, in fact, add great value to U.S. interests. Even if they cannot quantify the impacts they have had, it is clear from stakeholders' assessments (however subjective they may be) that the centers have had great success at the missions they have undertaken.

³⁶ Interview with ACSS officials, Washington, D.C., February 19, 2013; interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013; interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, February 6, 2013; interview with senior NESAC officials, Washington, D.C., January 17, 2013; and interview with CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

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This report could not have been undertaken without the extensive support provided by officials throughout the RC enterprise, including the five RCs themselves and a wide range of officials in OSD and the geographic combatant commands (GCCs). Their commitment to full transparency and candid disclosure enabled the study team to develop a comprehensive picture of the RC initiative. Appreciation is owed to the many officials who shared their time and insights; to encourage frank and forthright discussions during our interviews, none of the officials interviewed are identified by name in this report.³⁷

The final version of the report benefited greatly from insights and recommendations offered by two peer reviewers, Erin Conaton and Bernd McConnell. Both were intimately familiar with the regional centers from their long periods of public service, and the report profited from their deep expertise in defense strategy, security cooperation, and resource management.

This report was commissioned around the same time as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) began its own assessment of the regional center enterprise.³⁸ While RAND and GAO requested similar information from the centers and their stakeholders, the two efforts were very different in nature. GAO was charged by Congress with evaluating very specific issues related to the RC enterprise's management, the extent of redundancy (if any) between the centers and other defense institution-building initiatives, and the use of funds to enable representatives of international organizations and nongovernmental organizations to participate in center programs. RAND, in contrast, was tasked by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to characterize the centers' impacts on DoD goals and improve their ability to measure these impacts effectively. The RAND and GAO study teams briefed each other in December 2012 on their respective objectives, and they shared preliminary findings with each other in late April 2013, just before GAO provided a final draft of its report to DoD for comment. RAND and GAO did not, however, coordinate any aspects of their research or analysis, and both entities reached their conclusions independently.

³⁷ Interviewees are identified as "officials" or "senior officials." Those cited as "senior" officials are civilians in the Senior Executive Service (SES) and military officers of flag rank (generals and admirals), or the equivalent. An official who is the most senior person in an organization—such as the director of a regional center—is designated as a "senior official" regardless of his or her personal rank.

³⁸ GAO published its report on June 28, 2013, approximately two weeks before RAND delivered this report to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. See GAO, *Building Partner Capacity: Actions Needed to Strengthen DOD Efforts to Assess the Performance of the Regional Centers for Security Studies*, GAO-13-606, Washington, D.C., June 28, 2013.

Abbreviations

ACSS	Africa Center for Strategic Studies
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AOR	area of responsibility
APCSS	Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies
APOC	Asia-Pacific Orientation Course
APSA	Asian and Pacific Security Affairs
ASC	Advanced Security Cooperation
ASD	Assistant Secretary of Defense
AU	African Union
BPC	building partner capacity
CAPE	Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation
CB	Capacity Building
CBM	confidence-building measure
CCM	Comprehensive Crisis Management
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CHDS	Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies
CIT	Countering Illicit Trafficking
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa
COCOM	combatant command
CoS	Chief of Staff
CT	counterterrorism
CTFP	Counterterrorism Fellowship Program

CTOC	Countering Transnational Organized Crime
DASD	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
DIB	defense institution-building
DIILS	Defense Institute of International Legal Studies
DIRI	Defense Institution Reform Initiative
DISAM	Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DoDD	Department of Defense Directive
DSCA	Defense Security Cooperation Agency
DTRA	Defense Threat Reduction Agency
DUSD/SPF	Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Forces
EA	East Asia
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EUCOM	U.S. European Command
EUR	Office of European and NATO Policy
FAO	foreign area officer
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
FSU	former Soviet Union
FY	fiscal year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GCC	geographic combatant command
GCMC	George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies
GCSC	Global Center for Security Cooperation
HA/DR	humanitarian assistance/disaster response
HD and ASA	Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs
IADC	Inter-American Defense College
IG	Inspector General

IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IMO	intermediate military objective
IO	international organization
ISA	International Security Affairs
IT	information technology
LNO	liaison officer
LOA	line of activity
LOE	line of effort
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOE	measure of effectiveness
MSRA	Managing Security Resources in Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDN	Northern Distribution Network
NDU	National Defense University
NESA	Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NSPW	National Security Planning Workshop
O&M	operations and maintenance
OHDACA	Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid
ONE	Outreach Networking Events
OSC	Office of Security Cooperation
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
OSD/PSO	OSD Office of Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations
OUSDP	Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
PACOM	U.S. Pacific Command

PASS	Program on Advanced Security Studies
PASS-CB	Program on Advanced Security Studies—Capacity Building
PDASD	Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
PfP-C	Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes
PLTCE	Partner Language Training Center—Europe
PME	professional military education
PPD	Presidential Policy Directive
PSO	Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations
RC	regional center
RCPAMS	Regional Centers Person/Activity Management System
ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia
RIO	Regional International Outreach
RUE	Office of Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia
SCETWG	Security Cooperation, Education, and Training Working Group
SCMR	Strategic Choices Management Review
SCO	Security Cooperation Office; security cooperation officer
SDP	Strategy and Defense Policy
SEAPOC	Senior Executive Asia-Pacific Orientation Course
SMS	Short Message Service
SOLIC	Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict
SOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
SSR	security sector reform
SSR/T	Security Sector Reform and Transformation
STACS	Seminar on Trans-Atlantic Civil Security
TCO	theater campaign order
TCP	theater campaign plan
TOPS	Topical Outreach Program Series
TOR	terms of reference

UFR	unfunded requirement
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USARI	U.S. Army Russian Institute
USC	U.S. Code
USDP	Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
USG	U.S. Government
WHA	Western Hemisphere Affairs
WIF	Warsaw Initiative Funds
WMDs	weapons of mass destruction

Introduction

The five Department of Defense (DoD) Regional Centers for Security Studies are key tools for building strategic capacity among partner nation security establishments, establishing professional networks and communities of interests, and promoting U.S. values and policies among senior- and mid-level officials from partner nations. The centers work to advance policy priorities stated by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and security cooperation objectives identified by the regional combatant commands (COCOMs). They are prominent and high-profile components of overall U.S. security cooperation and engagement efforts, despite their modest budget of \$84.2 million for the entire enterprise in fiscal year (FY) 2013.

The regional centers (RCs) are widely praised as effective and valuable tools for developing capacity and strengthening partnerships—exactly the type of “innovative, low-cost, and small footprint approaches to achieve [U.S.] security objectives” that the January 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance* calls for.¹ However, the centers and their stakeholders have undertaken only limited efforts to assess their programs systematically and to measure the actual impacts that they have had on U.S. and DoD objectives over time. In August 2012, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for Partnership Strategy and Stability Operations (OSD/PSO) therefore tasked the RAND Corporation to conduct a study of the RCs’ effectiveness.

More effective performance measures will be critical for the RC enterprise in a number of ways. First, improved metrics can help the centers find areas for improvement and thus deliver more effective programs. Second, they can identify which programs have the greatest or least impact on DoD objectives, thereby helping the centers decide how to allocate their resources. Third, as resources become more limited across DoD and budget cuts appear inevitable, reliable assessments of each program’s value can enable the centers to identify the programs whose reduction or elimination will impact their contributions the least. Similarly, if additional resources become available, such metrics will help center managers decide how to allocate the marginal dollars for maximum effect. Finally, better metrics can help the RCs demonstrate their value.

To measure the centers’ effectiveness, RAND embarked on a comprehensive effort to understand their roles, missions, activities, relationships with stakeholders, and existing assessment procedures. The RAND study team first reviewed the written guidance given to the regional centers by OSD and by the COCOMs since their establishment. RAND also analyzed the extent to which such guidance provided the centers with clear, measurable goals. The RAND team also assessed the formal and informal interaction between the centers and their

¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (hereinafter *Defense Strategic Guidance*), January 2012a, p. 3.

stakeholders to identify strengths, shortcomings, best practices, and areas for improvement in the oversight of the regional center enterprise.

Second, RAND catalogued the range of activities undertaken by the regional centers. The centers' "foundational" programs consist largely of long-term and short-term residential courses. Increasingly, they engage officials and selected private citizens from partner nations through advanced and specialized courses offered in their own countries, as well as focused substantive programs aimed at senior policymakers, center alumni, and other partner nation constituencies. The centers also publish academic research products and offer subject matter expertise to both U.S. stakeholders and regional partners. They work to reduce regional tensions by hosting nonofficial discussions of sensitive issues in "Track II" confidence-building dialogues, and they build communities of interest through continual engagement of partner nation alumni and policymakers.

Third, RAND researchers examined how the RCs are evaluated. In discussions with a broad spectrum of officials in OSD and the COCOMs, the RAND study team compiled primarily qualitative assessments of the regional centers' contributions to U.S. interests, as the centers' stakeholders conduct few methodical evaluations of center initiatives. In some cases, stakeholders do not even determine the extent to which the centers execute their guidance, much less whether they undertook these tasks effectively.

The study team also gathered information on the centers' internal procedures for evaluating their own programs. While all centers have undertaken efforts to evaluate and improve the execution of their events, few have made comprehensive efforts to assess the impact that they have on stakeholder-directed objectives. Those that do primarily measure activity (outputs) rather than results (outcomes), which makes it difficult to establish more than a simple correlation between RC efforts and the desired results.

Fourth, RAND identified the types of performance metrics that the centers could employ to develop more insightful assessments of their impact and to compare the relative impact of individual programs. RAND analysts also identified the ways in which the centers could use both existing and new outreach tools to collect the data needed. Currently, the centers use what little performance-related data they gather to improve event execution, rather than to enhance programs' long-term impact.

Fifth, RAND examined debates regarding the scope and execution of the centers' activities and identified steps that could enhance the governance, operations, and efficiency of the regional center enterprise. These debates fell primarily into two categories. The first includes questions regarding how the centers define their missions and focus their efforts—whether they should continue to emphasize regional security challenges or instead orient themselves around specific global threats, for example, or whether they could add greater value by altering the balance of residential and mobile programming. The second includes questions about how efficiently the centers execute their missions; RAND researchers assessed several existing proposals for cost savings and worked to identify elements of the RC enterprise that seem to generate limited value—"low-hanging fruit" that could generate savings with modest impact. If it is necessary to accommodate reduced funding, the centers might cut several such initiatives in order to preserve their most valuable programs.

RAND conducted 68 interviews with 135 officials at the centers, their stakeholder organizations, and other interested entities. The vast majority of the interviewees worked in regional and functional staffs in OSD, on the staffs of the six geographic combatant commands (GCCs), at the five regional centers, and at the Global Center for Security Cooperation

(GCSC), which is charged with deconflicting the centers' activities and those of other DoD defense institution-building (DIB) programs. The RAND team also interviewed former OSD officials with experience with the regional center enterprise and staff at the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Staff, and the U.S. Mission to NATO.

The team reviewed current and historical documents related to the management of the RC enterprise, including those that set policy priorities, directed topics for engagement, and established governance and reporting relationships. Researchers closely reviewed each center's FY2013–FY2014 program plan, which documented their priorities, course offerings, resource allocations, and linkages to policy objectives, as well as concept papers and other relevant materials regarding the centers' myriad programs.

Finally, RAND sat in on a January 2013 meeting of the primary governance body overseeing the enterprise, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (PDASD) Board, as well as an OSD-chaired roundtable of RC directors that took place the following day. A RAND team member also observed a May 2013 meeting of the PDASD Board at which RC directors presented their FY2014–FY2015 program plans. By attending these meetings, RAND analysts developed a greater appreciation for the complex nature of managing the centers.

This study is also informed by broad lessons identified in an unpublished September 2011 RAND analysis of the ways in which RCs measure their performance. In November 2010, the RCs developed a plan for implementing measures of effectiveness (MOEs) that could assess progress toward strategic objectives. The following year, at OSD's request, RAND analysts conducted an assessment of this MOE plan that identified shortcomings, proposed a framework for more useful metrics, and suggested ways to improve subsequent versions of the plan.

Overview of Findings and Recommendations

The RCs' stakeholders in OSD and the COCOMs universally agree that the centers are critical engagement tools that contribute significantly to U.S. policy objectives and provide a solid return on investment. They do this in a number of important ways:

- They expose partner nation leaders to U.S. values and rule-of-law, governance, and policies.
- They shape partners' strategic thinking.
- They nurture relationships that facilitate U.S. access to the highest levels of partner nations' governments.
- They build communities of interest among partner nation officials from across regions to encourage regional interaction and problem-solving.
- They provide neutral venues for addressing regional conflicts.
- They offer one of the few security-related engagement tools for smaller countries that have limited military-to-military engagement with the United States.

The study team's key conclusion is that centers should improve existing data collection and outreach tools to gather information that would be more helpful in evaluating program effectiveness and assessing impact. They could complement such efforts with information from alumni and from other U.S. government officials who can testify to the impact that RC pro-

grams have had over the long term. Centers could then analyze the information they collect in ways that enable them to assess their impacts. By gathering consistent and comprehensive data over time, the centers can develop more insightful evaluations of the impacts their programs have on the advancement of their stated goals.

Stakeholders, for their part, should issue clearer guidance with an eye toward measurable objectives, and they should follow up by conducting their own assessments of whether the RCs have met their defined goals. OSD should further encourage regionally oriented DASDs—who are the sources of the centers’ primary policy guidance—to engage the centers actively and take full advantage of them as tools for advancing U.S. objectives in their regions.

Being unable to identify which programs have the most impact makes it difficult to determine which programs to maintain or reduce during times of budget pressure. With changes made to the way in which the RCs evaluate their programs, RC stakeholders could understand the impact of any future budget reductions they are directed to accommodate. In the meantime, however, the RC enterprise as a whole should consider identifying efficiencies that could enable cost savings while preserving core RC programs.

Brief Outline

Though each of the five centers strives to advance similar objectives, each emerged in a different context. Chapter Two explains the centers’ origins by providing a brief history of each, as well as of the GCSC.

Chapter Three outlines the authorities underpinning the centers’ missions, the evolution of the regional center governance structure over time, and the multiple iterations of policy guidance that OSD has given to the centers since it began (formally) doing so in 2008.

Chapter Four describes the courses and programs that each of the centers execute, including core courses, specialized and advanced courses, and workshops aimed at center alumni. Drawing on data from FY2012, the chapter presents detailed information on each program, such as duration, number of participants, and cost. The chapter also describes programs that the centers undertake outside the classroom, including planning workshops for senior partner nation officials, Track II “nonofficial” confidence-building initiatives, and academic research.

Chapter Five examines the business practices that the centers employ to implement their programs and extend their impacts—such as incorporating stakeholder objectives into program curricula, allocating program slots among countries, and engaging center alumni—with an emphasis on how these practices help the centers achieve stakeholder objectives. Chapter Five further reviews the centers’ sources of funding, including both core operating budgets and funds they receive from other organizations—primarily OSD functional offices, DoD agencies, and COCOMs—that sponsor programs at the RCs. The chapter concludes with a review of how the centers themselves plan to adjust to a likely reduction in resources; centers’ decisions regarding what to cut and what to preserve provide valuable insights into the centers’ priorities and their assessments regarding which programs add the greatest (or least) value.

Chapter Six assesses the impacts that the centers have had on U.S. interests. Quantitative metrics have generally been inadequate for this task to date, though the chapter does identify some two dozen ways in which stakeholders believe that the RC enterprise has advanced DoD goals and objectives. The chapter continues by examining the ways in which the centers and their stakeholders have attempted to assess the centers’ program execution and measure their

outcomes, pointing out ways to improve data collection and analysis to support effective measurement of effectiveness.

Chapter Seven reviews the reasons why it is difficult to measure the impact of long-term professional education programs. The chapter identifies potential lessons learned from efforts to measure impact by similar U.S. government programs, such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program and the State Department's Fulbright Scholar program. Most importantly, the chapter recommends ways in which the RC enterprise can use both new and existing tools to collect better data and steps that the centers can take to analyze this information to provide insights into the enterprise's overall impact.

Finally, Chapter Eight offers recommendations on how improvements to the RC enterprise's governance and administration could improve their effectiveness and better enable the centers to measure their impact. The chapter also summarizes and addresses "philosophical" debates regarding the centers' missions that have the potential to alter their path forward, such as whether they should become threat-focused centers of excellence or maintain their regional orientation, and whether the enterprise should shift resources toward the Asia-Pacific region to support the strategic rebalance or whether it should emphasize other regions to compensate for it. Finally, the chapter identifies steps that the enterprise can take to share burdens with partners and to reduce costs with minimal negative impact on center programs.

Regional Center Missions and Histories

This chapter provides a brief history of each of the RCs, including the policy imperatives for founding them, the roles they have played in supporting U.S. policy, and adjustments that have been made in response to changes in both the security environment and in U.S. policy.

George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (GCMC)

GCMC History

The Berlin Wall fell in 1989, followed in 1991 by the breakup of the Soviet Union. Free from control of Moscow, a number of Central and Eastern European countries set out to form democratic governments and to become part of the Euro-Atlantic community. NATO member nations supported these broad strategic goals but felt that these countries were not yet ready to assume full NATO membership. At the same time, Alliance members wanted to avoid conditions that might drive the countries to drift back into Moscow's sphere of influence. As part of a strategy to "encourage" these countries to develop the capacity to contribute to—and ultimately join—NATO, the United States sought to bolster the security of these nascent democracies while helping to integrate them into Western institutions.

In furtherance of this objective, on June 5, 1993, the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) formally established the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, located in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Prior to that, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney had signed DoD Directive 5200.34 in November 1992 to create the policy framework for such a center. In December 1994, a memorandum of agreement was signed by EUCOM and by the German Ministry of Defence (MOD) to make GCMC a German-American partnership. GCMC is the only bilateral DoD security studies institution.

GCMC was "founded on three assumptions:

1. even peaceful, democratic governments require an effective national defense;
2. regional stability will be enhanced when legitimate defense requirements are planned and organized within the framework of democratic governance; and
3. a network of compatible democratic security structures will enhance the continent's prospects for harmony and security."¹

¹ GCMC internal document, 1996.

A decision was made to house GCMC at the U.S. Army Kaserne in Garmisch—a logical choice because facilities and capacity already existed there, including housing for visiting students. The facilities had hosted the U.S. Army Russian Institute (USARI), which had the mission of “providing graduate level Russian language and area training pertinent to staff and military attaché duties in support of the Department of the Army Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program.”² Although USARI’s mission formally ended in 1993 (and its facilities were converted for GCMC use), GCMC still provides training for FAOs who specialize in European and Eurasian studies.

Alongside USARI was the Partner Language Training Center—Europe (PLTCE), which operated under the aegis of U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR). Prior to 1993, the mission of PLTCE was to provide instruction in languages other than Russian to these FAOs. PLTCE still exists today and continues to “provide flexible language training for U.S. personnel while offering English and strategic language instruction and expertise to NATO allies and world-wide partners.”³

Mission and Purpose

Named after Secretary of State George Marshall, GCMC “dedicated [itself] to stabilizing and strengthening post–Cold War Europe by helping aspiring democracies of Central and Eastern Europe and the new Republics of the former Soviet Union to develop national security organizations based on democratic principles.”⁴ GCMC addressed two critical needs:

1. It prepared countries for eventual NATO membership by helping participants understand NATO and the Euro-Atlantic community more broadly.
2. It allowed Western countries (and NATO) to “demonstrate” their commitment to ensure that these countries would be invited to join NATO at an appropriate time.

Today, GCMC’s mission is to “create a more stable security environment by advancing democratic institutions and relationships, especially in the field of defense; promoting active, peaceful security cooperation, and enhancing enduring partnerships among the nations of North America, Europe, and Eurasia.”⁵ Stakeholders see GCMC as a key element of engagement with countries in strategically important regions where other instruments for engagement are constrained. This includes the Caucasus, Central Asia, and other Central and Eastern European NATO partner nations. In this capacity, stakeholders have indicated that GCMC provides two important functions:

² According to GCMC’s website, USARI students “studied everything they could about the Russian language, ideology and political structure as well as history, literature and sociological characteristics of the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, developing a network of experts on Soviet military and political thought. Faculty consisted of former Soviet citizens who were born, raised and educated in Russia. The first were recruited after World War II from displaced-persons camps and included lawyers, professors, doctors and later consisted of defectors with similar professional credentials who had moved West.”

³ DSCA, *Regional Centers for Security Studies: FY2011 Annual Report*, undated(c), p. 25.

⁴ GCMC internal document, 1996.

⁵ GCMC, *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, April 30, 2012.

1. It provides a safe, neutral forum for countries with unresolved disputes to discuss sensitive security issues.⁶
2. It keeps partner countries focused on the utility of adopting the Euro-Atlantic “model” as they formulate national security strategy and develop their security sector.⁷

OSD Policy adjusted GCMC’s mission after September 11, 2001, to address the security challenges of a post-9/11 world. In coordination with OSD and EUCOM, the center expanded its consideration of functional challenges,⁸ increased participation by countries outside its traditional area of focus, and invited officials of a wider range of ranks.

GCMC also hosts the Partnership for Peace Consortium (PfP-C), which is an international association of institutes of higher learning in defense and security affairs that is supported by the United States, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and NATO. Some GCMC operations and maintenance (O&M) funding goes to supporting PfP-C, but most U.S. funds to support PfP-C come from the Warsaw Initiative Fund (WIF). Partner nations provide funding and in-kind support as well.

The first participants in GCMC’s programs included countries in the European theater, as well as republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU). In 1994, for example, out of the 75 participants who took part in the center’s 19-week residential program (the predecessor of today’s 10-week Program on Advanced Security Studies [PASS]), about 80 percent were from countries in the EUCOM area of responsibility (AOR), 10 percent were from Russia, and 10 percent were Americans. More than half of all early participants spoke Russian but no English. Today, the number of Russian-only speakers has decreased to roughly 20 percent, though even among this group a number speak rudimentary English.

Central Asian countries were included in the GCMC program for several reasons. First, they were a part of the FSU, and they were brought together with other FSU countries to engage in a dialogue on a governance prototype that followed the Western model. As a senior OSD official explained, the hope was that Central Asian countries would be exposed to Western democratic ideals and governance, as exhibited by NATO member states, that would serve as a model for reforming their own institutions.⁹ Second, it made sense logistically to bring them to Garmisch because many of them spoke Russian, and the Russian language capabilities at GCMC allowed for courses to be conducted in English with simultaneous translation into Russian and German. As a result of these dynamics, Central Asian officials participate primarily in Marshall Center programs even though the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) also conducts programs in this region.¹⁰

⁶ A senior OSD official noted that “GCMC is helpful in bringing together players who may not otherwise get along. Officials from opposing governments will come to Garmisch, however, and will have a discussion that is ‘quasi-official’ but also done in an environment that allows for openness and frankness.”

⁷ A senior OSD official who provides policy to the region stated that his office wants participants to look more to Europe as a model and not the Middle East.

⁸ A former senior official at GCMC in 2002 noted that the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) at the time said that his number one priority in 2002 was the “Global War on Terrorism” and that he wanted a specific focus on combating terrorism. Interview with OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013.

⁹ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

¹⁰ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

In the years since GCMC's establishment, most Central European countries have joined NATO—thanks in part, several NATO International Staff officers and OSD officials claimed, to GCMC's training and education initiatives.¹¹ GCMC's engagement focus has therefore shifted increasingly to the East (Central Asia and the Caucasus) and to the South (the Balkans). Current Marshall Center participants increasingly come from these countries, although the newer NATO countries also send robust cohorts.

Current GCMC Policy Guidance

OSD directed the Marshall Center to address a number of specific issues in FY2013–FY2014.¹² This included the implications of the strategic rebalance and the transition of the NATO mission in Afghanistan for European allies and Euro-Atlantic security organizations. It also instructed the center to maintain an emphasis on security challenges relevant to the European theater, including terrorism, illicit trafficking, transnational organized crime, environmental issues, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance/disaster response (HA/DR). The guidance specifically tasks GCMC with developing programs on cybersecurity and space policy. These latter topics require faculty with specialized expertise, which several centers reported have been difficult to hire. The OSD priorities memo directed GCMC to expand its engagement with Central Asia, making clear that this region lies squarely within the Marshall Center's AOR. (As will be discussed later, the NESA Center has also expanded its outreach in Central Asia, and the two have not always fully coordinated and deconflicted their efforts.)

Programmatically, OSD directed the center to increase its outreach activities “in order to better balance the resident and outreach arms of the GCMC program,” suggesting—as several GCMC officials themselves noted—that the Marshall Center's greatest value in these activities lies in short, targeted in-country seminars rather than lengthy residential courses.¹³ It also instructed the center to make certain, whenever practical, that the experts in transnational threats have regional expertise to ensure that regional nuances and contexts are captured in addressing global security challenges.

Unique Partnership with Germany

Due to its unique partnership with the German MOD, the Marshall Center reached out to countries with which the United States typically had limited military-to-military engagement—most notably with Mongolia and Afghanistan, countries that are located outside of GCMC's area of operations but have close ties with Germany.¹⁴ In addition to the above expansion of mission since 2001, GCMC was also called upon to engage more with partners in the region affected by NATO operations in Afghanistan, which led it to increase its interaction with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asian countries. As the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan proceeds, one senior EUCOM official said, GCMC will look for ways to stay engaged with partner nations that were involved with the International Security Assis-

¹¹ A December 2012 NATO report to foreign ministers identified a significant need for defense education. GCMC is currently offering a substantial portion of the required education and training.

¹² Peter F. Verga, Chief of Staff to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, “FY13–14 Priorities for the Regional Centers for Security Studies,” memorandum to regional center directors, January 23, 2013b.

¹³ Interview with senior Marshall Center official, Garmisch, Germany, January 14, 2013.

¹⁴ GCMC, “Command Brief for General Accounting [*sic*] Office,” January 13, 2013a, slide 4.

tance Force (ISAF; particularly NATO-aspiring nations) to facilitate continued “intellectual interoperability.”¹⁵

Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS)

APCSS History

After World War II, a number of Asia-Pacific countries achieved rapid growth and stability under the security warranty of U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM). By the early 1990s, prosperous economies, such as the “Four Asian Tigers”—Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan—emerged in the region. As the region’s economy experienced rapid growth, its security needs evolved.

The United States has shifted its security posture from largely unilateral military deployments in the 1950s and 1960s to multilateral, non-warfighting activities in the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century to address the security needs of diverse regional actors.¹⁶ In the meantime, Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii identified the need for a DoD institution to support PACOM by providing innovative, regional approaches to addressing complex security problems in Asia. In 1994, Senator Inouye introduced an amendment to the Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 1995 to establish a Marshall Center–like organization that would support PACOM.¹⁷ In 1995, President Bill Clinton signed the bill, which included \$3 million to establish the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS). APCSS opened its doors at Camp Smith and the Waikiki Trade Center in 1995. In June 2000, the center moved to an independent facility at Fort DeRussy, in Honolulu’s Waikiki neighborhood.

By 2011, the center reported that it had trained 928 graduates and participants from 67 countries through 17 resident programs and Track II activities, totaling 18,412 participant days. APCSS alumni recently created six new associations, bringing the total associations to 54.¹⁸ The frequent participants of APCSS programs include close U.S. allies in the region: Indonesia (220), Australia (177), Thailand (278), and the Philippines (278). APCSS has expanded the number of invitations sent to nations in the region that could play important geostrategic and economic roles, such as India (247), South Korea (134), and China (71).¹⁹

¹⁵ A senior EUCOM official expressed EUCOM leadership’s position that the U.S. government “cannot search for trust in time of emergency,” meaning that investments made in organizations like GCMC pay dividends in times of need. “These relationships that are built at institutions like GCMC cannot be made quickly and take time. The ‘intellectual interoperability’ from this engagement must be done in theater because it is too costly and time-consuming to bring everyone to D.C. for this intellectual transfer.”

¹⁶ James A. Winnefeld, Jonathan D. Pollack, Kevin N. Lewis, L. D. Pullen, John Y. Schrader, and Michael D. Swaine, *A New Strategy and Fewer Forces: The Pacific Dimension*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, R-4089/2-USDP, 1992.

¹⁷ Bryan Greenstein, “The Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies: Contributing to Regional Security Capacity-Building,” *JFQ*, No. 47, 4th quarter 2007.

¹⁸ DSCA, *Regional Centers for Security Studies: FY2011 Annual Report*, undated(c), p. 11.

¹⁹ APCSS, “APCSS Summary of FY12 Programs in Support of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy & U.S. Pacific Command,” briefing to the PDASD Board for Regional Center Oversight, Washington, D.C., January 30, 2013c, slide 10.

Mission and Purpose

APCSS was patterned on the vision of Marshall Center, strengthening the ties between PACOM and the military and civilian leaders from countries in the region.²⁰ At the core of its mission, APCSS supported PACOM by developing and sustaining relationships among security practitioners through executive education, leadership development, and organizational capacity-building.²¹

The center defines its mission as “Building capacities and communities of interest by educating, connecting, and empowering security practitioners to advance Asia-Pacific security.” Its vision for implementing this goal includes five elements:

- serving as a venue of choice for professional military education (PME)
- facilitating security assessments and approaches
- building capacity for individual leaders and organizations
- analyzing security information and enabling strategic understanding of complex challenges
- developing security-related communities of interest and expertise in the Asia-Pacific region.²²

Current APCSS Policy Guidance

For FY2013–FY2014, OSD directed APCSS to build capacity and common perspectives on a wide range of regional and subregional challenges, including maritime and border security, transnational threats, humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism, stability operations, space policy, and cyber security, as well as to build new partnerships, share best practices, and improve understanding of U.S. policies.

Both OSD and PACOM instruct APCSS to promote defense reform, address maritime security, build HA/DR capacity, address such transnational threats as climate change and water security, and facilitate confidence-building measures in areas of historical tensions.²³

Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS)

CHDS History

During the 1980s, as many Latin American countries transitioned to civilian rule after long periods of military domination, officials from the region became concerned about government civilians’ lack of experience with security issues and about the fragility of civilian control over military institutions. Regional leaders requested U.S. help to professionalize civilian officials,²⁴ most vocally at the 1995 Defense Ministerial of Americas (DMA) in Williamsburg, Virginia.²⁵ In response, during the second Defense Ministerial held at Bariloche, Argentina, the follow-

²⁰ APCSS, *History and Seal of the APCSS*, undated(b).

²¹ APCSS, *Annual Report*, 2010a, p. 3.

²² APCSS, *Annual Report*, 2012a, p. 2.

²³ PACOM, *PACOM Fiscal Year 2013 Theater Campaign Order*, para. 3.C.12, undated. Also Verga, 2013b.

²⁴ Interview with senior CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

²⁵ CHDS, *FY2011 Annual Report*, undated(d), p. 5.

ing year, Secretary of Defense William J. Perry proposed the creation of an RC that could help educate civilian officials and solidify civilian authority over armed forces in the region.²⁶ After a year's preparation, CHDS began operation in the fall of 1997, located at Fort Lesley J. McNair, the site of the National Defense University's campus in Washington. In 2013, the Center was renamed the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS) to honor the former Secretary's role in establishing the center.

Mission and Purpose

The mission of CHDS is to provide high-quality education for civilian and defense personnel in order to foster mutual trust, build partner capacity, inform national security policies and strategies, raise regional threat awareness, and promote critical thinking on global issues.²⁷ A key component of CHDS's mission—stemming from its origins as a tool for reinforcing civilian authority in countries recently emerging from military dictatorships—lies in its strong focus on educating civilians in defense matters. Throughout its existence, about 75 percent of CHDS participants have been civilians.²⁸

Current CHDS Policy Guidance

In FY2013–FY2014, OSD tasked CHDS to focus on several priorities:

- Strengthen civilian control of the military by building capacity among civilian defense professionals.
- Promote national security strategic planning.
- Enhance partner nations' participation in multilateral activities.
- Facilitate whole-of-government solutions by strengthening defense support to civilian authorities.
- Develop common understanding of security challenges.

The U.S. Southern and Northern Commands (SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM, respectively) provided consolidated guidance for FY2012 that was consistent with these priorities.²⁹ The consolidated guidance memo also directed CHDS to conduct four specific events in direct support of SOUTHCOM and another three in support of NORTHCOM, which requested that the center make a concerted effort to foster greater participation in CHDS courses by Mexican military officers.

Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS)

ACSS History

Following bipartisan discussions with U.S. European Command, the House National Security Committee in June 1995 requested that DoD develop an African center that would promote

²⁶ CHDS, "About the Perry Center," webpage, undated(a).

²⁷ CHDS, "CHDS brief to PDASD Board," January 30–31, 2013.

²⁸ Interview with senior CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

²⁹ CDRUSSOUTHCOM, "Consolidated Combatant Commander Guidance to CHDS for FY 2012," August 9, 2011.

democratic principles and civilian control of the military. In March 1998, President Clinton made a major trip to Africa, the first by a U.S. president to sub-Saharan Africa in over 20 years. While there, Clinton proposed to establish an Africa-focused institution patterned on the Marshall Center to increase dialogue regarding security challenges in the region.³⁰ In March 1999, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) was formally established and headquartered in Arlington, Virginia. It became the first sustained U.S. government (USG) initiative to engage African security leaders in promoting good governance and strengthening security institutions.

Mission and Purpose

The mission of the center has been to advance U.S. policies “by strengthening the strategic capacity of African states to identify and resolve security challenges in ways that promote civil-military cooperation, respect democratic values, and safeguard human rights.”³¹ The center facilitates exchanges of ideas tailored specifically to African concerns and builds trust between the United States and African countries.³² ACSS addresses a range of security-related topics that are critical to the region: maritime security, counterterrorism, and military professionalization. The center operates two offices on the continent—one in Ethiopia and one in Senegal, which opened in 2006 and 2008, respectively—to engage in outreach, facilitate ACSS events in the region, and support regional alumni associations.³³

Since its establishment, ACSS has played a vital role in engaging high-level African leaders from the civilian, military, and nongovernment sectors. ACSS’s first educational program was a senior leaders seminar in Dakar, Senegal, in May 1999, which attracted 115 senior-level leaders from the civil and military sectors.³⁴ Since then, the center has provided education and instruction for high-level government leaders, including six current and former African presidents and 683 cabinet-level officials and general officers.³⁵ In total, ACSS has instructed fellows from 53 African countries.

Current ACSS Policy Guidance

OSD directed ACSS to focus on the following priorities in FY2013–FY2014:³⁶

1. **Countering Violent Extremism and Counterterrorism:** Promote multilateral approaches to deter and defeat terrorist groups, and help African governments address the root causes of radicalization and violence.
2. **Transnational Security Challenges:** Promote regional capacity to address such transnational threats as illicit trafficking, maritime safety and security, and emerging environmental challenges.

³⁰ ACSS, “History,” web page, undated(c).

³¹ ACSS, “About: Mission & Vision,” web page, undated(a). Also DSCA, *Regional Centers for Security Studies: FY2011 Annual Report*, undated(c), p. 5.

³² Interview with ACSS officials, Washington, D.C., February 19, 2013.

³³ ACSS, “Regional Offices,” web page, undated(d).

³⁴ ACSS, undated(c).

³⁵ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

³⁶ Verga, 2013b.

3. **Security Sector Transformation:** Support comprehensive, whole-of-government national security strategy development, build security sector capacity, and professionalize national security cadre.
4. **Peacekeeping and Stability:** Reinforce efforts of African states and regional organizations to prevent and respond to regional security challenges.
5. **Promote and Preserve Partnerships:** Develop and maintain communities of interest among African leaders and stakeholders, and leverage these relationships to promote democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law.

Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA)

NESA Center History

Established in 2000 to deepen engagement with security partners in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia,³⁷ the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) is the newest of the five regional security centers. It was established in part, according to a December 1999 OSD staff memo to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, because “the standard repertoire of military engagement tools available to the CINCs [commanders-in-chief, now referred to as geographic combatant commanders], however, is not well suited to addressing some of the most salient issues confronting the region, such as proliferation, the security implications of oil and water policy, the roots of extremism and terrorism, environmental concerns, and conflict resolution.” A center specifically for the Middle East would help fill these gaps, the memo stated, by addressing these challenges in a regional context. “Only by addressing these issues in the context of [its] history and sociology can a strategy of engagement with the region be successful.” Such a center would also help to “bridge the deep divisions in the NESA region”³⁸ by serving as a U.S. government entity that would transcend internal bureaucratic divisions; U.S. engagement had been hindered, the memo continued, by the fact that parties to regional conflicts fell under different U.S. combatant commands. (EUCOM covered Israel, for example, while U.S. Central Command [CENTCOM] was responsible for most Arab states. India and Pakistan were divided between PACOM and CENTCOM, respectively.)³⁹

Mission and Purpose

NESA’s mission is “to enhance stability in the Near East and South Asia region by providing a professional academic environment where the key security issues facing the region can be addressed, mutual understanding is deepened, partnerships are fostered, security related decision-making is improved, and cooperation is strengthened among military and security professionals from regional countries and the United States.”⁴⁰ It advances these goals, NESA Director James Larocco wrote in a cover memo to the center’s FY2013–FY2014 program plan,

³⁷ Franklin D. Kramer, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, “Establishing a Near East-South Asia Center for Security Studies—Action Memorandum,” memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, December 17, 1999. Also NESA Center, “About Us: Mission & Vision,” web page, undated(a).

³⁸ Kramer, 1999.

³⁹ Kramer, 1999.

⁴⁰ Kramer, 1999. See also NESA Center, “NESA FY13 Program Brief for the GAO Engagement Team,” slide presentation, September 13–14, 2012d, slide 2.

by “building sustained, engaged communities of influence and partnerships among security professionals and opinion-makers in the NESA region.”⁴¹

Current NESA Center Policy Guidance

OSD’s FY2013–FY2014 guidance to the NESA Center,⁴² which notes that the *Defense Strategic Guidance* continues to place a premium on engagement with partners in the Middle East, emphasizes that the United States will place a priority on countering violent extremism, proliferation, and Iran’s destabilizing policies, as well as preventing Iran’s development of a nuclear weapon, upholding commitments to regional allies and partners, and supporting Israel’s security. The OSD guidance directs NESA to focus on the importance of reforms—particularly in newly democratic countries—that promote long-term stability, civilian control of the military, transparency, and accountability. It also calls for increased participation by Iraqis, Libyans, Palestinians, and Jordanians, as well as by partner officials from outside the traditional defense and foreign affairs agencies. It also calls for efforts to promote greater intraregional cooperation among the countries of both the Maghreb and the Gulf, integrate Iraq into the region, promote better Indo-Pakistani relations, and promote interactions between Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinians.

Programmatically, the OSD guidance directs NESA to focus courses and programs on a range of specific topics, including defense reform, democratic transitions, national security and counterterrorism strategy development, Afghan border security, Indian Ocean security, and HA/DR. The guidance also calls for a focus on such emerging issues as establishing civilian control of new security forces, environmental security, and health security.

The OSD guidance recognizes the NESA Center’s extensive involvement in Track II non-official confidence-building measures and “Track 1.5” back-channel diplomatic initiatives by specifically calling on the center to engage in such efforts, including India-Pakistan confidence-building measures and Israeli-Palestinian dialogues. It similarly charges NESA with involving extra-regional actors in key regional issues, building on the center’s unique ability to facilitate broader dialogues on Middle Eastern security. Specifically, it directs NESA to continue inviting Turkey to center events and to engage Russia on regional security issues in which it plays an active role, including challenges related to Iran, Syria, Afghanistan, and proliferation.

NESA also works to advance CENTCOM’s priorities, as characterized by the lines of effort (LOEs) in the Command’s theater campaign plan (TCP). Among them are countering the Afghan and Pakistani insurgencies, countering violent extremist organizations, combating weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), undermining Iranian nuclear intentions, and building partner capacity.⁴³ Although NESA coordinates with PACOM and U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) regarding South Asia and the Maghreb, respectively, the center does not reference these COCOMs’ TCPs as documents that guide its activities; indeed, neither COCOM provides NESA with written taskings, though they do work together on NESA programs within their respective AORs.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA), *FY13–14 Program Plan*, memorandum to the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, from James A. Larocco, May 11, 2012b.

⁴² Verga, 2013b.

⁴³ Taken from 2011 CENTCOM TCP, as cited in NESA Center, 2012d, slide 10.

⁴⁴ Interview with NESA Center officials, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013. Also see NESA Center, 2012d, slide 10.

Global Center for Security Cooperation (GCSC)

GCSC was created in 2007 to help the regional centers coordinate their activities and to help prevent duplication of effort by the various DoD DIB activities. “The mission of the GCSC,” according to its terms of reference (TOR), “is to synchronize, integrate, and deconflict selected international military education providers’ capabilities” in support of OSD and Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) priorities, the COCOMs’ theater security cooperation objectives, and the five regional centers.⁴⁵ According to its ToR, it does so by

- establishing a consortium of international military education providers
- enhancing OSD Policy dissemination
- increasing awareness of DoD international partner education and training resources, including curricula, subject-matter expertise, lessons learned, best practices, and capability to meet unforecast training requirements.⁴⁶

OSD’s guidance on primary and secondary geographic areas of responsibility also charges GCSC with maintaining an online library of activities for use by policymakers and regional center staff planning future activities and with helping to coordinate (along with OSD Policy, the affected COCOMs, and the primary regional center) RCs’ plans to hold activities in their secondary geographic AORs.⁴⁷

One of the GCSC’s primary products is a monthly report on DIB activities taking place over the subsequent 180 days across a consortium of DoD programs. It prepares this report at the direction of OSD Policy as a means of presenting a common operating picture of ongoing DIB and education/training activities.⁴⁸ GCSC is also charged with undertaking independent curriculum reviews of RC courses upon a center’s request.

⁴⁵ OSD, “Terms of Reference for the Global Center for Security Cooperation,” December 7, 2007.

⁴⁶ OSD, 2007.

⁴⁷ Peter F. Verga, OSD Chief of Staff, “Regional Center Dual Coverage & Out-of-Area Coordination Guidance,” memorandum, January 15, 2013a.

⁴⁸ James J. Wirtz, GCSC Director, letter to RAND, July 23, 2013.

Regional Center Management and Guidance

The governance structure for the regional center enterprise and the policy guidance given to the centers have changed a number of times in the past decade—sometimes reflecting changes in the national security environment and sometimes reflecting a desire on OSD’s part to clarify its priorities. OSD has issued a series of DoD Directives (DoDDs) and memos from senior policy officials that have changed the centers’ command structures, altered their relationships with their key stakeholders, and in some cases caused a measure of confusion over whether the centers are primarily educational institutions, security engagement resources, or policy tools. OSD has instituted procedures to coordinate policy guidance from multiple stakeholders and created new oversight bodies, although these have not always been fully integrated into the existing governance structure. After it became clear that the centers needed clearer goals and objectives, OSD developed very broad policy guidance in a 2008 memo, which was replaced five years later by directives that several senior RC officials criticized as containing too much detail.

The centers also receive direction from the regional combatant commands that tends to be more specific and operational in nature, and thus more easily implemented than the broad (and at times confusing) guidance received from OSD. The centers are therefore often more closely attuned to the COCOMs’ security cooperation goals than to OSD’s policy objectives—a dynamic reinforced by the COCOMs’ more frequent informal communication with the centers.

This chapter describes the evolution of the management structure and policy directives that guide the RC enterprise and provides details on the documents that guide the centers’ missions and activities.

Regional Center Governance

Three of the centers—the Marshall Center, Asia-Pacific Center, and CHDS—were established by DoDDs.¹ The NESA Center was authorized by a memo signed by Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen,² and the Africa Center’s establishment was announced by President Clinton

¹ DoD, DoD Directive 5200.34, “George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies,” November 25, 1992; DoD, DoD Directive 5200.38, “Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies,” January 29, 1996; DoD, DoD Directive 3200.13, “Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies,” September 3, 1997.

² Kramer, 1999.

during a trip to Senegal.³ OSD subsequently managed the RC enterprise through a series of DoDDs, policy guidance documents, and oversight bodies. In addition, Congress passed legislation in 2000 that clarified the roles and missions of the RCs. These steps are described below.

1996: The Board of Visitors for the Department of Defense Centers for Regional Security Studies

On May 1, 1996, DoD established an advisory board with the mission to “provide advice on matters related to mission, policy, faculty, students, curricula, educational methods, research, facilities, and administration” of the three regional centers that then existed (GCMC, APCSS, and CHDS) and “any other similar regional security studies centers subsequently established by the Department of Defense.”⁴ The board was to have 20 to 25 members appointed by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Defense, and it was to report to these two officials through the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

Though the board’s March 1997 charter called for it to meet two or three times each year, only three meetings of the board were announced in the *Federal Register*, as required by the Federal Advisory Committee Act, under which authority the board was established.⁵ These meetings took place on September 9, 1998; July 27, 1999; and April 26, 2000. The board was disestablished on February 19, 2002 by then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.⁶

1999: Memo Calling for a DoD-Wide Management Scheme

In 1999, in a memo to the Secretary of Defense, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD/ISA) Frank Kramer raised concerns “about the overall management and funding of the DoD-sponsored security centers,” noting that “it became apparent that the centers have grown to the point where a DoD-wide management scheme is needed.”⁷ Although OSD and the Joint Staff had established a Regional Centers Management Review Board to review the centers’ resource requirements, according to Kramer, this review board seemed to have played little or no role in the enterprise’s actual management.⁸

2004: DoDD 5200.41

The RCs current foundation guidance document is DoDD 5200.41. The Secretary of Defense signed the directive in 2004 in order to consolidate guidance for the expanding RC enterprise into a single management document that would “establish responsibilities for policy oversight,

³ See the White House, “Fact Sheet: African [sic] Center for Security Studies,” April 2, 1998.

⁴ “Charter for the Board of Visitors for the Department of Defense Centers for Regional Security Studies,” March 6, 1997. Also see Government Printing Office, “Renewal and Meeting of the Board of Visitors for the Department of Defense Centers for Regional Security Studies,” *Federal Register*, Vol. 63, No. 162, August 21, 1998, p. 44849.

⁵ “Under the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the ‘Federal Advisory Committee Act,’ notice of a meeting of the Board of Visitors for Department of Defense Centers for Regional Security must be published,” cited in Government Printing Office, “Closed Meeting of the Board of Visitors for the Department of Defense Centers for Regional Security Studies,” *Federal Register*, Vol. 65, No. 83, April 28, 2000, p. 24936.

⁶ U.S. General Services Administration’s Committee Management Secretariat, “5111—Board of Visitors for the Department of Defense Centers for Regional Security Studies,” Federal Advisory Committee Act Database, undated. Also email correspondence with DSCA official, May 23, 2013. See also U.S. General Services Administration, “Terminated Federal Advisory Committees,” webpage, February 2013.

⁷ Kramer, 1999.

⁸ Discussions with OSD and DSCA officials.

management, and support of the DoD Centers for Regional Security Studies.”⁹ The directive, which is still in effect, laid out four goals for the RCs in paragraph 3.1:

The DoD Centers for Regional Security Studies (hereafter referred to as “Regional Centers”) shall support DoD policy objectives, as set forth, in particular, in the DoD Defense Strategy and the DoD Security Cooperation Guidance, with activities designed to enhance security, foster partnerships, improve national security decision-making, and strengthen civil military relationships.

A critical role of the centers, according to the directive, is to develop legitimate civilian-led security institutions. Paragraph 3.1 continues, “A core Regional Center mission shall be to support the Department’s policies and priorities by assisting military and civilian leaders in the region in developing strong defense establishments and strengthening civil-military relations in a democratic society.” The directive also empowered the centers to conduct four types of activities to achieve their objectives: education, exchanges, research, and information-sharing.

The directive set up a bifurcated governance structure for the RC enterprise, placing the three Washington-based centers under the National Defense University (NDU) and the other two under the regional combatant commands. This is illustrated in paragraph 3.4:

Subject to the policy oversight of the USD(P), Regional Centers shall be under the authority, direction, and control of the Commander of a Regional Combatant Command or the President of the NDU. Regional Center Directors are responsible to the Commander of the Regional Combatant Command where assigned, or to the President of the NDU for implementing activities according to DoD policy.

Though these reporting relationships had a logic to them, they created a distance between the centers and OSD, which developed the policy objectives that the centers were charged with advancing. Given the centrality of education to the centers’ mission, it was logical to place the three Washington-based centers under the stewardship of NDU, DoD’s premier professional military educational institution. However, this reporting relationship ensured that the centers would be managed primarily as educational bodies, rather than as tools to advance policy objectives. The Marshall Center’s and Asia-Pacific Center’s close geographic proximity to their regional COCOMs argued for these two centers to be placed under the commands. However, the close working relationships that developed between the organizations made the centers more attuned to the COCOMs’ engagement priorities than to OSD’s broader policy goals.

According to interviews with DSCA staff and with a former senior OSD official who worked on the directive,¹⁰ the vision at this time for the centers was for each one to be on par with the others (in terms of funding and guidance). Despite multiple changes to this structure (as described below), this memorandum is still officially in effect.¹¹

⁹ DoD, “DoD Centers for Regional Security Studies,” DoD Directive 5200.41, July 30, 2004 (certified current as of December 5, 2008).

¹⁰ Interview with DSCA officials, Arlington, Va., March 7, 2013; interview with former senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 26, 2013.

¹¹ The draft DoDD 5200.41 (discussed later in this chapter) does clarify the updates in roles since then, but it remains unsigned and not in implementation.

Though subsequent memos and decisions have altered the governance structure for the enterprise, OSD has not modified DoDD 5200.41 to reflect these changes. DoDD 5200.41 has, in fact, been outdated for almost eight years. For several years, OSD Policy has been developing an update to the directive that addresses all of the major managerial changes that have taken place at the RCs since 2004, but it has not yet developed consensus for a new directive. RC directors have expressed frustration, both because their institutions' foremost guidance document fails to reflect the reality under which they operate and because anticipated changes have been looming for an extended period of time.¹²

2005: Memo Directing OSD Oversight and COCOM Control of the Regional Centers

On September 26, 2005, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memo that designated DSCA (an OSD entity) as the "executive agent for DoD Regional Centers for Security Studies." This document reaffirmed OSD's policy oversight responsibilities and directed DSCA to assume administrative responsibility for RC budgeting and personnel management, which gave OSD additional influence over the centers' annual program plans.¹³

Most notably, however, the memo placed all five centers "under the authority, direction, and control of the Commanders of the Combatant Commands." The memo made the combatant commanders and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy the raters and senior raters, respectively, for the center directors—codifying the COCOMs' roles as managers and OSD's role as higher-level overseers. The memo's only mention of NDU was to state, "The Regional Centers will continue to work with the National Defense University to ensure academic excellence"—all but ending NDU's management role in the RC enterprise.

2008: "Revalidation" of DoDD 5200.41

Despite the changes brought about by the 2005 memo, the original DoDD was revalidated—stamped "as current" without any changes—in 2008 without any formal explanation for the decision. It appears that achieving consensus on changes to DoDD 5200.41 was seen as too difficult, leading to a decision to simply update the effective date of the document. The revalidation of a document that was already out of date illustrates the complexity of organizing all key stakeholders and finding consensus on even the most basic management and oversight procedures for the RC enterprise.

2009–2011: Effort to Update DoDD 5200.41

In the wake of the revalidation, DSCA attempted to revise DoDD 5200.41 so that it accurately reflected some of the more obvious changes, such as the management and oversight roles of OSD and the COCOMs, for example. According to interviews with those who worked closely with this updating attempt, it was never completed because there were too many differences between the COCOMs and OSD.¹⁴ All of the RCs, the COCOMs, and multiple OSD offices provided detailed comments that they felt should be reflected in any updated directive. Budget

¹² Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

¹³ Program plans are formally submitted each year, through DSCA, from the regional centers to OSD. They detail the ends, ways, and means of each center for the given fiscal year in which they represent.

¹⁴ Interview with DSCA officials, Arlington, Va., March 7, 2013.

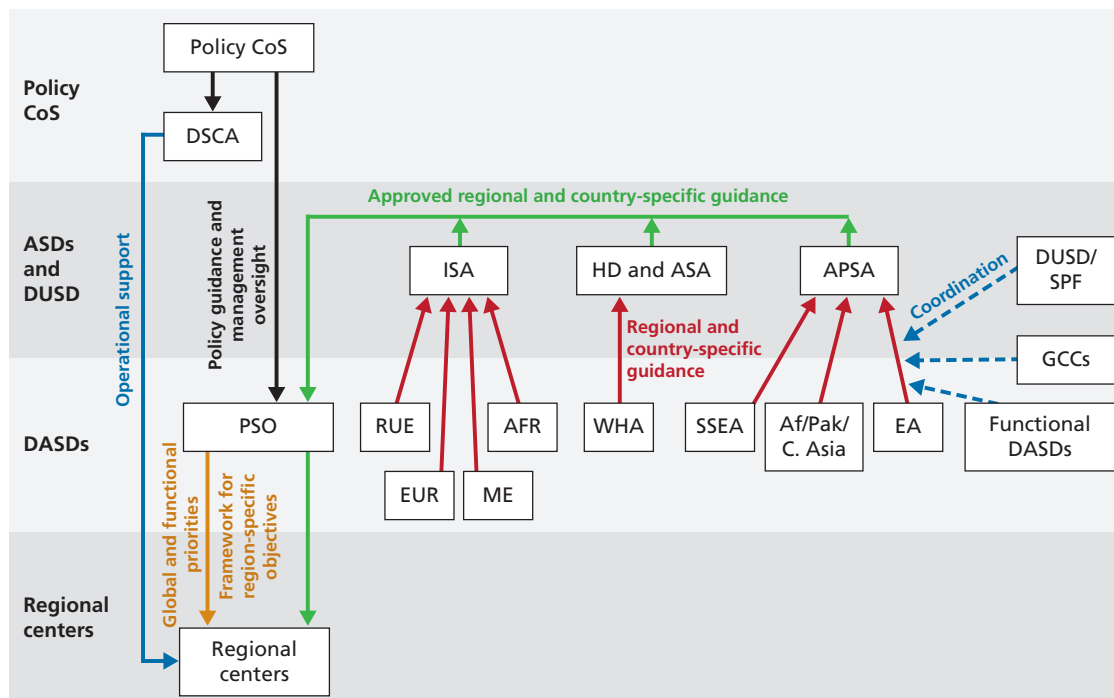
constraints beginning in 2010 made updating this document a lesser priority, and no updates were ever finalized.

2011: Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USDP) Flournoy Guidance

On February 28, 2011, USDP Michèle Flournoy issued a memo titled “Policy Guidance for the Department of Defense (DoD) Regional Centers.”¹⁵ Although primarily meant to update the centers’ policy priorities (as described below), the memo also laid out a complex management and oversight structure for the RC enterprise. It placed the centers firmly under the direction and authority of OSD for both policy direction and management. According to the document, the DASD for PSO would provide global and functional priorities and a framework for region-specific priorities. It went on to direct the regional DASDs to provide regional and country-specific guidance to the centers through PSO after coordinating with the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Forces (DUSD/SPF), the functional DASDs, and the combatant commands and after securing approval from the relevant ASDs. It also acknowledged that DSCA would continue to execute management responsibilities. The process map in Figure 3.1 illustrates the responsibilities of each actor.

In this new structure, as described by the guidance roles and responsibilities, the COCOMs were relegated to a “coordinating” role. They were to provide input to the regional

Figure 3.1
Oversight Structure Instituted by February 2011 Flournoy Memo



NOTES: AFR = Africa; APSA = Asian and Pacific Security Affairs; CoS = Chief of Staff; EA = East Asia; EUR = Europe; HD and ASA = Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs; ISA = International Security Affairs; ME = Middle East; RUE = Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia; SSEA = South and Southeast Asia; and WHA = Western Hemisphere Affairs.

RAND RR388-3.1

¹⁵ Flournoy, 2011.

DASDs' guidance to the centers, as well as to the centers' annual plans. As will be discussed later, in practice the COCOMs played and still play a far more active role in the centers' activities than is implied in the USDP memo.

In addition to establishing a new management structure for the RC enterprise, this memo directed the centers to submit their annual program plans and measures of effectiveness to DSCA for approval after coordinating them with the regional DASDs and the COCOMs. This was the first time that centers were directed to submit their measures of effectiveness to their stakeholders.¹⁶

2011–2012: Creation of PDASD Board

In an effort to better synchronize consolidated OSD regional and functional guidance to the RCs, the PSO office raised the possibility of creating a PDASD Board. This was discussed for the first time at an RC roundtable meeting held in January 2011. The idea, which was laid out in a concept paper provided by OSD/PSO, was to provide an opportunity for input that would include OSD regional and functional PDASDs and DUSD/SPF. The OSD Policy Chief of Staff would chair the board, which would meet twice a year to provide timely guidance that would be incorporated into RC planning for future years.

An unstated purpose of the board was to help reduce confusion caused by multiple OSD offices' provision of guidance to the RCs. Explaining the need for this oversight, a senior OSD official noted that too many stakeholders—regional and functional DASDs, DSCA, PSO, and the OSD Policy Chief of Staff—had a say in the management and guidance of the RC enterprise.¹⁷ The board has also increased transparency by communicating OSD's overall intent for the RCs to the centers' leadership and to other stakeholders. A senior OSD official noted that the board was meant to be a “useful mechanism for getting the attention of the RC directors and bring an appropriate level of attention to the RC.”¹⁸

OSD has never formalized the PDASD Board, however, which potentially undermines its ability to govern the RC enterprise effectively. The only document that characterizes the board's roles or authorities is the PSO-drafted “concept paper,” which has not been officially endorsed by a senior official with oversight of the enterprise. Similarly, in practice the board has been imposed on the complex management structure established by the February 2011 Flournoy memo, but nothing defines the board's responsibilities or prerogatives in relation to the multiple actors to whom the memo assigns formal responsibilities for RC oversight. The modified process map in Figure 3.2 adds the de facto role played by the PDASD Board to the RC oversight structure established by the 2011 Flournoy memo.

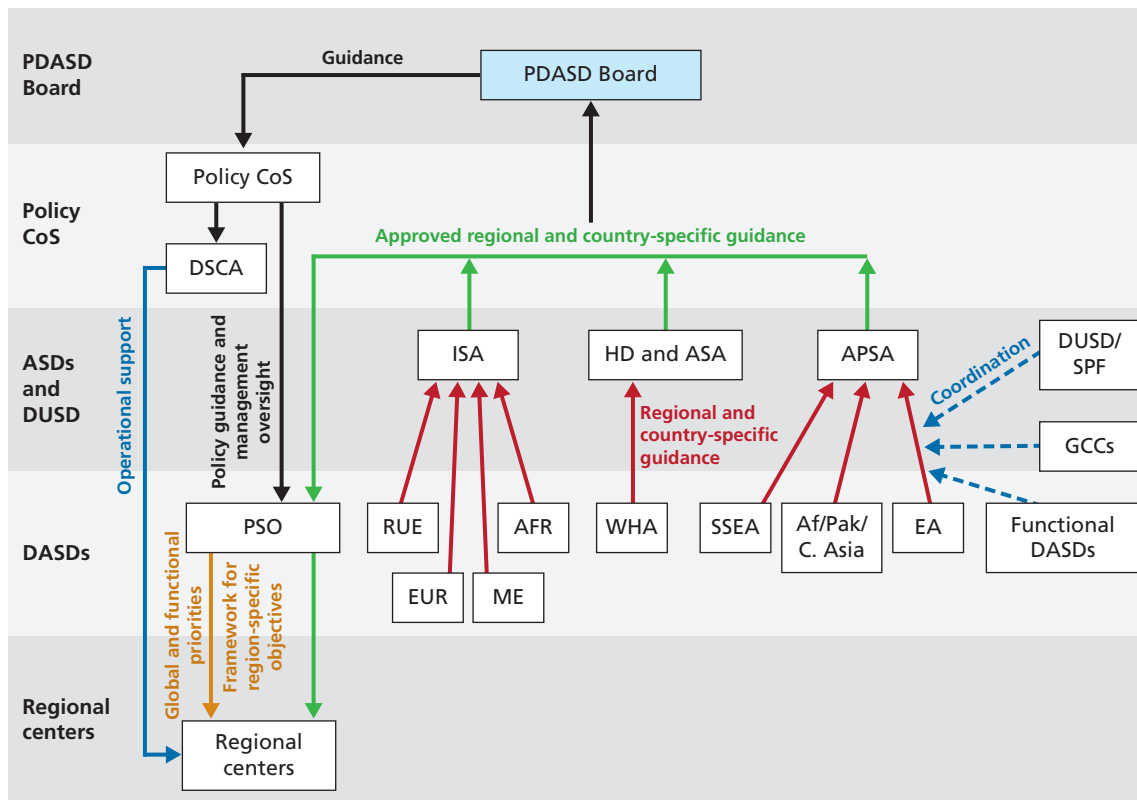
The PDASD Board gives OSD functional offices a greater voice in the RCs' direction than indicated by the 2011 Flournoy guidance. Although the 2011 guidance indicates that the functional DASDs should have “input” into the centers' regional guidance, two out of five PDASDs who exercise “oversight” of such guidance through the Board represent functional offices. (These officials come from Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict [SOLIC],

¹⁶ It does not appear, however, that OSD or DSCA ever conducted a serious evaluation of the centers' measures of effectiveness. Few interviewees were aware that, at OSD's direction, RAND had evaluated the centers' measures of effectiveness in 2011.

¹⁷ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013.

¹⁸ This senior official also felt that OSD had an advantage in its efforts to get the attention of the RC directors because they all “strive to be relevant.” Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., December 19, 2012.

Figure 3.2
PDASD Board De Facto Role in RC Oversight Structure



RAND RR388-3.2

which is responsible for counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and global transnational threats, and from Global Security Affairs (GSA) whose charter is to oversee countering WMDs, nuclear and missile defense, cyber security, and space policy.) Given that the DUSD/SPF also sits on the board, fully half (three of six) of the board's senior officials focus on global security challenges, rather than regional ones.

2013: Regional Center Dual Coverage and Out-of-Area Coordination Guidance

On January 15, 2013, the USDP released the first document that resulted from the PDASD Board, a memo promulgating "procedures for coordinating RC activities in countries that have been assigned coverage by more than one RC." The memo and its appendices clarify which RCs are the "lead" for each country and which RCs must coordinate with the lead RC prior to conducting events in that country or region.

During a discussion of this document at the RC directors' roundtable meeting on January 31, 2013, one director criticized the directive as "extreme micromanagement" of an issue that could be resolved by staff members in each center.¹⁹ The memo was deemed necessary, however, because center staff had, in fact, not always coordinated efforts. A key example is that the director of one center made multiple trips to a "seam" region—one covered by more than

¹⁹ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

one center—without coordinating the travel with OSD regional offices, COCOMs, or the other interested center. Largely in response to this, several stakeholders requested that OSD clarify the geographic responsibilities of each center and specify procedures for coordinating center activities in “seam” areas.²⁰ This memo should lead to greater coordination of efforts in countries engaged by multiple RCs.

2012–2013: Efforts to Update DoDD 5200.41

OSD resumed efforts to update DoDD 5200.41 in 2012 in an effort to capture the myriad changes that had taken place since the original directive was approved in 2004. At a February 2013 meeting of RC directors, the OSD chief of staff presented a draft version of the document to the directors, which, once signed, would have the following purposes:

1. Assign responsibilities for oversight, management, function and operations, and support of the DoD RCs.
2. Specify all applicable and relevant references.
3. Designate the DSCA director as the DoD Executive Agent for the RCs.
4. Delegate authorities of the Secretary of Defense.

The document’s second enclosure identifies each specific center’s authority while also identifying the additional authorities under Section 184 of Title 10, United States Code. Additionally, in Enclosure 3, which outlines responsibilities for all U.S. key stakeholders, the new directive would clarify the important management role that DSCA plays in the regional center enterprise, putting its responsibilities on firmer footing than the 2005 Executive Change Agent Memo.

Trends in Regional Center Enterprise Management

The RCs have gradually been under increasing OSD control since the three Washington-based centers were established in early 2000s. Whereas the RCs initially served as COCOM engagement tools and institutions with an academic character affiliated with NDU, they have since become tools to advance broader policy objectives. In the process of this transformation, NDU has largely been eliminated from direct involvement with the Washington-based centers, while the COCOMs have taken a reduced overall management role of the centers. According to a senior official who worked in OSD from 2003 to 2008, the centers did not collaborate much when they were under different organizations, and it was hoped that consolidating their management would facilitate greater integration and synergy across the RC enterprise.²¹

Not surprisingly, the COCOMs (particularly PACOM and EUCOM) opposed their loss of direct authority over the centers, in part because they relied on the RCs to further their strategic engagement in their regions. EUCOM and PACOM both expressed displeasure over a step that they perceived as an effort to pull their RCs away from them.²² This perception helps

²⁰ Interview with senior PACOM official, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013; interview with OSD official, Washington, D.C., January 29, 2013.

²¹ Interview with former senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 26, 2013.

²² Interview with EUCOM officials, Stuttgart, Germany, January 9, 2013. The official explained EUCOM’s reasons for non-concurrence: (1) EUCOM felt that its relationship with the Marshall Center needed to be more formal, and (2)

explain the slow progress with the directive. The DC-based centers' COCOMs did not indicate any major concerns with the directive in interviews.

The frequent changes to the centers' management, however, created uncertainty about how the centers should interact with their primary stakeholders. The fact that the DoDD was simply "revalidated" in 2008 without recognizing the significant changes directed by the 2005 DSCA Executive Agent memo was a reflection of a lack of consensus regarding the focus of the RC enterprise. Similarly, the drawn-out process of updating DoDD 5200.41 has created a gap in strategic guidance that hinders long-term strategic planning.

The creation of the PDASD Board has the potential to add to this confusion. The board, as noted, was inserted on top of an existing oversight structure—though no approved guidance document defines its authorities or explains how it fits into the existing management structure for the RC enterprise. It is unclear, for example, whether the PDASD Board has the authority to modify the priorities outlined by regional DASDs and approved by ASDs. The current draft of the updated DoDD does not outline the responsibilities of the PDASD Board, despite its seemingly important policy oversight role.²³ While OSD and RC officials appear to defer to the board's guidance, it should be placed on a firmer, less ad hoc foundation.

Regional Center Guidance

2008: OSD Enterprise-Wide Guidance and Policy Priorities

According to a senior OSD official, in an effort to have more RC commonality, on January 18, 2008, then-USDP Eric S. Edelman produced a three-page document entitled "Policy Guidance to the DoD Regional Centers."²⁴ Its purpose was to "update policy guidance for Combatant Commanders and Directors of the Regional Centers for Security Studies . . . to use in planning and coordinating their activities." It went on to identify the "core tasks" and "goals" of the RCs, which were as follows:

- Core tasks:
 - Counter ideological support for terrorism.
 - Harmonize views on common security challenges.
 - Build capacity of partners' national security institutions consistent with the norms of civil-military relations.
- Goals:
 - Enhanced policy understanding and mutually supportive approaches to security challenges, especially to delegitimization of extremism
 - Enhanced security communities that increase security through mutual understanding and collective or collaborative action
 - Improved sustainable institutional capacity to enhance national, regional, and international security.

EUCOM should be in the Marshall Center's direct line of authority but is not. "OSD Policy has changed the directive so that they are the only (formal) authority," the EUCOM official stated.

²³ Enclosure 3 (Responsibilities) of the draft Directive 5200.41 lists seven specific responsibilities for the USDP, none of which include any mention of the PDASD Board.

²⁴ Interview with former senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 26, 2013.

USDP Edelman specifically directed the centers to measure their success in implementing these core tasks and goals, writing, “you will assess effectiveness within a metrics-based structure coordinated between the Regional Center, DASD-PS, and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), as well as the regional DASDs and the Geographic Combatant Commands.”²⁵

Less than a month later, on February 1, 2008, PDASD for Global Security Affairs Joseph A. Benkert sent a memo entitled “Policy Priorities for DoD Regional Centers Program Planning, 2010–2015” to the directors of DSCA and the RCs.²⁶ The purpose of this memorandum, which repeats the core tasks and goals from the Edelman guidance, was to “describe regional center program planning policy priorities for the 2010–2015 POM [Program Objective Memorandum].” The “strategic vision” for the RCs focused on “building and sustaining a networked and empowered community of current and future security leaders who (1) share common values and perspectives, (2) strive to increase their countries’ capacity to meet internal security needs while contributing to the security of others, and (3) promote greater cooperation in the international arena.”

This document made clear that partner nations are not the RCs’ only clients, stating, “USG personnel are active contributors [to] and beneficiaries” of the RC enterprise.²⁷ As will be discussed, some centers have incorporated U.S. government personnel into their programs more than others.

The Benkert memo provided a crucial foundation for the centers’ extensive alumni outreach activities, making clear that maintaining relationships with center graduates creates long-term benefits for both the partner nations and the United States. Benkert wrote:

[T]he return on investment comes from sustaining and leveraging a global network of security professionals that stem from foundational regional center courses. The value of the network is measured by post-course relationship outcomes The beneficiaries are our international partners (capacity-building, enhanced security communities) and the United States (strategic listening and enhanced partner capabilities and capacity).²⁸

The memo’s third attachment specified both enterprise-wide and center-specific priorities that the centers should pursue. Most of the priorities were codified in terms of outputs (rather than outcomes), directing that seminars be conducted on specific topics or that centers add a specific number of issue-focused courses. Furthermore, progress toward executing most of the priorities would have been difficult to measure as written. Some items directed specific tasks that would either be undertaken or not (“add an additional four events,” “increase participation . . . through the addition of two short courses”); others identified vaguer end-states without specifying measurable targets (“build a network,” “develop a mechanism,” “implement IT [information technology] solutions,” “facilitate harmonization”). Attachment 2 of the memo

²⁵ “DASD-PS” refers to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Partnership Strategy, the predecessor to the DASD/PSO.

²⁶ Joseph A. Benkert, PDASD for Global Security Affairs, “Policy Priorities for DoD Regional Centers Program Planning, 2010–2015,” memorandum to the directors of DSCA and the regional centers, February 1, 2008.

²⁷ Interview with former senior Marshall Center official, Arlington, Va., March 8, 2013. A former director of GCMC stated that all RC directors were told by OSD (around 2004–2006) to increase the number of U.S. participants in the RC activities, with the rationale that they would both help convey U.S. policy and benefit from a professional experience that they could not gain elsewhere.

²⁸ Benkert, 2008.

listed the specific tools that the centers should use to advance their priorities, including “foundational/transformational” programs, short-term special topic events, research projects and academic publications, and outreach and networking events.

In short, the Edelman memo provided centers with broad strategic guidance on core tasks and objectives, while the Benkert memo’s second and third attachments provided clear direction on how the centers should work to achieve these priorities. While the implementation of the priorities, as written, would not have been easy to measure—despite USDP Edelman’s directive that the centers should, in fact, measure their achievement of overarching policy goals—the Benkert memo was sufficiently precise to serve as the basis for centers’ FY2009–FY2011 program plans, at which point new guidance was issued by USDP Flournoy.

2011: USDP Flournoy Memo

On February 28, 2011, USDP Michèle Flournoy provided updated policy guidance that superseded the Edelman memo of January 18, 2008, by building on it rather than tossing it aside. The new Flournoy guidance endorsed—with occasionally minor changes of emphasis—all of the key elements of the Edelman memo, including building communities of interest among partner nations; strengthening institutional capacity to enhance national, regional, and international security; combating terrorism and violent extremist ideologies; and strengthening partner nations’ disaster response capabilities. It also repeated the program execution missions of the Edelman memo, including fostering opportunities for U.S. government officials to participate in center programs and serve on faculties and staffs; collaborating and connecting outreach and network-building efforts with those of other regional centers, DoD educational institutions, GCSC, and the Department of State; and using the Regional International Outreach (RIO) system (the precursor to GlobalNet) as the primary means for online collaboration among the centers and alumni.

Flournoy added several new priorities to the RC enterprise that reflected, to a large degree, areas of interest to the new Presidential administration. Perhaps the most significant of these new tasks was an emphasis on whole-of-government solutions—rather than purely civilian or purely military approaches—to complex security challenges, including the stabilization of weak or failing states, the prevention and mitigation of mass atrocities, and the promotion of democratic accountability, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. Similarly, Flournoy modified her predecessor’s direction to develop disaster mitigation programs by tasking the centers specifically to “foster defense support to civil authorities in dealing with disasters” in order to enhance partners’ HA/DR capacity, but to do so in a way that preserves “the proper role of the military in democratic societies.” Collectively, these taskings charge RCs with helping partners to address the security challenges associated with essentially political issues like governance, human rights, and humanitarian assistance, but to avoid militarizing solutions by working to bolster both civilian and military capacity.

Flournoy also tasked the centers to promote critical thinking regarding the impact of resource scarcities and changes in climate on national security, a reflection of the growing perception that changes to the environment have the potential to create political and economic disruptions that threaten the security of the United States and its partners.²⁹

²⁹ The first high-profile U.S. government analysis of this issue was undertaken by that National Intelligence Council in its 2008 *National Intelligence Assessment on the National Security Implications of Global Climate Change to 2030*. See “Intelligence Report Assesses Impact of Climate Change,” *U.S. News & World Report*, June 24, 2008.

The Flournoy memo—written well after President Barack Obama had made clear his intention to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq and wind down the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan—also added areas of emphasis that hinted at the broader U.S. shift away from the Middle East and toward the Asia-Pacific region. The document directed centers to encourage partners to consider ways of “maintaining strategic stability among the major powers on the context of a dynamic security environment and shifting balances of military power,” as well as to “explor[e] increasing complexity in the global commons (e.g., space, maritime, and air domains outside national jurisdiction).”

The guidance memo failed to specify center-specific priorities, as was done in the 2008 memo, choosing instead to focus on broader strategic guidance that the centers could implement as they chose in a regional context. The Flournoy memo was issued in time for centers to use it as the basis for their FY2012 program planning.

2013: OSD Memo on FY2013–FY2014 Priorities

On January 23, 2013, in preparation for the RC directors’ meeting a week later, OSD Policy Chief of Staff Peter F. Verga issued priorities for the RC enterprise and for each RC for FYs 2013 and 2014. Notably, this document directs the centers to pursue their priorities in the context of the 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance* (DSG). It states clearly that “the RCs should play an active role in advancing the shift in DoD’s strategic emphasis from the previous decade of war to preparing for future challenges,” including the “rebalance” toward the Asia-Pacific region and the goal of promoting the United States as the “security partner of choice” for collaborative efforts to address mutual security interests.

For the first time, the document directs RCs to adopt efficient management practices and to be evaluated, in part, against how well they implement them. The document states:

RC programs should be measured against the following general planning and organizing principles:

1. In a resource-constrained environment, prioritize ruthlessly by focusing on and measuring high quality and the cost effectiveness of activities rather than their quantity or administrative convenience.
2. Eliminate all unnecessarily duplicative, contradictory, or redundant initiatives, across RCs in accordance with the policy priorities set in this document.
3. Implement good practice and lessons learned from previous RC programs (this could lead to ending or replacing less effective or efficient activities) and ensure all serials [*sic*] articulate clearly their business rationale in ends, ways, and means.

While the Verga memo does not specify targets for the centers to meet, the centers should be able to take steps toward these principles—for example, instituting assessment processes that emphasize quality and cost-effectiveness—that enable them to eliminate inefficiencies in quantifiable ways.

The second planning and organizing principle, above, suggests that center initiatives include redundant and/or inefficient activities that should be eliminated. The memo leaves it up to the centers to collaborate on the identification and elimination of unnecessarily duplicative programs. The centers have not, to date, established a process for making such decisions.

Whereas the Edelman and Flournoy memos made no reference to technology except to direct the use of RIO/GlobalNet, the Verga guidance instructs the centers to take advantage of several new computer systems that could help engage target audiences in a “cost-effective way.” In addition to calling for the continued use of RIO/GlobalNet, the memo directs centers to “use the Security Assistance Network as the primary online means for tracking DoD-sponsored foreign personnel” and to use “the Regional Centers Person/Activity Management System (RCPAMS) as the primary online system to capture and report information on programs, activities, participants, and alumni to include costs and other relevant information.” As subsequent chapters will discuss, the centers have used these networks—particularly RCPAMS—to make their alumni outreach much more effective.

The memo goes on to provide several pages of specific programmatic guidance to each RC, addressing both policy objectives to be promoted and activities to be undertaken. Compared with the two to four center-specific items addressed in the 2008 Benkert memo and the total absence of center-specific taskings in the Flournoy memo, the Verga guidance contained such detailed direction that center officials bristled at what they called “micromanagement.”³⁰ At a roundtable of center officials in January 2013, center directors expressed frustration at their inability to tackle every issue identified in the memo, citing a lack of policy guidance on emerging issues (such as cybersecurity and space policy) and challenges in recruiting technical experts in certain fields.

Other Stakeholder Guidance

Although centers’ formal guidance and budget projections come from OSD/PSO and DSCA through the processes outlined above, in practice, the centers receive additional guidance directly from the regional and functional DASDs and the COCOMs through regular, ongoing dialogue and coordination. The nature of such interaction varies by center; as a result, some centers are more closely tied to OSD priorities, others are more thoroughly integrated into the COCOM structure and used by the command as a key regional engagement tool, and others set a fairly independent path for themselves.

Written Guidance

Both OSD regional offices and the COCOMs formally communicate their priorities to the centers in writing.³¹

OSD

The regional DASDs are arguably the centers’ most important stakeholders. Since the RCs are structured regionally, they are closely aligned with the policy priorities developed by the regional DASDs. Some DASDs have begun producing regional strategies that define DoD policy objectives in their regions. OSD’s African Affairs office intends to consolidate DoD’s interpretation of multiple guidance documents into a single regional strategy that addresses priorities outlined in the National Security Strategy; Defense Strategic Guidance; Guidance

³⁰ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

³¹ This includes broad strategies for all security cooperation activities in their region, not necessarily strategy only for the RCs.

on the Employment of the Force (GEF); National Counterterrorism Strategy; and Presidential Policy Directives (PPDs) on Africa, political and economic reform in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), mass atrocities, and women, peace, and security (WPS).³² OSD's Western Hemisphere office issued a *Western Hemisphere Defense Policy Statement* in October 2012 that emphasizes building partner capacity, strengthening institutions, and becoming the region's security partner of choice. The document specifically recognizes the roles of CHDS and other defense institution-building initiatives in advancing these objectives.³³

OSD's functional DASDs, in contrast, provide little formal guidance to the RCs, with one exception. OSD/SOLIC issues guidance for its Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), which spends about \$5 million a year in the RC enterprise. This guidance provides clarification on activities and countries to be funded using CTFP money. Otherwise, there is little in the way of guidance from the functional DASDs. Its counternarcotics office, for example, does not factor the centers into DoD's counternarcotics plan, calling them "peripheral."³⁴ Similarly, the DASD for Cyber Policy has not provided any direction for how the centers should address this emerging issue, though the centers have begun to do so on their own in order to respond to regional requests.³⁵

COCOMs

In most cases, the combatant commands issue their formal written directives to the regional centers through their TCPs, which translate COCOM strategies into executable plans and taskings. PACOM, SOUTHCOM, and EUCOM³⁶ assign specific tasks to the RCs to advance TCP objectives;³⁷ PACOM also assigns responsibilities to the Asia-Pacific Center in its theater campaign order (TCO), which is its tool to operationalize the TCP.³⁸ In December 2012, EUCOM made the Marshall Center the Command's "6th component" in its TCP, placing it organizationally on a par with its operational components. This step, according to a EUCOM official, has improved the alignment of GCMC programs with EUCOM objectives.³⁹ COCOMs occasionally provide written guidance to the centers through means other than the TCP; the EUCOM J5, for example, outlined his command's key goals in "fairly robust" annual letters sent to the Marshall Center director.⁴⁰

The COCOMs fully incorporate the RCs in their theater engagement strategies and activities, which are guided by the TCP.⁴¹ RCs participate in Security Cooperation, Education and Training Working Group (SCETWG) meetings, at which OSD, COCOMs, DSCA, embassy

³² Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., December 14, 2012.

³³ DoD, *Western Hemisphere Defense Policy Statement*, October 2012c, pp. 1, 6.

³⁴ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., January 3, 2013.

³⁵ Interview with senior Marshall Center official, Garmisch, Germany, January 14, 2013.

³⁶ Interview with senior EUCOM official, Stuttgart, Germany, January 9, 2013.

³⁷ Interview with senior EUCOM official, Stuttgart, Germany, January 9, 2013.

³⁸ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

³⁹ Interview with EUCOM officials, Stuttgart, Germany, January 9, 2013.

⁴⁰ Last done in 2007 and prior to OSD's 2008 guidance to the RCs, the EUCOM commander wrote a detailed guidance document specifically for GCMC. Interview with senior EUCOM official, Stuttgart, Germany, January 9, 2013.

⁴¹ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, Tampa, Fla., January 25, 2013; interview with PACOM official, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013; interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013.

country teams, and security cooperation “providers” develop bilateral engagement plans.⁴² At such meetings, OSD and the COCOMs define their engagement priorities; embassy security cooperation officers (SCOs) help identify and define partner nation requirements; DSCA, RCs, and other security cooperation providers offer programs that can advance both U.S. priorities and partner needs; and agencies collectively determine how to allocate security cooperation resources.⁴³

Informal Guidance

Stakeholders provide a great deal of informal guidance to the RCs to complement the annual direction provided in formal policy documents and campaign plans. A great deal of this direction is provided verbally, through interaction at both senior and working levels. The dynamics between the RCs and their stakeholders, however, differ greatly. Several are far closer to their COCOMs than to OSD, primarily because they interact more closely on the day-to-day aspects of program execution; the Asia-Pacific Center and Marshall Center also take advantage of their proximity to their COCOMs to build close relationships and interact frequently.

OSD

OSD offices’ interaction with the centers ranges from weekly formal consultations to virtually no communication at all.

- The African Affairs (AFR) office is the most engaged in the centers’ activities, though the three centers that address its region (ACSS, NESA, and GCMC) respond very differently. The DASD issued a standing invitation to both the Africa Center and the NESA Center to participate in the office’s weekly staff meetings at the Pentagon, given that they are located at nearby Fort McNair; the Africa Center sends a representative virtually every week, whereas the NESA Center has never attended. The office has near-daily working-level contact with the Africa Center, according to OSD/Africa staff members, but has “minimal” interaction with NESA and “barely engages” the Marshall Center at all.⁴⁴
- OSD’s Afghanistan/Pakistan/Central Asia office interfaces regularly with the Marshall Center, particularly regarding Central Asia, and occasionally with the NESA Center.⁴⁵
- Senior officials from OSD’s Office of Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia (RUE) and its Office of European and NATO Policy (EUR) noted that neither office had engaged the Marshall Center effectively for several years, primarily because of a post-9/11 emphasis on counterterrorism rather than the trans-Atlantic alliance; both offices, however, stated that they were beginning to make proactive efforts to do so.⁴⁶

⁴² Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

⁴³ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

⁴⁴ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., December 14, 2012.

⁴⁵ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

⁴⁶ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., December 17, 2012; interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 15, 2013.

- OSD's Middle East office (ME) has no dialogue at all with the NESACenter, according to two officials in that office. "NESACenter is not a tool in OSD's engagement toolbox," one official said, noting that OSD therefore does not factor NESACenter into its regional plans.⁴⁷
- Similarly, OSD's Office of South and Southeast Asia (SSEA) asserted that the NESACenter failed to keep the office informed of its engagement in South Asia until an OSD official insisted that it do so.⁴⁸
- Several functional offices claimed to have little to no informal interaction with the centers, mirroring the relative dearth of formal functional guidance. A senior OSD official claimed that OSD/SOLIC has had "zero coordination" with the centers regarding counterdrug and organized crime issues, despite the fact that several centers address these topics,⁴⁹ and OSD's Homeland Defense (HLD) staff claimed to receive no feedback on this topic from any of the centers except the Marshall Center.⁵⁰

In some cases, as the EUR and RUE officials noted, the relative lack of engagement is due to OSD's withdrawal. In other cases—as demonstrated by NESACenter's lack of contact with all three OSD offices responsible for its region—it is the RC that sees little need to confer with its OSD stakeholders. OSD offices' failure to provide consistent "informal" policy direction to these centers is a missed opportunity to advance DoD goals through the centers.

COCOMs

Complementing any formal guidance that COCOMs may give to the RCs in their TCPs, the commands' informal interaction with the centers is frequent and robust. Conceptually, this is appropriate. OSD provides strategic policy guidance, and the COCOMs—which are more concerned with bilateral engagement and program execution in their theaters of operation—work with the centers on the execution of their initiatives.

The centers that are co-located in-theater with their GCCs—the Marshall Center and the Asia-Pacific Center—have much more frequent interaction with these stakeholders than the three Washington-based centers do.⁵¹ Their proximity allows a wide range of working-level COCOM and center staff to engage each other on center initiatives and to apply the centers' resident regional expertise to COCOM challenges. PACOM officials, for example, stated that they regularly consult with APCSS instructors when preparing for senior-level meetings or trips.⁵² The two RCs outside of Washington also seem to be more closely tied to their COCOMs than to OSD. For example, though APCSS staff have frequent meetings with the

⁴⁷ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., December 13, 2012; interview with OSD official, Washington, D.C., December 13, 2012.

⁴⁸ Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

⁴⁹ Interview with senior OSD official, January 3, 2013. An ACSS official noted one instance in which OSD/SOLIC collaborated with the regional centers—a February 2012 multi-RC counternarcotics workshop at which the keynote speaker was the DASD for Counternarcotics. Correspondence from ACSS, July 17, 2013.

⁵⁰ Interview with OSD official, Washington, D.C., January 4, 2013.

⁵¹ Both PACOM and APCSS reside in the Honolulu metropolitan area. In contrast, while GCMC and EUCOM are both located in Germany, the Marshall Center's Garmisch facility is about 200 miles from EUCOM's Stuttgart headquarters. That said, both are many miles and several time zones away from Washington, making even the Marshall Center and EUCOM "co-located" by comparison.

⁵² Interview with PACOM officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013.

PACOM commander and regularly get feedback from PACOM staff officers,⁵³ an OSD official stated that the APCSS director checks in with OSD when he visits Washington roughly twice each year and that the OSD staff who manage RC issues have few opportunities to visit Honolulu.⁵⁴ The same is true with leadership and staff at GCMC. Due to the high cost and infrequency of staff trips to the United States, there are usually fewer face-to-face engagements with OSD than with EUCOM.

Lack of proximity has not necessarily been an obstacle to close RC-COCOM ties, however, as two of the three Washington-based centers have full-time liaison officers posted at their primary GCCs. CHDS has liaisons at both SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM headquarters, and NESA has a liaison working in the CENTCOM J5 in Tampa (but no one at PACOM or AFRICOM). These liaison officers enable the commands and the centers to remain informed of—and have input into—each other’s plans and activities. In addition, incoming AFRICOM senior staff regularly visit ACSS as part of their Washington, D.C., consultations en route to assuming their new positions, and AFRICOM sends senior-level speakers to ACSS events in Washington and in Africa.

In practice, the COCOMs have developed stronger ties to the RCs than envisioned by the USDP Flournoy guidance. One senior OSD official asserted that the COCOMs often go straight to the centers with requests and directives, bypassing OSD, and are therefore “not faithful” to the formal oversight structure.⁵⁵ A German official opined that EUCOM has too much influence over the Marshall Center, suggesting that such influence makes the center more of an operational tool than a policy one.⁵⁶ On the other hand, many within OSD see the high level of interaction between the RCs and the COCOMs as positive.

Guidance Gaps

Several centers operate in more than one geographic region. (See Figure 3.3 for a map of each center’s geographic area of operations and the “seams” in which they overlap.) However, they typically do not get guidance from more than one COCOM or OSD office. NESA, for example, receives policy guidance from OSD/PSO but not from the regional OSD offices responsible for Africa (OSD/AFR), the Middle East (OSD/ME), or South/Southeast Asian Affairs (OSD/SSEA). Similarly, although NESA receives direction from CENTCOM in its TCP, it receives no such guidance from PACOM regarding its activities in South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan), from AFRICOM regarding the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania, and Libya), or from EUCOM regarding Turkey and Israel. Indeed, a NESA official stated that the center’s “bosses” are CENTCOM, OSD/PSO, and DSCA; all other interested organizations, this official said, are merely “ancillary.”⁵⁷ (NESA’s allocation of staff resources appears to be a clear indicator of the priority which it assigns to its stakeholders; though it has a full-time liaison officer [LNO] working at CENTCOM head-

⁵³ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

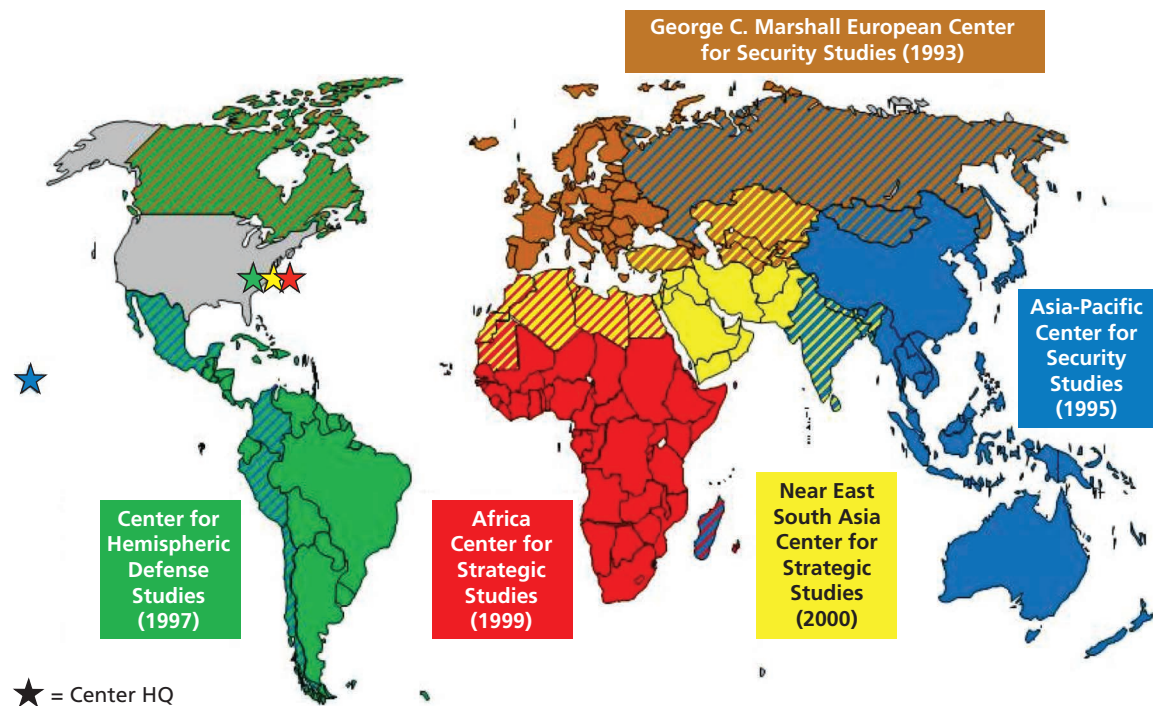
⁵⁴ Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

⁵⁵ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., December 20, 2012.

⁵⁶ Interview with NATO International Staff official, Brussels, Belgium, January 11, 2013.

⁵⁷ Interview with NESA Center official, Washington, D.C., February 12, 2013.

Figure 3.3
DoD Regional Centers' Areas of Focus



SOURCE: Verga, 2013a.

RAND RR388-3.3

quarters in Tampa, it has never sent a representative across the Potomac River to attend the weekly staff meeting held by OSD's African Affairs office.) As a result, even though the NESACenter was intended since its inception to "make a major contribution to the attainment of U.S. goals and objectives for the Near East and South Asia,"⁵⁸ according to the OSD staff memo seeking approval for its establishment, it receives no formal, written guidance regarding these goals and objectives from the offices setting them or from the COCOMs responsible for 12 of the countries in Africa, South Asia, and the eastern Mediterranean that it engages robustly.⁵⁹

Guidance to the centers regarding Central Asia can be confusing as well. CENTCOM has taken a very active role in Central Asia, not only because these countries are in its AOR but also because its dependence on Central Asian transit routes (the Northern Distribution Network [NDN]) to get supplies into Afghanistan has driven it to encourage Central Asian states to focus increasingly on Afghanistan and Pakistan. CENTCOM thus gives guidance to NESACenter—which engages in Central Asia, as well as in Afghanistan and Pakistan—on working with Central Asia in its TCP. OSD's Central Asia office, however, prefers that Central Asians attend Marshall Center programs as a way of enhancing these countries' ties to the Euro-Atlantic community. OSD therefore prefers to put GCMC in the "lead," with NESACenter in a sup-

⁵⁸ Kramer, 1999.

⁵⁹ See statistics for "NESACenter Alumni," in NESACenter, 2012d, slide 26.

porting role in the region;⁶⁰ this preference was codified in OSD's 2013 guidance memo on RC Dual Coverage and Out-of-Area Coordination.

"Guidance gaps" create three problems.

First, the existence of bifurcated guidance to two centers engaging the same countries—such as the two centers working in Central Asia, for example—has the potential to promote different engagement priorities at different centers.

Second, in the absence of appropriate guidance regarding certain countries, a center is likely to determine for itself how best to engage with the affected country. The most prominent example is that, lacking a guidance framework, NESAs have engaged in South Asia in ways that the center's leadership—not OSD or PACOM—believe most effectively advanced U.S. policy objectives in the region. This does not suggest that its South Asia initiatives have been counterproductive, though its activities there would be more likely to advance U.S. goals when executed in the context of clear direction from OSD and PACOM.

Third, current and clearly defined goals are a *sine qua non* to monitor and to assess the extent to which a center's programs have advanced DoD goals; it is challenging to measure (particularly over time) whether a center has met goals or priorities that have not been provided in writing. Thus, NESAs' activities in South Asia could be monitored and assessed more effectively if it had a clear statement from OSD and from PACOM of the objectives and accomplishments that they expected NESAs to achieve. The Marshall Center program presents a similar case. Although the center's inclusion of large numbers of Africans in its programs is acknowledged to be valuable, in the absence of guidance from OSD/African Affairs or AFRICOM, it is difficult to assess its impact on DoD's Africa priorities.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

⁶¹ GCMC does receive guidance from OSD/SOLIC regarding African participants, which OSD/SOLIC officials noted was in line with African Affairs objectives. This specific guidance and objectives are contained in the CTFP guidance. Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013.

Regional Center Activities

In 2004, OSD Policy updated its formal management of the RCs, directing them to accomplish their mission “through education, exchanges, research, and information sharing” and to do this “by assisting military and civilian leaders in the region in developing strong defense establishments and strengthening civil-military relations in a democratic society.”¹

By contrast, the proposed revision to DoDD 5200.41 develops a broad framework for the ways in which the RCs are to accomplish their mission. According to the most current version of the draft, the RCs are to “[d]evelop and implement activities consistent with guidance from the USD(P), in coordination with the ASD and DASD within OUSD(P) [the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy] responsible for affairs in the region concerned, the lead GCC, and any other GCC, consistent with Enclosure 3 of this directive, and within administrative and resource guidance from the Director, DSCA.”² This allows each RC to determine (through stakeholder consultation) the best ways to accomplish its stated mission in its respective region, recognizing that different RCs will configure their programs differently to address the particular needs of their respective regions.

Ways in Which the Regional Centers Accomplish Their Missions

To meet the objectives laid out by the USDP guidance, the RCs conduct a wide array of activities. Their academic programs are focused on resident executive development seminars (typically one to ten weeks in duration), nonresident programs (conferences, seminars, and workshops that are typically held in-region), research, and alumni outreach, to include some alumni-focused academic programs.³ Each activity type is described below, highlighting commonalities and differences by category where they exist.

Academic Programs

Foundational Courses

Residential foundational courses have served as the backbone of each RC’s academic programs. In these programs, participants gain a better understanding of regional security challenges, develop critical thinking skills, and forge new relationships with participants from different cultures and with opposing opinions. The specific topics examined in the foundational courses

¹ DoD, 2004.

² 2013 draft of revised DoDD 5200.41.

³ DSCA, undated(c), p. 2.

are based on stakeholder priorities and guidance.⁴ Most RCs have four to eight residential programs, some of which explore regional security challenges and some of which examine functional challenges that are explored in a regional context (such as border security and disaster response).

Foundational courses generally include both civilians and military officers, and they are typically designed for either mid-level or senior officials. Foundational courses are typically “extended” in duration, but the centers take different approaches to determining the length of their courses. Most RCs and stakeholders agree that some minimum amount of time is necessary for the participants to build relationships with each other, particularly when they come from adversarial states; one APCSS staff member noted that it takes several weeks for such participants to feel comfortable with each other, after which they appear much more open in their interactions with each other and with the American staff. Generally, this staff member said, four weeks is the minimum amount of time needed for participants to build lasting relationships.⁵ At the same time, center officials acknowledged that courses beyond a certain length will likely attract less-qualified students; an APCSS staff member stated that countries would not send their best people for more than six weeks,⁶ while a NESA Center senior official asserted that countries would send their most valued staff for a maximum of only 2.5 weeks.⁷

Table 4.1 shows the centers’ FY2013 “core” foundational programs.

Some of the RCs even have courses that are accredited and recognized by international academic standards. Since 2010, GCMC, for example, has implemented an agreement with the German Bundeswehr Universitat whereby participants can earn a master’s degree in international strategic studies in a year by taking courses at GCMC and at the Bundeswehr Universitat in nearby Munich. CHDS is also unique in that nations who send participants to its courses recognize and give academic credit that can be applied toward a graduate degree to those who attend CHDS courses.⁸ This demonstrates the value that client partner nations who send participants to CHDS place on the quality of the resident programs. In both cases, the centers gain credibility,⁹ and future participants have an added incentive to ask their governments to send them to the appropriate U.S.-sponsored RC. This reinforces other efforts to make the United States the “security partner of choice.”¹⁰

Advanced and Specialized Courses

Whereas core courses typically address regionwide challenges, centers also offer courses that focus on specific issues and that provide more advanced discussions suitable for subject matter experts. Most of these programs are offered in-residence. RCs have recently begun using innovative ways to reduce costs while attempting to maintain the quality of their programs. For example, CHDS precedes its classroom sessions with several weeks of online discussions so that

⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013.

⁵ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

⁶ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

⁷ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, Washington, D.C., January 17, 2013.

⁸ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁹ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁰ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

Table 4.1
Regional Center Foundational Programs

Regional Center	Course	Duration (Days)	Frequency	Number of Participants	Cost	Funding Type
ACSS	Next Generation of African Security Leaders	20	1x/year	45	\$808,000	O&M
	Senior Leaders Seminar	13	1x/year	75	\$588,000	O&M
	African Executive Dialogue	3	1x/year	30	\$250,000	O&M
	Managing Security Resources in Africa	6	1x/year	45	\$432,000	O&M
APCSS	Advanced Security Cooperation (ASC)	35 each	2x/year	150–170 total	\$1.5 million total	O&M
	Transnational Security Cooperation (TSC) Senior Executive Course	5 each	2x/year	80 total	\$337,000 total	O&M
CHDS	Strategy and Defense Policy (SDP)	21	1x/year	48	\$480,000	O&M
	Caribbean Defense and Security Course (CDSC)	10	1x/year	40	\$350,000 (UFR)	O&M
	Senior Executive Dialogue	5	1x/year	45	\$75,000	O&M
GCMC	Program in Applied Security Studies—Capacity Building (PASS-CB)	73 each	2x/year	210 total	\$2.43 million total	23% O&M 77% other
	Program on Terrorism and Security Studies (PTSS)	35	2x/year	150	\$1.18 million total	8% O&M 92% CTFP
	Seminar on Trans-Atlantic Civil Security (STACS)	21	1x/year	75	\$316,000	7% O&M 93% CTFP
	Senior Executive Seminar (SES)	8 each	2x/year	210 total	\$569,000	11% O&M 89% other
NESA	Executive Seminar	15	2x/year	90	\$1.1 million	O&M
	Senior Executive Seminar	12		30	\$550,000	O&M
	Combating Terrorism Executive Seminar	15	1x/year	45	\$450,000	O&M
	Combating Terrorism Senior Executive Seminar	15	1x/year	45	\$450,000	CTFP

SOURCES: Data represent FY 2013 program offerings as presented in each regional center's FY13–14 Program Plan submissions: *ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012a; *APCSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012c; *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e; *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, April 30, 2012f; and *NESA FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012b.

NOTE: UFR = unfunded requirement.

participants arrive with a solid base of knowledge. Thus, participants actually spend more time on knowledge transfer while spending less time (and requiring fewer resources) at the center.

Whereas foundational courses address broad security issues, advanced and specialized courses address emerging topics that require special attention beyond what can be provided in the core programs. The Marshall Center offered its Security, Stability, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTaR) residential program, for example, from 2005 to 2012, during which time it was one of DoD's only strategic stability operations education programs. It was discontinued as a residential program in FY2013 when it was clear that the pending drawdown of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan would reduce the need for such instruction. If the need re-emerged, GCMC could refashion the course content in occasional or shorter-duration non-residential events.

The Africa Center categorizes its specialized academic programs as its "thematic series" and holds most of these events in the region. They are discussed in the next section on workshops and seminars and are listed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.2 shows selected specialized and advanced courses from each center's FY2013 program plan.

Workshops and Seminars

Workshops are shorter, tailored events that typically target a partner nation's needs more than the residential courses.¹¹ They are mobile, meaning that they can be conducted in-country and away from the RC in order to reach a larger number of participants. The topics are usually country-specific, although they can also be region-specific, and they are tailored to advance partners' primary interests. Compared with the longer-duration residential courses, these events are generally logistically simpler, can be planned with a shorter time horizon, and are less expensive to execute. It is less expensive, for example, for three NESAs to conduct a workshop for 30 participants in Yemen than it is for 30 Yemeni officials to travel to Washington for an identical event. This is true for almost all RCs except for ACSS; due to the high cost of intra-African travel, ACSS estimates that Washington-based events are one-third the cost of an in-region event.¹² ACSS thus tends to hold its pan-African core programs in Washington, while it conducts mostly bilateral workshops on the continent using small teams of traveling ACSS instructors and staff.

The lasting impact of country-specific workshops and seminars may not be the same as the residential courses because of their shorter duration, their focus on knowledge transfer rather than on interactive discussion and analytic inquiry, the lack of exposure to U.S. culture and government agencies, and the lack of opportunity for participants to develop relationships with officials from other countries in their region. That said, such events reach more partner nation officials for (generally) less money, attract participants who might not otherwise be available to attend a long-duration resident course, and address partner nations' specific requirements.

The centers' ability to design a workshop on short notice helps them gain access to partner governments at senior levels, as senior officials often request the centers to conduct a workshop on a topic of interest or a topic in which they are struggling to find solutions in the short run. The ministers of defense and finance from a former Soviet republic, for example—both of whom were GCMC graduates—requested that the Marshall Center conduct a "tailored"

¹¹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹² Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

Table 4.2
Regional Center Specialized and Advanced Courses

Regional Center	Course	Duration (Days)	Frequency	Number of Participants	Cost	Funding Type
ACSS	See section on workshops and seminars and Table 4.3.					
APCSS	Comprehensive Security Response to Terrorism (CSRT)	28	1x/year	up to 112	\$900,000	CTFP
	Comprehensive Crisis Management (CCM)	28	1x/year	up to 112	\$1.16 million (UFR)	O&M
CHDS	Combating Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC)	15 online, 10 in D.C.	1x/year	12	\$100,000 (UFR)	O&M
	Advanced Civil-Political Military Relations and Democratic Leadership (ACPMR)	15	1x/year	12	\$115,000	O&M
	Perspectives on Homeland Security and Homeland Defense (PHSD)	1	1x/year	40	\$350,000	O&M
	Strategy and International Security (SIS)	15f	1x/year	12	\$115,000	O&M
GCMC	Seminar on Regional Security (SRS)	21	1x/year	45	\$161,000	18% O&M 82% other
	Program in Security Sector Capacity Building (SSCB)	21	1x/year	45	\$174,000	21% O&M 79% other
	Seminar on Combating WMD/Terrorism (SCWMD/T)	14	2x/year	120 total	\$390,000	100% CTFP and DTRA
NESA	WMD Conferences		2x/year		\$530,000	DTRA
	Central Asia Leadership Conference		1x/year		\$350,000	U.S. Army Central (ARCENT)

SOURCES: Data represent FY13 program offerings as presented in each regional center's FY13–14 Program Plan submissions: ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan, May 11, 2012b; APCSS FY13–14 Program Plan, May 11, 2012c; Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan, May 24, 2012e; and GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan, April 30, 2012f. NESA data taken from NESA, "NESA Center Presentation to PDASD Board," January 30–31, 2013b, slide 4.

seminar on an emerging topic.¹³ Similarly, immediately after taking office, newly elected officials in a South American country asked CHDS to conduct a National Security Planning Workshop (NSPW) to help the government develop a new national security strategy.¹⁴

Examples of in-region workshops and seminars that were planned for FY2013 are listed in Table 4.3.

¹³ Interview with senior Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013.

¹⁴ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

Table 4.3
Regional Center Workshops and Seminars

Regional Center	Course	Number of Participants	Location	Cost	Funding Type
ACSS	Security Sector Reform and Transformation (SSR/T)—West Africa	40	Senegal	\$92,000	O&M
	Security Sector Reform and Transformation (SSR/T)—East/Central Africa	45	Tanzania	\$205,000	O&M
	Maritime Safety and Security Seminars (2 events)	40 each	Djibouti, Mauritania	TBD	AFRICOM
	AFRICOM Academic Symposium	40	Germany	TBD	AFRICOM
	Food and Water Security	TBD	Washington	\$73,000	OSD
	East and Horn of Africa Transnational Threats Workshop	45	Ethiopia	\$576,000 (UFR)	CIT, CN, WMD
	Countering Violent Extremism in the Sahel	60	Senegal	\$531,000 (UFR)	CTFP
APCSS	Workshops—topics chosen in consultation with U.S. embassies, including resource scarcity, resource management, and crisis management (12 events)	~600	Multiple	\$650,000; \$500,000	O&M; CTFP, APRI, OHDA
CHDS	NationLab (6x/year)	300 total	Multiple	\$60,000	O&M
	National Security Planning Workshop (2 events)	100 total	Multiple	\$90,000	O&M
	In-Region Partner Institution Courses (6 events)	360 total	Multiple	\$60,000	O&M
GCMC ^a	Building Integrity in Government	90	Garmisch, Germany	\$180,000	50% O&M; 50% other
	MOD Parliamentary Relations	45	Azerbaijan	\$27,000	Other
	National Security Strategy Development	30	Kazakstan	\$43,000	O&M
	Defense Education Enhancement Program (DEEP) (7 events)	n/a	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakstan, Moldova, Montenegro	\$542,000 total	11% O&M; 89% other
	Media: Weapon or Tool	50	Garmisch, Germany	\$99,000	O&M
	NATO Smart Defense (2 events)	70 total	Bosnia, Montenegro	\$74,000 total	Other
NESA	Yemen National Security Seminar	40	Yemen	\$450,000	Other
	Pakistani Military Confidence-Building Seminar	25	Pakistan	\$275,000	Other
	Libya Human Capacity-Building Program	Not specified	Libya	\$275,000 (UFR)	Not specified

SOURCES: Data represent FY13 program offerings as presented in each RC's FY13–14 Program Plan submissions: ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan, May 11, 2012b; APCSS FY13–14 Program Plan, May 11, 2012c; CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan, May 24, 2012e; GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan, April 30, 2012f; and NESA FY13–14 Program Plan, May 11, 2012b. NESA data also taken from NESA, "NESA Initial Brief for the RAND Study," January 17, 2013a.

Ministerial and Other High-Level Regional Gatherings

RCs host high-level regional gatherings to help address emergent issues with senior representatives of partner countries. Such events generate several valuable outcomes. First, these events help establish and foster communication links between key partner nation leaders and senior U.S. officials at the centers' primary stakeholder agencies. Second, these events typically enable greater understanding of a shared security issue through dialogue and opinion-sharing, often by participants who are responsible for establishing policy in their home countries. Third, they provide a forum for key stakeholders to express their perspectives on issues in the region. Finally, they provide a "window" into how partner nation participants think and solve problems.¹⁵

The RCs are able to hold such high-level consultations—often at the cabinet level—because they have tremendous "convening authority," in the words of one senior EUCOM official.¹⁶ RCs have the capacity to gather high-level officials—either from a single government or from multiple countries in a region—in an environment where they can safely discuss sensitive issues. CHDS, for example, has brought together entire cabinets of several Latin American countries for two to three days at a time to develop their national security strategies. Through these NSPWs, CHDS has helped partner nations develop national-level strategic plans that are informed by, and consistent with, the principles of democracy and transparency that the United States works to promote.¹⁷ Similarly, the Marshall Center hosts three distinguished alumni conferences as a means of engaging senior officials from partner nations.¹⁸

Some of the centers have also held conferences, award ceremonies, and other outreach events in their regions. At least two OSD officials, however, asserted that the RCs have begun to focus too much effort on these high-profile—and often high-cost—events.¹⁹ One COCOM official agreed that some benefit is gained from ceremonial events—such as those that recognize the achievements of alumni who have reached the pinnacle of their governments—but suggested that such events be held less frequently.²⁰ CHDS officials acknowledged that though they used to hold large, costly multiday conferences, they now conduct smaller, more frequent events with subregional themes. (CHDS will organize five such events, each of which will last three to four days, in FY2013 and FY2014.) The center conducts some of these events through video-conference workshops and online webinars, which both take less time and cost less to conduct.²¹

Instruction for U.S.-Based Foreign Officials

Three RCs provide unique instruction for foreign officials based in the United States that explain U.S. decisionmaking processes, ensure partner officials understand U.S. policies and priorities in their regions, and develop communities of interest among partner nation officials—all key goals for the RC enterprise. CHDS, for example, organizes an annual program

¹⁵ Interview with EUCOM officials, January 9, 2013.

¹⁶ Interview with senior EUCOM official, Stuttgart, Germany, January 9, 2013.

¹⁷ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁸ GCMC, *FY13–14 GCMC Program Plan*, April 30, 2012f, pp. 7–8.

¹⁹ Interviews with senior OSD officials, December 19, 2012, and December 20, 2012.

²⁰ Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, Miami, Fla., January 24, 2013.

²¹ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013. Also CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e, p. 8.

for roughly 50 Washington-based Latin American diplomats, journalists, academics, and staffs of international organizations that is designed to clarify the U.S. policymaking process and assess decisionmaking dynamics in a democratic society. Because all participants are based in Washington and/or pay their own expenses, the cost of conducting this seminar over five half-days is only about \$1,000.²² The Africa Center organizes a one-week seminar to explain U.S. decisionmaking processes—including the roles of executive branch agencies, Congress, NGOs, and think tanks—to African defense attachés and embassy staff. ACSS budgets \$20,000 for this annual event.²³ NESAC runs a similar program for Middle Eastern diplomats in the Washington area, as well as a dedicated program for partner nation military representatives stationed at CENTCOM’s “Coalition Village” in Tampa.²⁴

Instruction for U.S. Government Personnel

U.S. government employees who focus on regional security matters also benefit from attending seminars and/or workshops at the RCs. Because USG participants’ home agencies pay their travel and per diem costs, the centers incur few additional expenses (beyond the fixed costs of instructor salaries, facility overhead, etc.) for conducting U.S.-only events or for incorporating USG staff into regular programs.

Table 4.4 shows the level of U.S. participation at each of the RCs.

Centers contribute to the education of U.S. personnel in three ways:

- **Scheduling dedicated courses for USG personnel.** Some centers have dedicated regional orientation programs for U.S. personnel, primarily those who are assigned to positions involving regional security matters at CCOM headquarters, service staffs, or embassy country teams. These are generally introductory courses that present the leading security challenges in the region and an overview of U.S. policies, programs, and priorities in the region. The Marshall Center offers a three-week Eurasian Security Studies Seminar, which is funded by the Army, for Army FAOs specializing in Europe and Eurasia.²⁵ Table 4.5 shows examples of programs that centers proposed offering for U.S. personnel in FY2013.
- **Developing customized programs for USG personnel.** Some centers develop programs on request for USG agencies. APCSS, for example, offered an additional iteration of its Asia-Pacific Orientation Course (APOC) course for Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) employees at that agency’s request, and CHDS conducted its Countering Trans-National Organized Crime (CTOC) course for SOUTHCOM staff.²⁶
- **Including USG personnel in regular programs.** In 2008, when guidance formally directed the RCs to incorporate USG personnel into their programs, most centers began

²² Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013. Also CHDS, “Background/Concept Paper: Washington Security and Defense Seminar,” in *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012c, appendix 2.

²³ ACSS, “Background/Concept Paper: African Defense Attaché Seminar,” in *ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012b, appendix 4.

²⁴ Interview with senior NESAC Center officials, January 17, 2013; interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

²⁵ GCMC, “Eurasian Foreign Area Officer Program,” briefing, February 11, 2013c, slides 4–5, 8–9.

²⁶ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

Table 4.4
U.S. Participants in Regional Center Programs (FY2012)

Regional Center	Participants			Participant Days		
	Number of U.S. Participants	Total Number of Participants	U.S. Participant Percentage	Number of U.S. Participant Days	Total Number of Participant Days	U.S. Participant Days Percentage
CHDS	52	448	12%	1,645	7,884	21%
ACSS	63	331	19%	425	3,293	13%
APCSS	264	821	32%	2,352	17,266	14%
NESA	92	579	16%	309	4,205	7%
GCMC (includes PLTCE)	514	2,065	25%	15,827	56,908	28%
Total	985	4,244	23%	20,558	89,556	23%

SOURCES: Data taken from compilations of FY2012 participant data developed for congressional reports.

Table 4.5
Regional Center Programs for U.S. Government Personnel

Regional Center	Course	Duration	Frequency	Number of Participants
ACSS	Intro to African Security Issues	4 days	1x/year	50
	AFRICOM Advanced Area Studies Seminar	1 week	1x/year	40
	HOA Orientation Seminar for CJTF-HOA Staff	3 days	1x/year	50
APCSS	Asia-Pacific Orientation Course (APOC)	1 week	3x/year	225 total
	Mobile Asia-Pacific Orientation Course (Mobile APOC)	3 days	1x/year	90
	Senior Asia-Pacific Orientation Course (SEAPOC)	3 days	1x/year	40
CHDS	None			
GCMC	Eurasian Security Studies Seminar (ES3)	21 days	1x/year	~18
NESA	Joint Foreign Area Officer Program	12	1x/year	12

SOURCES: Data represent FY13 program offerings as presented in each RC's FY13–14 Program Plan submissions: ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan, May 11, 2012b; APCSS FY13–14 Program Plan, May 11, 2012c; GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan, April 30, 2012f; and interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013. GCMC data also taken from GCMC, "Eurasian Foreign Area Officer Program," briefing, February 11, 2013c, slides 4–5, 8–9.

reserving a certain number of slots in their core programs and seminars for these participants. USG staff who attend the centers' regular programs include active-duty military foreign area officers (regional experts) and others whose careers—or, in some cases, current or subsequent assignments—focus on regional security. The American officials benefit by gaining regional expertise and by building relationships with regional officials with whom they may work during the course of their careers. They, in turn, expose partner

nation participants to American perspectives by participating in program discussions and events.

To prevent American participants from dominating discussions, some RCs have policies—or at least targets—that cap the number of USG personnel included in regular programming. GCMC, for example, attempts to have two USG personnel in each seminar discussion, while ACSS strives for six to eight so that two Americans can take part in each breakout discussion session.²⁷ At NESA, USG participation in each course is at the professor’s discretion, though its courses typically have a maximum of three Americans so that one can take part in each small breakout group.²⁸

Demand for regional center slots by U.S. government personnel varies by center. While far more seek to attend GCMC courses than can be accommodated, CHDS accommodates virtually any self-funded U.S. government employee. According to center staff, U.S. demand for CHDS courses is limited because so many American civilian institutions offer courses on Latin American studies.²⁹

Academic Programs for Alumni

All of the regional centers are instructed by the 2011 USDP guidance to “facilitate engagement with and among foreign participants to enhance regional security through the creation of collaborative communities of interest among military and civilian officials from States of the region.”³⁰ Having engaged partner nation representatives in dialogue during their participation in center events, the centers treat their alumni as the core element of such communities of interest.

Some centers arrange substantive seminars for alumni, whether in-country or online using video-teleconferencing or webcast technologies. Such outreach programs reach large numbers of alumni and other partner nation officials. The Marshall Center, for example, planned to hold 25 Outreach Networking Events (ONE) in FY2013 that included 717 participants. The Africa Center plans 12 Topical Outreach Program Series (TOPS) events per year, each of which hosts between 75 and 200 participants (for a total of 800 to 2,400 people). NESA proposed ten “engagement” programs to provide substantive information of interest to NESA alumni.³¹ While CHDS organizes five short events in the region each year, it also uses technology to expand its outreach; in one FY2012 videoconference with Mexico, a CHDS faculty member delivered a presentation to 400 people.³² CHDS also offers an extended advanced course for alumni, “Governance, Governability, and Security in the Americas: Responses to Transnational Organized Crime (GGSA),” which involves three weeks of online learning, three weeks

²⁷ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

²⁸ Interview with NESA Center official, Washington, D.C., February 12, 2013.

²⁹ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

³⁰ Flournoy, 2011.

³¹ NESA, *FY13–14 Program Plan*, memorandum to the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, from James A. Larocco, May 11, 2012b.

³² CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e, p. 8.

in residence, and an eight-week period in which students develop research papers related to governance and instability.³³

Shift Away from Foundational Programs

The academic focus of several of the RCs has shifted over time away from long-term residential programs and toward shorter, more focused, country-specific programs held in-region. According to NESA officials, for example, 70 percent of the center's activities in FY2007 were Washington-based in-residence courses, while only 25 percent of its FY2013 events will be held in Washington.³⁴ The Africa Center currently holds only 15 percent of its events in Washington, as it hosts its core academic programs in Washington while conducting regional issue-specific seminars and bilateral academic outreach workshops on the continent.³⁵ Similarly, a senior Marshall Center official stated that as Euro-Atlantic values have become more institutionalized in many European countries, the center is devoting an increasing proportion of its resources toward short in-region events that are tailored to the needs of an individual partner nation.³⁶

This approach has pros and cons. On one hand, in-region events promote the transfer of tailored information and skills to more partner nation officials than could be achieved in a foundational course. However, by shifting resources to these efforts, the RCs lose the ability to expose participants to U.S. culture and government institutions and to foster relationships with both U.S. officials and officials from other countries in the region. One OSD official expressed a concern that the centers have marginalized their core programs and transformed their specialized and advanced courses and their in-region tailored seminars into their main efforts.³⁷

Nonacademic Programs

"Track II" Engagements

All of the regional centers are generally seen in their regions as credible, apolitical, academic fora that foster open discussions in a safe, neutral environment. The centers are thus ideally positioned to facilitate both official and semi-official dialogues among countries with unresolved disputes. As components of the U.S. government, they can draw U.S. officials into such discussions if U.S. involvement would be seen as constructive. A center could also host regional talks without involving U.S. policy agencies, if doing so could promote more open discussion.

As distinguished from official government interactions, often referred to as "Track I," the centers are thus valuable tools for facilitating nonofficial—or "Track II"—dialogues. Such discourses, according to RAND scholar Dalia Dassa Kaye, "are primarily about long-term socialization and the generation of new ideas, not immediate policy change. Such dialogues are a conditioning process in which regional [actors] are exposed to new concepts, adapt them

³³ CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e.

³⁴ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

³⁵ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013. Correspondence with ACSS, July 22, 2013.

³⁶ Interview with senior Marshall Center official, January 14, 2013.

³⁷ Interview with senior OSD official, December 19, 2012.

to their own contexts, and shape policy debates over time.”³⁸ Track II discussions often involve academics, civil society leaders, and others with limited formal ties to their governments. In many cases, however, the participants in these dialogues have influence on their nations’ policymaking apparatuses—often because they themselves are former high-level officials or hold positions that give them access to senior decisionmakers; when participants’ access to government officials enables them not only to propose new ideas but also to insert them into their countries’ decisionmaking mechanisms, the dialogues are often referred to as “Track One and a Half” or “Track 1.5.”³⁹

Not all regional centers are positioned to organize Track II dialogues. The Africa Center and CHDS, for example, do not engage partner nations directly to help resolve regional disputes. The NESACenter, however, has played an active role in several regional Track II and Track 1.5 dialogues.

- **Ottawa Track 1.5 (India/Pakistan):** Several NESACenter professors participate in regular dialogues hosted by the University of Ottawa, in which former Indian and Pakistani officials discuss the risk of nuclear conflict, incidents at sea, border security, and other security challenges. Participants reach out to current policymakers, write newspaper columns, and influence regional debates on security matters. The forum has led to the establishment of a range of confidence-building measures that have eased tensions on the subcontinent and reduced the risk of conflict.⁴⁰ An OSD official commented that the initiative has had a significant impact on Indian/Pakistani security relations.⁴¹
- **IISS India/Pakistan/Afghanistan/Bangladesh Track 1.5:** For approximately ten years, NESACenter and the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) have organized annual conferences and other events focused on violent extremism, counterterrorism, and other shared security threats at which both current and former officials from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh take part.⁴² NESACenter officials indicated that OSD and the State Department are integrally involved in these events, both by shaping the agenda and by participating in the conferences.⁴³
- **Danish seminars on India/Pakistan counterterrorism (CT) cooperation:** NESACenter works with the Danish government to organize seminars on terrorism that allow senior Indian and Pakistani officials to engage each other in a neutral venue. The forum also allows U.S. officials to engage their counterparts from both countries and encourage them to collaborate in productive ways.⁴⁴

³⁸ Dalia Dassa Kaye, *Talking to the Enemy: Track Two Diplomacy in the Middle East and South Asia*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-592-NSRD, 2007, p. 3.

³⁹ Kaye, 2007, p. 7.

⁴⁰ Interview with senior NESACenter officials, January 17, 2013; interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013. See also University of Ottawa, “University of Ottawa Leads Discussions on India and Pakistan Nuclear Relations,” press release, June 27, 2010.

⁴¹ Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

⁴² See also IISS, “IISS-NESACenter South Asia Security Conference 2012,” undated(b); and IISS, “IISS-NESACenter South Asia Security Conference,” undated(a) (regarding 2010 event).

⁴³ Interview with senior NESACenter officials, January 17, 2013.

⁴⁴ Interview with senior NESACenter officials, January 17, 2013.

- **Think tank network:** NESA engages 42 think tanks in the Middle East and South Asia, some of which host events at which U.S. officials can interact informally with officials from Iran, Syria, and other countries that have limited engagement with the United States.⁴⁵

Opportunities for Track II dialogues in other regions can be limited. For example, APCSS has created a U.S./China/Japan trilateral forum that helps identify shared issues of concern and opportunities for information-sharing.⁴⁶ However, according to a PACOM official, none of the countries in the Asia-Pacific region are yet ready to engage in even informal discussions on the controversy regarding disputed islands in the South China Sea, one of the most prominent contributors to regional tensions.⁴⁷ Despite these limitations, a senior PACOM official thought that APCSS would be well positioned to pursue Track II dialogues through other means, such as by creating relationships with regional think tanks akin to the network established by the NESA Center.⁴⁸

Academic Research

The RCs' instructors conduct research on their own initiative and at the request of stakeholders, who generally believe that the products are insightful and useful. All of the centers work to ensure that academic research is linked to stakeholder interests, though only one (CHDS) has established formal criteria for evaluating research proposals that take into account the extent to which the research would advance stakeholder priorities.⁴⁹

Professors at NESA and APCSS tend to publish scholarly articles in outside academic journals rather than through publications issued by the center itself.⁵⁰ The Marshall Center publishes occasional papers and "Security Insights," short papers written by faculty members, though it does so only infrequently. ACSS and CHDS disseminate faculty research much more often, including items such as the following:

- ACSS Special Report: *Advancing Stability and Reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau: Lessons from Africa's First Narco-State* (June 2013)⁵¹
- ACSS Africa Security Brief: *Islamic Militancy in Africa* (November 2012)⁵²
- CHDS Occasional Paper: *Pushing the Limits of Security and Defense Cooperation, Pathway to a North American Security Perimeter?* (March 2013)⁵³

⁴⁵ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

⁴⁶ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

⁴⁷ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

⁴⁸ Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

⁴⁹ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013. Also CHDS, "CHDS Research Proposals: Criteria for Selection," document provided via email, March 28, 2013.

⁵⁰ APCSS, "Articles Published by APCSS Faculty," webpage, undated(a).

⁵¹ Davin O'Regan and Peter Thompson, *Advancing Stability and Reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau: Lessons from Africa's First Narco-State*, Washington, D.C.: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, June 11, 2013.

⁵² Terje Østebø, *Islamic Militancy in Africa*, Africa Security Brief No. 23, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, November 2012.

⁵³ Richard Downie, *Pushing the Limits of Security and Defense Cooperation, Pathway to a North American Security Perimeter?* CHDS Occasional Paper, March 2013.

Publications

Several of the regional centers issue their own publications on topics of interest to USG stakeholders, partner nations, and alumni. Articles are written by center staff and by experts from the United States and the region. CHDS, APCSS, the Marshall Center, and the Africa Center put out short discussion papers on a regular basis. CHDS also publishes a journal, *Security and Defense Studies Review*, with articles in both English and Spanish. The Marshall Center issues a regular magazine, *per Concordiam*, that addresses a range of regional security topics. Stakeholders note that these publications allow them the opportunity to express policy views to audiences with influence in their regions, and they add that communicating these views through an RC medium gives the perspectives credibility, while also promoting the RCs as scholarly venues with extensive resident expertise.

Regional Center Business Practices and Management

All of the RCs undertake similar management and administrative efforts, such as developing course curricula, selecting students, and reaching out to alumni. The centers manage these processes differently because they operate in different political and cultural environments. An examination of the centers' varied approaches can help identify best practices that could be more widely applied.

Program Development

In accordance with the annual DSCA Guidance for Program Planning, RC staff and faculty at all of the centers develop concept papers for each academic program in which they describe each program's objectives, target audiences, topics, expected accomplishments, and indicators of success. These papers also identify, though to varying degrees of specificity, the stakeholder objectives that each course is intended to advance;¹ more specific linkages not only demonstrate more clearly how center programs contribute to policy objectives, but they also provide a standard against which programs can be measured.

The Asia-Pacific Center's concept papers describe in detail the ways in which each course advances individual objectives identified by USDP, OSD's Office of Asian and Pacific Security Affairs (OSD/APSA), and PACOM. The center's FY2013–FY2014 program plan also provides a detailed matrix that crosswalks each course against stakeholder objectives and thus shows which objectives are most addressed by APCSS programs.²

The Marshall Center links its courses and major nonresident events to stakeholder priorities in Annex C of GCMC's FY2013–FY2014 program plan. It goes further to describe how the center will engage specific regions (Black Sea/Eurasia, Central Asia, Central Europe, and Southeast Europe) and the priorities for each regarding the nonresident programs. Individual concept papers go into greater detail about each specific program.

Concept papers and program plans for ACSS, CHDS, and NESAC list program objectives and indicators of achievement, and they specify how each program will advance USDP (but not COCOM) goals.³ ACSS's FY2014 program plan specifically identifies the OSD regional

¹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

² APCSS, 2012c.

³ See, for example, NESAC Center, "Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies Proposed Support to a Lebanese Armed Forces for Phase 3," January 13, 2012a. See also NESAC Center, "NESAC Center—Harvard Kennedy School of Government U.S.-South Asia Leader Engagement Program Concept Paper," undated(c); ACSS, 2012c; CHDS, 2012b; and CHDS, 2012c.

policy priorities, OSD regional center mandates, and AFRICOM TCP lines of effort that are advanced, either directly or indirectly, by each academic program.⁴

Academic Accreditation

OSD has issued no guidance regarding whether RCs should seek accreditation of their academic programs or whether they should actively partner with academic institutions to offer advanced degrees. Nevertheless, two centers—GCMC and CHDS—have already done so, and several center officials suggested that OSD should help them institute a process for securing accreditation for their own programs or those that they establish in cooperation with partners.⁵

In early 2011, the Marshall Center began offering an M.A. in International Security Studies (MISS) in cooperation with the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the Universität der Bundeswehr München (Armed Forces University in Munich). The 12-month degree program is aimed at mid-career government officials (field-grade officers and their civilian equivalents) interested in preparing for assignments at a strategic level.⁶ As a result of this collaboration, all of the Marshall Center's courses except its Senior Executive Seminar (SES) are university accredited,⁷ meaning that a participant taking an individual GCMC course can earn academic credit toward an advanced degree at another academic institution. Marshall Center officials asserted that the ability to offer academic credit is important because it enables the center to compete with degree-granting institutions for promising self-paying students, primarily from Western Europe. Because such participants generally have other executive education options available to them, many prefer to attend courses that count toward a degree.⁸

CHDS is working to secure accreditation for its six advanced courses through NDU⁹ in order to attract both Latin American and U.S. students who could choose to study regional security issues at numerous competing institutions in the region and in the United States. A senior CHDS official stated that the ability to offer accredited courses would contribute directly to stakeholders' directive to make the United States "the security partner of choice."¹⁰

Though NESAC does not offer accredited courses itself, as part of its effort to establish a national defense university for the United Arab Emirates, it will work to accredit the new institution through NDU.¹¹

⁴ ACSS, *FY2014 Program Plan*, May 24, 2013b.

⁵ Regional center directors roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

⁶ Universität der Bundeswehr München, "M.A. International Security Studies, Course Catalogue 2012/13," p. 6.

⁷ GCMC, "M.A. International Security Studies (MISS)," briefing, undated.

⁸ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

⁹ CHDS, "Advanced Courses," website, undated(b).

¹⁰ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; regional center directors roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

¹¹ Interview with senior NESAC Center officials, January 17, 2013.

Student Selection

Generally, after a dialogue with the local U.S. embassy's Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) or equivalent, partner governments nominate individual candidates to the embassy. The OSC then vets the candidates to ensure that they meet specified criteria for each course (e.g., rank, experience, language capability) and statutory criteria regarding eligibility to receive U.S. training (e.g., no known involvement in human rights violations). OSC staffs also assess whether candidates are well suited for an RC program, considering in particular their current responsibilities and their potential as future leaders. Though centers reserve the right to "veto" a candidate they believe to be unqualified, they rarely do so; U.S. embassies thus are principally responsible for ensuring that the right individuals are nominated to participate in RC programs.

While in-region workshops are typically country-specific or involve representatives from a small number of countries in a specific subregion, each center's foundation courses involve countries from throughout its region (and often beyond). When deciding how to allocate invitations to these foundation programs, some centers take distinct approaches to different categories of participants, most notably representatives of developing countries, whose costs can be paid by the centers; representatives of developed countries, who must pay the costs of participating themselves; U.S. government personnel; officials from countries beyond the center's focus region; and representatives from international organizations (IOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Participants from Developing Countries

Under 10 U.S. Code (USC) 184, the RCs can use their own appropriated funds to pay the costs of attendance by students from "developing" countries. Thus, RC funds pay the costs of conducting a workshop in a developing country, as well as the costs associated with attendance at in-residence foundation courses by individual students from such countries.

Centers can (and do) take two different approaches to determining how to allocate seats in their foundation programs, which include students from multiple countries. The first, based on the view that security cooperation resources should be dedicated primarily to the most strategically important partner nations or to combat the most critical threats, is to prioritize invitations in a way that mirrors stakeholders' priority countries. The second, more inclusive, approach is to allot invitations to a broader audience on the logic that there is value in engaging all countries, no matter how small or seemingly marginal they might be to U.S. interests.

Both methods advance OSD and COCOM interests. While there is often advantage in increasing cooperation with higher-priority partners, multiple center stakeholders asserted that RCs, in particular, are uniquely positioned to promote engagement with smaller nations that receive few security cooperation resources or otherwise have little interaction with the United States on security issues.¹²

RCs are roughly split between these two approaches to apportioning invitations to their programs. CHDS,¹³ APCSS,¹⁴ and the Marshall Center issue a disproportionate share of invi-

¹² Interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012; interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013; interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012; interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

¹³ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

tations to countries that OSD and the COCOMs view as being higher priorities. In contrast, with some exceptions, NESAs allocate seats equally among countries, with each country in the region receiving two invitations: one for a civilian official and one for a military officer.¹⁵ ACSS allocates seats equally among countries for its Senior Leaders Seminar only. Some countries do not fill all of the seats offered to them, either because of limited capacity (such as the island states of the Caribbean¹⁶ and Oceania) or because their relative wealth would require them to pay to participate and, like some of the Persian Gulf states, they choose to spend their resources elsewhere.¹⁷

Inevitably, last-minute cancellations and the inability of some invited countries to fill their quotas enable the RCs to issue a second round of invitations to fill the unused seats. Here, too, centers' approaches to allocating resources differ. Some centers that prioritize their initial invitations also prioritize their "wait lists," treating newly available slots in the same way that they do the first round of openings. CHDS and GCMC take this approach. The Africa Center adopts a mixed approach; though it initially invites an equal number of participants from every country in its region, it develops a "wait list" for empty seats based on country prioritization; thus, while the center attempts to engage every African country in its foundation courses, when additional openings become available, it allocates them to countries in the region that are deemed more strategically important to the United States.¹⁸

NESA is the only RC that has no set strategy for allocating foundation program slots that unexpectedly become available. Instead, a NESA official stated, the center distributes them on a first-come, first-served basis. As a result, one of the primary determinants of which country receives extra slots in a program is the degree to which the local U.S. embassy OSC is proactive in seeking them.¹⁹

Self-Payers

Though developed countries are invited to RC events, they must pay their own way. None of the countries in the Africa Center's region fall into this category. While the oil-rich countries of the Persian Gulf send participants to NESA programs at their own expense, a NESA official asserted that these countries do not make use of all of the seats allotted to them.²⁰ GCMC allocates many slots to self-paying participants as well, but these are rarely filled. For GCMC, it is difficult to attract many Western Europeans to its courses simply because, like the United States, there are many competing forums for these participants to attend, and many of them provide degrees. APCSS has many self-paying countries.

Out-of-Region Participants

Some centers make an effort to include out-of-AOR students in their programs, while others do not. The Africa Center invites few participants from outside Africa, in part because of financial limitations, but also because the vast majority of its events are bilateral workshops that take

¹⁵ Interview with NESA Center official, February 12, 2013. Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁶ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁷ Interview with NESA Center official, Washington, D.C., February 12, 2013.

¹⁸ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁹ Interview with NESA Center official, Washington, D.C., February 12, 2013.

²⁰ Interview with NESA Center official, February 12, 2013.

place in Africa. CHDS makes no concerted effort to invite participants from other regions, though it occasionally includes them if their governments ask to send a representative and are willing to pay the associated costs.²¹

On the other hand, the Marshall Center and the Asia-Pacific Center make concerted efforts to include students from other regions. APCSS believes that participants from beyond the Asia-Pacific region add valuable perspectives to program discussions. Furthermore, by inviting countries on the west coast of Latin America, APCSS helps them build relationships with Asian countries that share a trans-Pacific orientation. Similarly, the Marshall Center—in part because it has the capacity to do so—invites significant numbers of participants from outside its geographic focus area to some programs; as many as 25 percent of its students come from sub-Saharan Africa alone. Many of its out-of-AOR participants attend counterterrorism programs with funding from CTFP, which, as a global program, identifies students from partner nations around the world.

NESA typically includes one out-of-AOR participant in each course, though the final decision is up to the director and the dean.²² While Canada and European countries are invited most frequently, NESA officials indicated that they have invited officials from Beijing to participate in center programs as a way of making China a stakeholder in the region rather than a “free rider.”²³ NESA officials also stated their intention to include three Chinese think tanks in the center’s network of research institutions.²⁴

Though a senior NESA Center official stated that the RCs were established to cross borders and that NESA does so more than the others,²⁵ one of the reasons why it invites so few participants from outside its geographic AOR is that, as discussed, it has defined its geographic AOR very broadly to include regions that are also addressed by other RCs, such as Central Asia and the Maghreb. For example, even though the Marshall Center has long had primary responsibility for the countries of Central Asia, the NESA Center treats them as “in-region” countries by allocating each country two slots in every core course.²⁶

There is logic to this approach; since the U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan, U.S. relations with Central Asian countries has become increasingly focused on a north-south axis, particularly the development of the NDN used to ship supplies through their territory to U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. However, OSD’s January 15, 2013, geographic guidance makes clear that key stakeholders do not agree with one NESA official’s statement that “NESA is a better fit” for engaging Central Asia than the center that is “supposed” to cover the region (the Marshall Center).²⁷ Indeed, OSD officials responsible for Central Asia stated that their preference is to orient the Central Asian republics toward Europe as a way of promoting democracy and fostering Euro-Atlantic values.²⁸ U.S. interests in Central Asia can clearly be

²¹ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

²² Interview with NESA Center official, February 12, 2013.

²³ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

²⁴ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

²⁵ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

²⁶ Interview with NESA Center official, February 12, 2013.

²⁷ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

²⁸ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

advanced by engaging the region with multiple security cooperation engagement tools, but maximum benefit can only be gained if the centers coordinate with each other and are faithful to guidance from policy stakeholders.

U.S. Officials

All of the RCs welcome U.S. officials in their foundation courses, noting that American participants are needed to add U.S. perspectives into discussions, as faculty must be careful not to appear as propagandists for U.S. government policy lest they undermine their credibility. Several centers expressed a desire to attract USG attendees from a more diverse range of agencies, as many of the American participants are new or incoming staff officers at the COCOM responsible for the region.²⁹ USG attendees' home agencies pay all expenses associated with their participation. For this reason, centers whose primary partners are less-developed states—CHDS and ACSS—are particularly responsive to requests to include American participants.³⁰

Table 4.5, in Chapter Four, shows the number of U.S. participants who took part in RC programs in FY2012.

Representatives of IOs and NGOs

Section 941 of the FY2009 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 110-417) gave the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, the authority to waive up to \$1 million in costs each year associated with attendance at one of the RCs by representatives of NGOs and IOs. This authority, which was granted for two years, was extended for an additional two years by the FY2011 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 111-383). In FY2013, it was extended for one year. DSCA and the centers have continued working to obtain extended, or even permanent, authority to invite NGO and IO representatives to center programs.³¹ For most centers, this authority is a way to engage civil society figures—journalists, academics, human rights advocates, and the like—in security-related discussions, from which they are often excluded at home. Their participation thus exposes partner nation officials to viewpoints that they may be unaccustomed to hearing, and it enables military officials and civil society representatives to build relationships that they would be unlikely to foster on their own.

This authority also enables the RCs to build capacity of international organizations, which is noted as a priority in the U.S. *National Security Strategy* and in OSD's guidance to all of the RCs, save CHDS. The President's May 2010 *National Security Strategy* states:

Working with [international] institutions and the countries that comprise them, we will enhance international capacity to prevent conflict, spur economic growth, improve security, combat climate change, and address the challenges posed by weak and failing states. And we will challenge and assist international institutions and frameworks to reform when they fail to live up to their promise . . . Regional organizations can be particularly effective at mobilizing and legitimating cooperation among countries closest to the problem . . . The

²⁹ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

³⁰ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

³¹ DSCA and the RCs prefer permanent authority to waive participation costs for NGO and IO officials because the time required to secure individual waivers often results in last-minute approvals that often come too late to enable the invitee to attend.

United States is encouraging continued innovation and development of enhanced regional capabilities Where appropriate, we use training and related programs to strengthen regional capacities for peacekeeping and conflict management to improve impact and share burdens.³² In support of this mandate, OSD directs four of the five regional centers to work with or support international organizations active in their regions. Among OSD's policy priorities for APCSS is to promote regional support for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), as well as to "reinforce regional architecture mechanisms." NESa is told to "increas[e] regional cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], especially through the emerging regional security architecture."

Finally, OSD directed ACSS to "reinforce efforts of the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities, and individual African partners to prevent and respond to regional security challenges." Africa Center officials noted that developing the capacity of regional and subregional organizations is "critical" in Africa, given the prominent roles they play in regional security,³³ and ACSS's regional offices in Dakar and Addis Ababa facilitate engagement with the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS).³⁴ The AU, for example, currently leads a peacekeeping mission in Somalia and leads a hybrid AU/United Nations peacekeeping mission in Darfur. Similarly, the ECOWAS has coordinated military interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau, and it is presently organizing regional forces for possible intervention in northern Mali. In addition to drawing on Section 941 authority to waive the costs of participation of NGO and IO staff, ACSS draws on separate statutory authority to cover the costs of officials from these organizations; the FY2011 National Defense Authorization Act also stated that "The Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a military department may pay the travel, subsistence, and special compensation of officers and students of African countries and other expenses that the Secretary considers necessary for African cooperation."³⁵ Such expenses can be waived regardless of whether the African participants attend ACSS, NESa, or the Marshall Center.³⁶

As a means of assessing IO/NGO requests for waivers, DoD issued guidance that priority should be given to organizations that advance U.S. interests in one of six ways. Listed in order of priority, they are

³² The White House, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010, pp. 13, 46–47.

³³ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

³⁴ ACSS, background paper, July 24, 2013.

³⁵ Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, P.L. 111-383, Sec. 1204. 10 USC 1050(a). Costs associated with participants from other regions can be waived under similar authorities. The Secretary of Defense has authority under 10 USC 1050 of Reference (b) to pay the travel, subsistence, and special compensation of officers and students of Latin American countries and other expenses; under the FY2003 Defense Appropriations Act (section 8073 of Public Law 107-248) to waive reimbursement of costs for conferences, seminars, courses of instruction, or similar activities for foreign nations' military officers and civilian officials; and under the FY1995 National Defense Authorization Act (section 1306 of Public Law 103-337, amended January 24, 2002) to waive reimbursement costs of conferences, seminars, courses of instruction, or similar GCMC activities for military officers and civilian officials from states located in Europe or the territory of the former Soviet Union.

³⁶ DoD, 2004.

1. NGO/IOs that participate alongside or in the vicinity of U.S. forces during post-conflict stability and/or disaster management operations, and whose participation has a direct benefit to DOD operations
2. NGO/IOs that participate in disaster management and stability operations with partners
3. NGO/IOs that play an important role in countering violent extremism
4. NGO/IOs that provide civil society oversight of foreign partner security sectors
5. NGO/IOs that engage in “sustainable development and stabilization” (also known as Phase Zero) activities where U.S. or foreign partner security forces are actively engaged (e.g., health affairs)
6. NGO/IOs that broadly influence security policies in their countries or international organizations.³⁷

Interestingly, the RC enterprise has not come close to making use of the full funding authority available to facilitate IO/NGO participation in RC programs. The value of waivers requested in fiscal years 2009 through 2012, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), fell well short of the \$1 million annual ceiling, comprising \$667,493 in FY2009, \$717,279 in FY2010, \$446,450 in FY2011, and \$405,046 in FY2012. In three out of those four years, CHDS waivers represented more than 80 percent of the total, meaning that the other four centers made little or no use of the IO/NGO waiver authority.³⁸

Alumni Outreach

All of the RCs maintain frequent contact with their alumni as a means of executing the 2011 USDP guidance to “facilitate engagement with and among foreign participants to enhance regional security through the creation of collaborative communities of interest among military and civilian officials from States of the region.”³⁹ Each center has made alumni outreach a top priority. A NESA Center senior official asserted, in fact, that alumni outreach is not simply a means to an end but rather a core objective in its own right. “Investing in alumni is our longest-lasting benefit,” the official said. “Our highest priority is our alumni.”⁴⁰

That said, OSD’s guidance (both past and present) is not definitive on the topic of alumni engagement. Though the February 2011 USDP guidance directed RCs to create “communities of interest,” it did not specify that centers do so through alumni outreach; this directive specifically addressed alumni engagement only in a procedural context by directing that they “use the GlobalNet system as the primary online means for contact with alumni.”⁴¹ Similarly, while the enterprise-wide portion of the more recent January 2013 OSD guidance directs centers to “develop enduring partnerships,” it mentions alumni networks only by tasking centers to use RCPAMS to collect data on alumni and to use

³⁷ GAO, 2013, p. 37.

³⁸ GAO, 2013, p. 39.

³⁹ Flournoy, 2011.

⁴⁰ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

⁴¹ Flournoy, 2011.

GlobalNet to reach out to them. The center-specific portions of the memo task three centers (CHDS, NESA, and ACSS) with reaching out to alumni but fail to mention whether or to what extent APCSS and the Marshall Center should do so in the portions of the guidance specific to them.⁴²

The centers have multiple ways of reaching their alumni. All of them send newsletters on a regular basis, primarily by email, to communicate center developments and share alumni news. They also send announcements, publications, and other materials to their alumni networks. Between newsletters, publications, and other announcements, CHDS, for its part, contacts alumni approximately 15 times per year with information of potential interest to them,⁴³ and other centers appear to maintain similar levels of outreach. The centers also disseminate information through social media tools, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. All of the centers send alumni periodic surveys with questions about their career development and their engagement with the centers.

Substantive Events for Alumni

Centers also hold substantive events specifically for alumni, which allow the centers to share information of relevance to graduates' careers, strengthen alumni networks, build networks of security sector decisionmakers, reach out to nontraditional audiences (such as partner nation civil society figures), and promote awareness of U.S. policies.⁴⁴ Many of these events are held in-region, where they can reach a large number of partner nation officials, though some centers also hold discussions and short courses online through lower-cost video teleconferences and interactive "webinars."⁴⁵

A description of alumni outreach events sponsored by the centers follows. For purposes of comparison, the incremental costs of each event are indicated.

The Africa Center conducts TOPS events in the region to re-engage alumni and strengthen their networks, promote security sector reform and positive civil-military relations, and encourage the sharing of views on potentially controversial issues in a safe venue. It plans to hold 18 two-day events throughout the continent in FY2013 on many of the same topics the center addresses in its regular programs, including transnational threats, national security strategy, security sector reform, maritime safety and security, countering terrorism, and disaster response. The total cost of these events—which will attract just over 2,000 total participants—is \$498,000, or about \$250 per participant (\$125 per participant day of instruction).⁴⁶

CHDS plans to hold five in-region and 15 virtual Regional Outreach Engagement Programs, which are designed to strengthen institutional capacity, build communities of interest in the region, offer a venue for critical thinking on regional and global security challenges, and support CHDS alumni associations. It has budgeted \$23,500 for the five in-region events and an additional \$1,500 for five executive-level in-region engagements held in conjunction with

⁴² Verga, 2013b.

⁴³ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁴⁴ ACSS, 2012c.

⁴⁵ Interview with NESA Center official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁴⁶ ACSS, 2012c. Also ACSS, "FY13 ACSS Program Planning Parameters," *ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012d.

other regional events, which will together reach an estimated 600 participants. The total cost per event is \$4,700 for each workshop and \$300 for each executive-level engagement; the cost per participant is \$42.⁴⁷

APCSS plans to conduct four alumni workshops in the region in FY2013 and FY2014, each lasting three to four days. Three will focus on substantive security challenges, including multinational counterterrorism cooperation, crisis management, and a topic proposed by alumni networks. A fourth annual workshop will address means of leveraging security cooperation education, with discussions of how to empower alumni associations in even calendar years and how to develop APCSS education networks in odd years. At a total cost of \$650,000 per year to reach 460 participants, the total cost per participant is \$1,413; if the events last only three days, the cost per participant day is \$471.⁴⁸

The Marshall Center holds several different types of alumni-focused substantive events. Distinguished Alumni Conferences, of which GCMC holds three per year, provide opportunities to maintain relationships and discuss emerging issues with senior policymakers from the region. To engage 180 senior partner nation officials for two days—including heads of government, cabinet ministers, chiefs of defense, and members of parliament—the center spends \$224,000 each year, or just under \$1,250 per participant (\$625 per participant day). Community of Interest (COI) Programs (four per year) convene alumni to discuss a range of shared security challenges during four-day events, including violent extremism, transnational threats, trafficking, proliferation, stability operations, and defense transformation. It expects to reach 440 alumni at a cost of \$602,000, or \$1,368 per participant (\$342 per participant day). Two-day Outreach Networking Events (ONEs) (20 per year) focus on sustaining the center's alumni network by engaging graduates to discuss how they can help advance shared security cooperation and capacity-building goals. The Marshall Center has budgeted \$160,000 to reach 200 alumni in FY2013, or \$800 per participant (\$400 per participant day).⁴⁹

NESA holds the fewest alumni-focused substantive events, which it refers to as “Strategic Forums.” It plans to conduct two such events in FY2013, each lasting two and a half days and involving 60 participants, at a cost of \$300,000 (\$2,500 per participant, or \$1,000 per participant day).⁵⁰

⁴⁷ CHDS, “Background/Concept Paper: CHDS Regional Outreach Engagement Program,” in *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012b. Also CHDS, “FY13 Budget Submission—UFR and Program Details,” in *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012d.

⁴⁸ APCSS, 2012c, pp. 9-55 to 9-60; APCSS, 2012c, pp. 9-39 to 9-50; APCSS, “FY13 Budget Submission—Program and UFR Details,” in *APCSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012d.

⁴⁹ GCMC, “FY13–14 George C. Marshall Center Program Plan (Ways) Events,” in *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, April 30, 2012e, Annex C, pp. 7–8. Also GCMC, “Marshall Center FY13 Budget Submission—Program and UFR Details,” in *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, April 30, 2012g.

⁵⁰ NESA Center, “FY14 Budget Submission—Program and UFR Details,” in *NESA Center FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012c.

Management of Alumni Relations

The centers expand their reach by interacting with alumni associations in 124 countries, all of which have been established by the alumni themselves.⁵¹ Though the centers are unable to provide funding for association activities, centers facilitate their operations by providing directories of alumni in their countries, sharing the names and contact information of the centers' newest graduates, involving associations in the planning of in-country events, and arranging for alumni associations to host discussions with center officials via video teleconference.⁵² One center (APCSS) has even held a workshop to help alumni clubs organize and identify achievable goals.⁵³ Other associations have become self-sustaining, holding events and maintaining "communities of interest" without support from the RCs.⁵⁴ Some alumni organizations have become proactive evangelists for the RCs' principles; one South American alumni chapter organized events throughout the country, at its members' own expense, to teach the importance of good governance, transparency, civilian control of the military, and the rule of law.⁵⁵ Some national alumni associations, including those in Central Asia, have taken steps toward the formation of regional alumni clubs as a means of promoting regional cooperation on shared security challenges.⁵⁶ Because some countries' laws prohibit the establishment of associations or limit citizens' ability to create them, alumni in some countries meet or otherwise engage each other informally.⁵⁷

The centers have used technology to facilitate alumni outreach. The Africa Center, for example, maintains a presence on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube, and it disseminates a daily compilation of U.S., European, and African media articles in both English and French to 7,500 people daily by email.⁵⁸ Alumni use of social media is influenced by a range of factors. One RC reported that civilian graduates and retired military graduates access its social media platforms more frequently than active-duty military alumni, perhaps because of concerns that continuous online engagement with a DoD entity could attract unwanted surveillance and be damaging to one's career.⁵⁹

⁵¹ ACSS has alumni associations in 31 countries, including one in Ethiopia specifically for alumni employed by the African Union. Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013. APCSS has 54 alumni associations, including one in the United States, one that it runs jointly with the Africa Center (Madagascar), and two that it runs jointly with the Marshall Center (Mauritius and the Comoros) (APCSS Fact Sheet, December 9, 2012f; also APCSS, "Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies Command Brief," June 2012e, slide 22). As of September 2012, CHDS has alumni associations in 16 countries; alumni were in the process of forming alumni associations in six additional countries, as well as a Caribbean regional association (CHDS, "CHDS Fact Sheet," September 18, 2012f). The Marshall Center has alumni associations in 28 countries (GCMC, "GCMC FY12 Update," briefing to PDASD Board, January 30, 2013b, slide 3). NESA has formal alumni associations in no countries, primarily because such associations are illegal in many countries throughout the AOR. Many NESA alumni, however, collaborate informally with each other and with the center. In addition, NESA is working toward establishing joint alumni chapters with other regional centers (ACSS, APCSS, and GCMC) in 13 countries where they have both produced large numbers of alumni (NESA website, undated[b]).

⁵² Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁵³ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁵⁴ Interview with Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013.

⁵⁵ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁵⁶ Interview with Partnership for Peace Consortium officials, Garmisch, Germany, January 14, 2013.

⁵⁷ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

⁵⁸ Correspondence with ACSS, July 22, 2013.

⁵⁹ Interview with NESA Center official, February 20, 2013.

Some of the centers, however, have had to make adjustments for the fact that alumni in some countries have limited access to email or online social media tools because of poor telecommunications infrastructure, shortages of computers in government offices, or field deployments to areas with limited connectivity.⁶⁰ The Africa Center, for example, estimated that 80 percent of its Internet outreach is to graduates in the Maghreb and southern Africa; to reach alumni in other countries, it makes extensive use of text messages (SMS), whose limited length restricts the amount of information the centers can share.⁶¹ A NESA official stated that in order to inform alumni in a less-developed country about an event being held in the capital city, the center passed the word through email, SMS, the U.S. embassy in-country, the partner nation's embassy in Washington, and leaders of the local NESA alumni association, some of whom distributed paper announcements by hand to graduates' offices. The center determined that by using a multitude of communication methods, it reached about 95 percent of NESA alumni in that country with information about the event.⁶²

Since August 2011, the RCs have maintained an enterprise-wide compilation of alumni information in RCPAMS. The system serves as a consolidated source of information on participants' involvement with the centers, their career development, and their contact information.⁶³ In addition to facilitating each center's alumni outreach, the institution of RCPAMS eliminated duplication of effort, as each center had previously maintained its own alumni database. Moreover, the system has made it easier for each regional center to engage officials from its AOR who have attended other RCs; as a result, the Africa Center can more easily include in its alumni events the significant numbers of Africans who have attended courses at the Marshall Center.⁶⁴ By creating additional opportunities to engage alumni of the regional center enterprise, such "crossover" outreach helps strengthen regional communities of interest and enhances partner nation officials' relationships with DoD and the U.S. government as a whole.

By allowing multiple U.S. officials to enter information into RCPAMS, the system has also made it easier for centers to maintain awareness of their graduates' contact information and career development; center officials estimated that they have current contact information for anywhere from roughly two-thirds,⁶⁵ to three-quarters,⁶⁶ to almost 100 percent of their alumni.⁶⁷ Some centers asserted that they have more reliable contact information for alumni in countries with alumni associations because of the feedback that such associations provide.⁶⁸

Though the regional centers push a great deal of information to alumni through a variety of mechanisms, the centers are less effective at soliciting information from them, with the exception of updates on their careers that can be published in subsequent alumni newsletters. Though all of the centers send their alumni surveys that ask about their career development

⁶⁰ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013; interview with NESA Center official, February 20, 2013.

⁶¹ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

⁶² Interview with NESA Center official, February 20, 2013.

⁶³ "DSCA Deploys RCPAMS System to Manage Event and Participant Information," *DISAM Journal*, 2012.

⁶⁴ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

⁶⁵ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, February 6, 2013.

⁶⁶ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

⁶⁷ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁶⁸ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

and their engagement with the centers, none of the centers has a plan to collect survey data in a systematic way—for example, by posing consistent questions to alumni at fixed intervals in their careers—that could be used to develop a comprehensive assessment of the value of center programs. When CHDS conducts alumni surveys, for example, it sends questions to all of its alumni at once, regardless of how much time has passed since they attended a CHDS event;⁶⁹ as a result, it is difficult to track alumni views consistently over time. As of February 2013, when CHDS staff were interviewed, the center had not conducted a survey in over 18 months and had no plans to do so in the foreseeable future.⁷⁰

Funding

The RCs are resourced from several sources of DoD funding.

DSCA Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Funds

The bulk of each center's budget comes from DSCA O&M funds. The five RCs received a total of \$86 million in O&M funding in FY2012 to conduct the activities laid out in DoDD 5400.41 and the USDP guidance.⁷¹ In FY2013, this number decreased to \$84.2 million. These funds cover the centers' overhead expenses (rent, salaries, IT, etc.), as well as the full costs of conducting the centers' foundation programs and the majority of their in-region workshops (which includes conference expenses, participant or instructor travel, and per diem allowances).

Reimbursable O&M

The centers also receive reimbursement from OSD and the COCOMs when they conduct additional or unplanned events at these stakeholders' requests. For example, when AFRICOM wanted a security sector reform (SSR) program in Tunisia in the wake of the political change there, it reimbursed NESAC for the costs of developing and conducting the workshop.⁷² Similarly, NORTHCOM provided additional funds to CHDS for conducting on short notice a program on CTOC in the Bahamas.⁷³ In FY2014–2015, AFRICOM plans to sponsor four events at the Africa Center totaling \$616,000 and requested ACSS support for seven additional events totaling \$1.26 million.⁷⁴

Stakeholders do not reimburse the centers for all of the events done at their request, however. Several centers set aside DSCA O&M funds for a placeholder event so they can be responsive to stakeholders on short notice. The Africa Center, for example, developed a workshop on water security at the request of the DASD for Africa using core funding that it had set aside.

⁶⁹ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁷⁰ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁷¹ O&M money is the core of the RCs' base funding. This money funds almost all of the centers' programs, overhead, and operating costs, including reimbursable participant travel.

⁷² Interview with senior NESAC Center officials, January 17, 2013.

⁷³ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁷⁴ David M. Rodriguez, AFRICOM Commanding General, "Approval of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) FY14–15 Program Plan," memorandum to acting director, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, May 23, 2013.

“Other People’s Money”

RCs also received \$16 million from other sources—often referred to as “other people’s money” (OPM)—in addition to their O&M allotment. This amount comprised 27 percent of the total amount of money spent on operations in FY2012.⁷⁵ The source of this supplementary funding typically provides guidance or rules on how it should be used, although the activities are generally in line with RC core activities and complementary to the mission. As one senior EUCOM official noted, having “different pots of money” at the RCs is a good thing. It takes the “best attributes of different authorities and applies them in a way that cannot be replicated elsewhere.”⁷⁶ The funding from other sources enables the RCs to undertake more activities than they would otherwise be able to do with base O&M resources, particularly regarding specialized issue areas (such as proliferation) that, while important, may not be at the top of the priority list in a particular region.

Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP)

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for SOLIC oversees the CTFP, which funds strategic and operational counterterrorism training for mid- and senior-level partner nation officials at the RCs and other professional military education institutions. CTFP’s budget was \$35 million in FY 2011.⁷⁷ CTFP often funds the entirety of a counterterrorism-related (CT-related) program, though it also provides funding to send individual students to CT-related programs operated by the centers with O&M funds.

In FY2013, RCs expect to use CTFP funds to cover a range of programs, including the following:

- **APCSS**—The Asia-Pacific Center will hold a four-week Comprehensive Security Responses to Terrorism (CSRT) Course for 75 participants (\$899,883; \$12,000 per participant, or \$600 per participant day).
- **CHDS**—CHDS used to receive about \$300,000 per year to fund programs related to counterterrorism, but it expects to receive no such funds in FY2013 or FY2014. The center now receives only small amounts of CTFP money to fund the participation of individual students in CHDS programs that address terrorism in the context of transnational organized crime. To offset anticipated budget cuts, CHDS plans to seek CTFP funds for individual students more aggressively in the future.⁷⁸
- **Marshall Center**—The Marshall Center intends to use approximately \$3.4 million in CTFP funds in FY2013,⁷⁹ primarily for the following:
 - Seminar in Trans-Atlantic Civil Security (STACS)—CTFP will fund 93 percent of the cost of this three-week course on homeland security and disaster management, which involves 75 participants (\$293,000 in CTFP funds).⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Money spent on operations includes all costs associated with operating a center and its activities, excluding the cost of civilian pay.

⁷⁶ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013.

⁷⁷ U.S. Africa Command, “Fact Sheet: Combating Terrorism Fellowship Program,” October 2012.

⁷⁸ CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e, p. 2.

⁷⁹ GCMC, *FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012e, p. 17. See also DSCA, “Combating [*sic*] Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) Course List 2013,” webpage, undated(a).

⁸⁰ Interview with OSD official, January 4, 2013.

- Program on Advanced Security Studies—CTFP funds a small number of PASS students (roughly 5–10 per class).
- Program on Terrorism and Security Studies—CTFP funds 55 of 75 participants.
- Senior Executive Seminar—CTFP pays for one of the three Senior Executive Seminars each year.
- Combating Terrorism Language Program—CTFP funds are used to cover expenses of most language program participants.
- Seminar on Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction/Terrorism—CTFP funds half of the costs associated with this course; DTRA funds the other half.
- **NESA**—NESA uses CTFP for a number of programs, including Track 1.5 and Track II outreach, including the following:
 - CT Senior Executive Seminar—A three-week program for 45 senior-level participants (\$450,000; \$10,000 per participant, or \$667 per participant day)
 - Pakistan Military Confidence Building Seminar—A two-week program for 25 Pakistani officials and U.S. counterparts (\$275,000; \$11,000 per participant, or \$1,100 per participant day)
 - Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue—CTFP will fund half of the cost of this confidence-building measure, which gathers 20 officials for 10 days (\$235,000 in CTFP funds)
 - Yemen National Security Seminar—40 officials for three weeks (\$450,000; \$11,250 per participant, or \$750 per participant day)
 - CENTCOM Subregional Seminar—CTFP will fund half of a weeklong event for 60 officials (\$90,000 in CTFP funds).

Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)

DTRA provides RCs with considerable amounts of funding to examine proliferation and countering WMD terrorism. In FY2013, it is providing the Marshall Center \$390,000 to conduct two two-week courses on WMD terrorism—for which the content is provided by DTRA—that will reach a total of 120 participants (100 from partner nations and 20 U.S. personnel).⁸¹ DTRA has also funded regional orientation programs (such as a Mobile Asia-Pacific Orientation Course from APCSS),⁸² ACSS alumni engagements,⁸³ and WMD- and proliferation-related instruction for U.S. government personnel at several RCs.

Counterdrug Central Transfer Account

A centralized source of funding managed by OSD's Office of Counternarcotics and Global Threats (OSD/CNGT) supports one professor at the Marshall Center to address transnational crime, mostly regarding sub-Saharan Africa and Europe.⁸⁴ The cost of this faculty position

⁸¹ GCMC, "Background/Concept Paper: Seminar on Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction/Terrorism (SCWMD/T)," *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012d. Also GCMC, "Marshall Center FY13 Budget Submission—Program and UFR Details," in *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012g.

⁸² APCSS, 2013c, p. 22.

⁸³ Correspondence with ACSS, July 17, 2013.

⁸⁴ Interview with senior OSD official, January 3, 2013.

and the development of related programming, which was initiated in FY2012, is \$250,000 per year.⁸⁵

Warsaw Initiative Funds (WIF)

The Warsaw Initiative provides funds for “a sizeable portion of the GCMC’s outreach programs, to include workshops and conferences,” according to the Marshall Center’s FY2013–FY2014 Program Plan. In FY2012–FY2014, the Marshall Center is programmed to receive \$1.9 million annually in Warsaw Initiative Funds (WIF), roughly half to three-quarters of which is dedicated to the Partnership for Peace Consortium. After FY2014, the Marshall Center expects that WIF funding will be significantly reduced.⁸⁶

Other Sources of Funding

The German Ministry of Defense, under a bilateral agreement with the United States dating back to the Marshall Center’s founding, provides a share of the Marshall Center’s budget (roughly 11 percent). In FY2013, Germany contributed \$2.25 million.⁸⁷

Several other sources of funds provide minimal support to RC programs:

- **Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA):** Centers have received OHDACA funds to conduct courses on humanitarian assistance and disaster response; APCSS, for example, received \$451,000 from PACOM to conduct its Comprehensive Crisis Management (CCM) course in FY2012.⁸⁸
- **Countering Illicit Trafficking (CIT):** The COCOMs’ CIT fund provides the Marshall Center with \$750,000 to pay for a single full-time professor and support other programming.⁸⁹
- **COCOM Discretionary Funds:** Each COCOM has funds that they can use at their discretion. Occasionally, the combatant commanders use these funds to support RC activities. PACOM, for example, provided \$204,000 in Asia-Pacific Regional Initiative (APRI) funds to APCSS to conduct workshops in Indonesia and Oceania in FY2012.⁹⁰ EUCOM, similarly, funds English language training for partner nation personnel preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in support of ISAF. EUCOM’s Joint Interagency Counter Trafficking Center (JICTC) provided the Marshall Center with \$205,000 for a senior law enforcement seminar in FY2013 and \$120,000 for an analysis of drug trafficking in the theater.^{91, 92}

Dedicated funding is used to augment the capabilities and the reach of the RCs and is thus generally welcomed by center directors. Naturally, reliance on dedicated funding—which

⁸⁵ EUCOM Joint Inter-Agency Counter Trafficking Center, “Coordination with GCMC,” slide presentation, December 13, 2012, slide 6.

⁸⁶ GCMC, *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012e, p. 17.

⁸⁷ GCMC, *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012e, cover memo, p. 2.

⁸⁸ OHDACA funds are managed by OSD but executed by the COCOMs. APCSS, 2013c, p. 22.

⁸⁹ GCMC, *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012e, p. 17.

⁹⁰ APCSS, 2013c, p. 22.

⁹¹ EUCOM Joint Inter-Agency Counter Trafficking Center, 2012, slide 6.

⁹² Correspondence with ACSS, July 22, 2013.

may become more prevalent as centers become more entrepreneurial as a result of budget cuts—has the potential to alter the nature of RCs’ engagement. For example, though counter-narcotics cooperation is an important element of U.S. engagement in Latin America, CHDS does little work on narcotics except to examine the impact that transnational organized crime (including narco-trafficking) has on governance and stability in the region.⁹³ The decision to examine this issue only in a broader context was a deliberate one, as OSD did not want CHDS to contribute to the “narcotization” of U.S. relations with the region.⁹⁴ Were OSD to allocate counternarcotics money to CHDS to conduct drug-related programs in Central and South America, CHDS’s outreach could become increasingly defined by this one issue. In a similar vein, CTFP funds have enabled NESA to develop counterterrorism programs for the Yemeni military—certainly a top priority for a key ally in the fight against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). However, the center’s increasing reliance on funds dedicated to CT-focused programs could reduce the scale of NESA’s engagement with Yemen on other issues of importance, such as good governance, democratization, and civilian control of the military.

Reimbursements from Self-Paying Countries

U.S. government funds are used to cover the centers’ overhead and operating expenses, as well as the participation costs of students from developing countries and, as approved, of representatives from NGOs and international organizations. Developed countries are invited to send participants, but they must reimburse the centers for the associated costs. The money recouped by the RCs, however, is quite small. In FY2012, the Marshall Center was reimbursed \$1.29 million by self-paying countries, about 3.5 percent of its \$36.6 million total operating budget for that year.⁹⁵ The Asia-Pacific Center, in allocating seats for its FY2013 transformative courses (ASC, Theater Security Cooperation [TSC], APOC, and Senior Executive Asia-Pacific Orientation Course [SEAPOC]), planned for between 11 and 16 percent of the students to come from self-paying countries (73 to 105 out of 676 total students). The budget for these programs is \$2.856 million, which suggests that roughly \$308,000 to \$442,000 would be reimbursed—about 1.9 to 2.8 percent of APCSS’s \$15.9 million total operating budget.⁹⁶ No sub-Saharan African country is required to cover the costs of its participation in ACSS events, though the center can seek reimbursements from some extra-regional countries that send officials to its events. In FY2012, five such countries (Canada, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and the United Kingdom) sent a total of six students to ACSS residential programs, representing 2 percent of 331 total residential program participants, while three countries (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) sent eight students to nonresidential events, representing 4 percent of all participants.⁹⁷ In FY2013, the Africa Center allotted just 11 seats to self-payers (five French, two British, two Portuguese, and two unspecified) out of 651 foreign participants for its 16 core academic programs—just 1.7 percent of all participants.⁹⁸

⁹³ Interview with senior OSD official, January 3, 2013; interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012.

⁹⁴ Interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012.

⁹⁵ GCMC, “GCMC FY12 Update,” January 30, 2013, slide 8.

⁹⁶ APCSS, *FY13–14 Program Plan*, Enclosure 10 (“Proposed FY13 International Participation in Executive Education Programs”), May 11, 2012c, pp. 10-1 to 10-4.

⁹⁷ ACSS, “Africa Center for Strategic Studies Congressional Report, Date Range: FY2012,” undated(e).

⁹⁸ ACSS, 2012a, Appendix 3.

Managing Potential Budget Cuts

All of the RCs have found significant efficiencies over the past few years by streamlining operations, renegotiating contracts, and refraining from filling vacant positions. While centers have made some cuts to academic programs, for the most part they have reduced expenditures and increased productivity in administrative, management, support, and overhead functions.

The Africa Center has scaled back support for faculty research, insourced contractors, cut Portuguese translation, and reduced throughput in certain academic programs.⁹⁹ It also maintains a very small faculty of seven instructors, choosing instead to rely on a network of 200 “adjunct” subject matter experts who can be used in time-limited, targeted ways at a lower cost.¹⁰⁰ APCSS cut its operating budget by 22 percent by halving staff travel, leaving positions vacant while employing more college interns, and negotiating new housing for participants that allow it to pay reduced lodging rates and (because the new apartments have kitchens and Internet access) a mere 42 percent of the permitted per diem allowance for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE). The center also shortened its core ASC course from seven weeks to five and reduced the number of students in it.¹⁰¹ NESAs combined two senior positions (deputy director and chief of staff), eliminated a computer support position, and renegotiated contracts on lodging, transportation, and translation. It also decided to move its forward office from Bahrain to the United Arab Emirates, where its sole staff member will support (and thus be paid for by) NESAs Foreign Military Sales (FMS) contract to develop an Emirati national defense university.¹⁰² After shrinking overhead with such cost-saving measures, one center official stated, there is no doubt that further funding cuts will affect academic programs, as little excess infrastructure or overhead is left to cut.¹⁰³

As a pure accounting exercise, it is relatively simple for the RCs to adapt to shrinking budgets; because each event is discrete, centers can cut as many individual events as necessary without affecting the others. NESAs officials asserted, for example, that the cancellation of Track II events would be simple to execute because they are unconnected to the academic programs and would therefore have little impact on the center’s other initiatives.¹⁰⁴ Such confidence-building initiatives are unique, however, in that other wealthy partner nations with interests in facilitating solutions to protracted conflicts—such as Turkey or the oil-rich Persian Gulf countries—might be willing to fund Track II programs if U.S. funding were to be reduced or eliminated.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, these engagements may also be at risk of not occurring because many partner nations are scaling back their security cooperation funding as well.

In deciding which programs to cancel, it would generally be simpler, as a logistical matter, to cancel in-region workshops, which involve travel of only a handful of center instructors and benefit from the assistance of U.S. embassy personnel and local alumni networks. In compari-

⁹⁹ ACSS, 2013a, slide 13.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁰¹ APCSS, 2013c, pp. 19–20. Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁰² Interview with NESAs Center official, February 12, 2013; interview with NESAs Center officials, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013.

¹⁰³ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with senior NESAs Center officials, January 17, 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with senior NESAs Center officials, January 17, 2013.

son, cancelling or rearranging the travel of dozens of students attending foundation programs, as well as the myriad support arrangements that facilitate such core programs, would be a more complex task.

However, without concrete, objective measures of effectiveness, it is impossible for each center to know which of its programs has the least *impact* on stakeholder objectives and should therefore be the first program to be cut. Several center officials stated that core foundation programs need to be maintained because they invest in future regional leaders,¹⁰⁶ provide a neutral multilateral setting in which regional perspectives can be exchanged, and build cross-border relationships.¹⁰⁷ Further, they establish a critical intellectual, strategic, and interpersonal framework from which other RC programs (and, to some degree, other DIB programs) can benefit.¹⁰⁸ Others, however, pointed out that centers have shifted their agendas increasingly toward in-region workshops for a reason; they can be tailored to the security needs of a particular country, focused on current challenges, and provide skills to many more people.¹⁰⁹ Not insignificantly, in almost all cases, they can be conducted at significantly lower cost.

Each center has made decisions on what to eliminate first, as DSCA instructed the centers to include in their FY2013–FY2014 program plans a list of things they would cut in the event of a \$500,000 or \$1,000,000 reduction in resources. (Centers were also told to identify the programs that they would augment in the unlikely event of an increase in funding by \$500,000 or \$1 million.¹¹⁰) It is not entirely clear how centers made these decisions in the absence of MOEs, but their decisions do provide insight into what programs they believe have the least (or most) impact.

Interestingly, the centers are more or less evenly split on how they would allocate mandatory decrements or increments to their funding. CHDS and ACSS appeared interested in protecting their core programs as much as possible, while the Marshall Center placed a greater emphasis on in-region programs, and APCSS seemed willing to sacrifice core program resources in order to protect its specialized courses.

CHDS

In planning how to eliminate or add a marginal dollar, CHDS's top priority is its foundation programs. In planning for potential budget cuts, CHDS's main concern, according to a center official, was to have the least negative impact on core programs even if it meant sacrificing a range of more focused and specialized programs.¹¹¹ If forced to find half a million dollars in savings, CHDS proposed eliminating *all* advanced courses and seeking personnel and contract reductions. If forced to identify \$1 million in savings, the center proposed eliminating all advanced *and* specialized courses and the Senior Executive Dialogue, seeking personnel and contract reductions, and cutting multiple support functions like travel and professional development for faculty and staff. A \$1 million cut—which represents 8.5 percent of its entire \$11.8

¹⁰⁶ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with senior Marshall Center official, January 14, 2013.

¹¹⁰ DSCA, "FY13–14 Program Planning Guidance," undated(b).

¹¹¹ Interview with CHDS official, telephone communication with the authors, March 8, 2013.

million operating budget—would nevertheless force the center to reduce its core Strategy and Defense Policy (SDP) course from three weeks to two.¹¹²

CHDS's plans for a windfall also gives some insights into the center's priorities. If it received an additional \$500,000, it would expand its foundation programs by increasing the number of participants in its core SDP course by 50 percent and adding a Caribbean SDP course. It would also modestly expand the size of its advanced and specialized courses and its homeland defense program.

ACSS

The Africa Center, which placed a number of specialized courses on the chopping block, also seemed most interested in protecting its core programs. Given a \$500,000 decrement in funding, ACSS proposed eliminating one of two Security Sector Reform and Transformation (SSR/T) in-region workshops, which had already been cut back by 70 percent from their proposed levels, and cutting a seminar on Managing Security Resources in Africa (MSRA) by 80 percent. By making these cuts, the center would still be able to hold one SSR/T workshop on the continent; its resource management course is focused on implementation more than any other ACSS program, suggesting that the center places a higher priority on programs focused on strategic analysis of shared threats. ACSS would cope with a \$1 million cut by eliminating the MSRA program altogether and also cutting its African Executive Dialogue, five in-regional alumni programs (TOPS), and a three-day Introduction to African Security Issues seminar aimed at U.S. government staff. ACSS would use additional funding to augment the SSR/T workshop that it judged to be underfunded and to address unfunded facilities requirements.¹¹³

Marshall Center

A senior Marshall Center official stated that although residential programs have been the center's staple over the past 20 years, the center's most relevant programs going forward are its shorter, more tailored outreach events.¹¹⁴ The Marshall Center offered up a range of administrative and support functions to absorb 60–70 percent of potential cuts, indicating that it is more willing to scale back large core programs rather than entirely eliminate smaller non-residential events that it conducts throughout its AOR. It had already scaled the PASS course down to ten weeks as a cost-saving measure in FY2012.¹¹⁵

In case of a \$500,000 decrement, GCMC would reduce funding for travel, staff training, supplies, and staff development before reducing participation in its ten-week “flagship” PASS-Capacity Building (CB) course by 14 students (out of 201 annually, or 7 percent). To accommodate a \$1 million cut, the center would decrease a range of IT and support functions, while also funding 16 fewer PASS-CB students (an additional 8 percent of the total). Regardless of how the Marshall Center valued its programs relative to each other, if it felt compelled to make cuts to any programming at all, the PASS-CB foundation course would be the obvious target; as the center's largest program (210 students divided among two sessions) and its longest (ten

¹¹² CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e.

¹¹³ ACSS, *ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 11, 2012a.

¹¹⁴ Interview with senior Marshall Center official, January 14, 2013.

¹¹⁵ GCMC, “GCMC FY12 Update,” briefing to PDASD Board, January 30, 2013b, slide 6.

weeks, twice as long as the next-longest course), cutting a small number of its students generates significant savings.¹¹⁶

Consistent with Marshall Center officials' view that it has the greatest impact through tailored in-region events, the center proposed using an initial \$500,000 in extra funding to add three to five additional nonresidential programs. It would use a further \$500,000 to add yet more nonresidential programs, as well as to perform technology upgrades.¹¹⁷

APCSS

The Asia-Pacific Center, in its assessment of the impact of changes in funding, did not go to such lengths to preserve its core courses, nor would it use any additional resources that became available to strengthen its core programs, suggesting that the center values its other academic programs more. It wrote that a \$500,000 decrease in FY2013 would reduce the Advanced Security Cooperation (ASC) course throughout by four participants (7 percent of ASC students) and totally eliminate one of two iterations of the TSC course, as well as reduce secondary missions (such as research) and support functions (staff travel, supplies, library services, and IT maintenance). A \$1 million reduction would eliminate ten more ASC students (an additional 8 percent) and trigger further cuts to staff, contractors, and travel.¹¹⁸

Similarly, APCSS would not use a funding windfall to enhance its core programs. Instead, it would use an initial \$500,000 to partially fund its Comprehensive Crisis Management (CCM) course with 41 participants. A \$1 million increase would enable APCSS to fill the CCM course to its capacity of 85 fellows.

NESA

NESA did not provide a priority list in its program plan.

Potential Impact of Budget Cuts on Center Missions

Budget cuts have the potential to shift centers' focus away from key missions. In particular, NESA and CHDS would be expected to hold fewer events in Washington—where it is costly to host a small number of students for in-residence courses—and more regional events, where larger numbers of students can be engaged for only the cost of sending a few instructors. Despite wanting to protect its core programs, for example, CHDS stated that large budget cuts may lead it to “shift away from DC based in-residence educational opportunities” in order to reduce the cost of events and meet presidential directives to reduce travel expenses.¹¹⁹ Such a shift would lead fewer Latin American and Caribbean participants to gain firsthand exposure to U.S. government officials and to American culture. Interestingly, fiscal pressures could lead the Africa Center to do the exact opposite; ACSS is considering moving in-region workshops

¹¹⁶ GCMC, *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012e, p. 18.

¹¹⁷ GCMC, *GCMC FY13–14 Program Plan*, p. 18.

¹¹⁸ APCSS, *APCSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, p. 4-1.

¹¹⁹ CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e, p. 3. For details on the Presidential Directive, see Executive Order 13589.

to the United States because intra-African airline tickets are often more costly than tickets between participants' home countries and Washington.

Centers have also changed the way they do their business in order to accommodate shortages of resources. CHDS, for example, implemented courses conducted entirely online specifically to offset a reduction of \$300,000 in CTFP funding, and many of its foundation courses conduct several weeks of instruction online before bringing participants to Washington for a shortened residential program.¹²⁰

Centers are reacting to the expected fiscal pressures by becoming more entrepreneurial and “more aggressive in seeking outside funding”¹²¹—an imperative that has the potential to divert centers from their primary missions. The NESACenter, for example, is considering developing a program for Fulbright scholars in the United States, whom NESACenter leadership feels are poorly tracked by the State Department once they return to their home countries. By offering instruction to Fulbrighters at NESACenter, the center would be able to track them through the center's own alumni network.¹²² While such an effort may provide NESACenter with funds, and while it may enhance the long-term value of the Fulbright program to the U.S. government as a whole, tracking graduates of a State Department program whose participants work in a wide range of scholarly fields is not central to NESACenter's mission as a DoD institution charged with building security capacity and forging relationships with foreigners engaged in national security issues.

Such entrepreneurial drive could also lead centers to compete with each other for programs or students. CHDS, for example, wrote to DSCA that “CHDS will continue to aggressively seek outside funding to offset funding reductions and has already begun to work with U.S. military groups in order to identify eligible course offerings for which they could elect to use their allocated CTFP funding to send students to CHDS courses.”¹²³ Because U.S. embassy security cooperation officials can use CTFP dollars to send a student to any one of roughly a dozen DoD institutions engaged in PME, RCs may feel compelled to engage in marketing efforts to capture the available funds.

As centers look to reduce or offset the costs of academic programs themselves, they may consider increasing the ratio of self-paying participants to those coming from developing countries, whose costs are covered by the centers' funds. Doing so, however, may reduce engagement with officials from developing countries—the primary target audience of the RCs—in favor of officials from countries that already have substantial military ties with the United States.

Global Center for Security Cooperation (GCSC)

Though no objective data have been collected to assess GCSC's effectiveness, a great deal of subjective information exists to suggest that GCSC has not added substantial value to the RC

¹²⁰ CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e, p. 2. Also interview with CHDS officials, Washington, D.C., February 21, 2013.

¹²¹ CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e, p. 2.

¹²² Interview with NESACenter official, February 12, 2013.

¹²³ CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e, p. 2.

enterprise. Multiple OSD and RC officials said GCSC adds no value to the RC enterprise.¹²⁴ One RC official went so far as to say that GCSC is “useless” and that “none of us read what they put out.”¹²⁵

Global Center officials assert that by serving as a central source of information on security cooperation events, the center provides a “common operating picture to depict ongoing or planned SC events worldwide for OSD, DSCA, COCOMs, [and] Joint Staff,” as well as to security cooperation officers in U.S. embassies overseas.¹²⁶ If the Global Center did not exist, GCSC officials asserted in an information paper, “no coordination or deconfliction of activities between institutions”¹²⁷ would occur because the RCs would not do so on their own; besides, a senior GCSC official stated, RCs would not know what other activities were going on in their regions without its semiannual “180-day” report of DIB activities taking place across the 29-member consortium.¹²⁸ GCSC’s information sharing and deconfliction efforts, a senior GCSC official stated, create cost savings for RCs by preventing them from duplicating efforts.

These contributions to the RC enterprise seem overstated. At an OSD-hosted roundtable in February 2013, senior RC officials noted that GCSC only reports on consortium activities—leaving out similar DIB activities undertaken by the State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the COCOMs. Thus, they claimed, the 180-day report is “incomplete.” They also pointed out that the 180-day report is simply an activity report—a list of outputs rather than outcomes—that gives no indications as to which events might be particularly important or valuable. By portraying all events as equal, they claimed, the report suggests that other programs’ large number of events is more impactful than the centers’ small number of strategically focused events.¹²⁹ As an administrative matter, RC officials stated that they devoted significant amount of staff time to developing their submissions to GCSC, which simply repackaged their narratives.¹³⁰ Finally, an RC official noted that even if the GCSC report does identify redundant events, the Global Center itself has no authority to direct centers to deconflict their activities; OSD has such authority, but it has yet to draw on the report to “rein in stray activities,” suggesting that the report has not actually been used for this purpose.¹³¹

Several RC officials stated that they do cooperate and deconflict with other DIB programs on their own, both through informal collaboration and through participation in annual security cooperation planning events. RCs and other “providers”—such as the Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI), Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS),

¹²⁴ Interview with senior NESAC Center officials, January 17, 2013; interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013; interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013; Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

¹²⁵ Interview with senior NESAC Center officials, January 17, 2013.

¹²⁶ GCSC, “Without the Global Center,” undated, information paper provided March 20, 2013.

¹²⁷ GCSC, undated.

¹²⁸ Interview with senior GCSC official, Monterey, Calif., March 20, 2013.

¹²⁹ A senior GCSC official stated that though the RCs comprise five of the consortium’s 29 members, they undertake a smaller percentage of the consortium’s events. Interview with senior GCSC official, Monterey, Calif., March 20, 2013. Pointing to this fact at a January 31, 2013, roundtable, RC directors claimed that the report would lead to them being judged unfairly for appearing to contribute less than their fair share of events to the DIB enterprise. Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

¹³⁰ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

¹³¹ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

WIF, IMET, and others—participate in annual COCOM-hosted SCETWGs, at which security cooperation priorities are set and resources allocated.¹³² Similarly, SOUTHCOM hosts a “horse blanket conference” at which the command, regional country teams, and security cooperation providers meet to align their efforts with SOUTHCOM TCP priorities.¹³³

RCs and other DIB programs also interact informally to prevent duplication of efforts and ensure that any overlapping initiatives that may occur are complementary. APCSS and DIRI, for example, have deconflicted events in the Maldives, Indonesia, and Cambodia, and APCSS meets weekly with a DIRI contractor based in Honolulu who works on security sector reform. The two have also “tag-teamed” on initiatives to promote longer-term collaboration than either could have secured on its own; in 2009, APCSS conducted a civil-military relations workshop in a South Asian country; DIRI then built on that event and on APCSS’s alumni network to gain host nation support for its own workshops. By building on APCSS’s previous work, DIRI was able to gain enhanced access to partner officials and address implementation issues in a more detailed way than APCSS could have done on its own.¹³⁴ Similarly, a senior OSD official noted that CHDS and DIRI had a “real impact” in one Central American nation by collaborating on national security planning; CHDS helped partner nation officials develop a strategy, after which DIRI helped them develop implementing frameworks to put its defense reform principles into practice.¹³⁵ APCSS and DIRI collaborated in a similar way in two South Asian countries, according to APCSS officials.¹³⁶

While the 180-day report is perhaps GCSC’s most visible contribution, it does not appear as if GCSC has accomplished its more substantive missions. A Global Center information paper asserted that the disappearance of GCSC would result in “less efficient dissemination of guidance and other information from OSD, due to the loss of a powerful means of rapid communication with the field.”¹³⁷ However, officials from all of the RCs claimed that—between the formal dissemination of guidance documents and frequent consultation with OSD stakeholders—they have an adequate understanding of OSD Policy’s priorities.¹³⁸

Finally, OSD gave GCSC the authority to conduct curriculum reviews of RC programs as a way “to ensure that planned courses are thorough and effective” and to provide opportunities for the RCs to have their courses evaluated by an outside, objective entity.¹³⁹ GCSC indicates that its curriculum reviews can help “ensure institutions and programs are conducted according to guidance and priorities.”¹⁴⁰

Four out of the five RCs, however, have yet to ask GCSC to review their courses. Officials from two RCs felt that GCSC has neither the pedagogical nor the regional expertise needed to

¹³² Interview with PACOM official, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013.

¹³³ Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, Miami, Fla., January 24, 2013.

¹³⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013.

¹³⁵ Interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012. Also, interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013, and interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, Miami, Fla., January 24, 2013.

¹³⁶ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013.

¹³⁷ GCSC, undated.

¹³⁸ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, February 6, 2013; interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

¹³⁹ OSD, 2007.

¹⁴⁰ GCSC, undated.

offer useful insights.¹⁴¹ The Asia-Pacific Center did ask GCSC to review its ASC course in 2011. To conduct the assessment, GCSC engaged experts from NDU, the Defense Language Institute, and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. The RCs could presumably engage similar experts on their own—particularly if they were DoD employees, as were two out of the three GCSC assessors—if and when they wanted an outside review of their courses. In the end, GCSC's assessment of the ASC course offered some potentially useful insights, though APCSS staff reported that GCSC's report was “not meaty” and was the least valuable of the three outside curriculum reviews performed for the center over the past 15 years.¹⁴²

Moreover, GCSC's review of the course curriculum went beyond its mandate. It included commentary on all aspects of APCSS's operations, including physical plant, library usage, student selection, alumni outreach, opportunities for budget efficiencies, and faculty sabbaticals. It made recommendations to OSD, DSCA, and PACOM on such issues as the selection of a new center director, the establishment of an RC enterprise board of advisors, and the extent to which PACOM endorses the center in its command briefing—topics beyond the scope of a curriculum review of a single course. GCSC's report even included out-of-scope recommendations that seemingly justified its own existence—suggesting, for example, that “the regional security cooperation community look hard at ways to enhance sharing information across the regional security centers and related organizations/activities”¹⁴³—raising questions about the extent to which GCSC's supposedly independent curriculum review was truly independent.

¹⁴¹ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013. Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁴² Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁴³ GCSC, “Curriculum Review Report of the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies Advanced Security Cooperation Course,” November 1, 2011, p. 12.

Regional Centers' Impacts

Interviews with RC stakeholders throughout OSD and the COCOMs revealed *universal* agreement that (1) the centers make positive contributions to U.S. interests, and (2) they are cost-effective ways of advancing DoD security cooperation and engagement objectives. Indeed, one senior OSD official, referencing APCSS in particular, stated that the center “is a prime example of an innovative, low-cost, small-footprint approach to implementing our defense priorities,”¹ echoing the strategy for building partner capacity that is called for in the January 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance*.² Not surprisingly, RC directors and staffs wholeheartedly agreed.

For reasons that will be discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter, virtually no one—neither stakeholders nor the RC staffs themselves—could quantify or measure the *extent* to which the centers add value in these areas. Ideally, the RCs would have collected and analyzed data that could be used to measure—or at least infer—impact in a systematic manner over an extended period of time, such as by posing questions directly to alumni in regular surveys or by evaluating existing data on such dynamics as alumni engagement and responsiveness.

This chapter recounts some two dozen ways in which—according to center stakeholders—the RCs advance U.S. interests, DoD policy objectives, and COCOM engagement priorities. Given the absence of specific metrics and outcome-focused performance data, these narratives are largely qualitative in nature. This fact alone does not make these success stories any less compelling than if they were backed up by extensive statistical analysis, but it does make them difficult and impractical to measure and track over time.

This chapter also describes how the centers and their stakeholders at OSD and the COCOMs do measure the centers' activities and achievements. Despite the fact that several iterations of USDP guidance called for the centers to measure their own performance, OSD itself does not assess whether the centers are successfully executing the guidance they have been given. Similarly, the COCOMs—despite tasking the centers to advance their regional engagement priorities—generally do not determine whether the centers have done what the commands tasked them to do. The COCOMs do evaluate the centers' accomplishments (as reported by the centers themselves) insofar as they advance TCP objectives. For their part, the centers collect a fair amount of information on event execution that helps them improve subsequent program delivery, but they collect little data that would help them assess the extent to which they advance stakeholder goals and objectives.

¹ APCSS, *FY13–14 Program Plan*, memo from Lavoy, undated(c).

² The *Defense Strategic Guidance* states, “Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities” (emphasis in the original).

Impacts

Stakeholders identified a wide range of ways in which the centers do advance DoD's security cooperation goals—measurable or not. Generally speaking, they fall into five categories:

- A. **Building partner capacity** in ways that enhance national security institutions and promote interoperability with the United States and other regional partners at a policy level
- B. **Developing long-term relationships and fostering pro-U.S. outlooks**, or at least a clear understanding of U.S. policy priorities, particularly among current and future partner nation leaders
- C. **Offering unique opportunities for engagement**, particularly in countries with little or no military-to-military ties with the United States
- D. **Promoting regional dialogue and reducing regional tensions**
- E. **Offering valuable repositories of regional expertise** to U.S. stakeholders and regional partners.

A. Build Partner Capacity

1. Regional centers impart fundamental national security analysis skills.

Most U.S. programs for building partner capacity (BPC)—particularly those undertaken by the COCOMs and their component organizations—focus on the operational capabilities that partner nations need to address security challenges. The RCs, however, impart a range of strategic analytical skills needed by partner nations' current and future defense leaders to develop their own national capacity and interact more productively with the United States;³ OSD's 2011 guidance directs the centers to "examine fundamental causes of relevant security challenges" and "foster critical thinking," and the 2013 guidance tasks the centers to build common perspectives on a wide range of security challenges. Participants come away better prepared to understand and assess complex strategic security challenges and to cooperate and collaborate with a range of agencies, both domestically and regionally, to develop whole-of-government solutions to such challenges.

Just as joint small unit training teaches partner forces U.S. military doctrine and tactics, the regional centers could be described as educating senior partner officials in U.S. national security analysis perspectives and techniques. In both cases, the security cooperation effort is designed to enhance partner nations' abilities to address shared threats and to operate more effectively with U.S. and regional counterparts.

2. Regional centers help build partner nation institutions.

One of the most significant contributions of the RCs, according to several stakeholders, is that they help partner nations to build and manage their defense and security institutions.⁴ The RCs and other DIB programs help partner nations develop security strategies and build institutional capacity in the security sector. COCOM-led BPC initiatives—which focus primarily on operational training—are far more effective, one COCOM official asserted, because of the foundational institution-building work done by the RCs.⁵

³ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

⁴ Interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012; interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013.

⁵ Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013.

3. Regional centers develop future partner nation leaders.

As with other U.S. PME programs, the RCs provide future military leaders from around the world with career-enhancing skills and information. The Deputy Minister of Defense of a former Soviet republic reportedly told a Marshall Center official that the center is “building [his country’s] bench” of Westernized, strategically oriented senior defense officials.⁶

It is not possible to conclusively attribute graduates’ career success to their participation in RC programs; if they were selected to attend the RCs because they were up-and-comers, they may well have succeeded in their fields anyway. However, in many countries, attendance at an RC is considered to be a high-profile credential that helps alumni advance in their careers.⁷

A minister of defense in one South American country, for example, selected his senior advisors only from the cadre of CHDS graduates in his country. Similarly, soon after attending a CHDS seminar, a new Latin American parliamentarian with no experience in security issues was appointed deputy minister of defense, and then minister of defense; in this case, the official’s participation in an RC program served as a key security-related credential—perhaps the only one, in fact—that facilitated his appointment to the most senior defense policymaking position in his government.⁸

The intent is that RC graduates not only advance in their careers, but that they will act throughout their careers in ways consistent with the principles and values they learned at the centers, particularly if and when they reach the most senior levels of their governments. Anecdotes to this effect abound. As just one example, an APCSS alumnus in a senior military leadership position told center officials that he refrained from attempting a coup d’état, despite significant pressure, because of what he had learned at the center several years earlier.⁹ (Of course, exceptions do exist. Participation in the APCSS Senior Executive Seminar in 2004 did not deter Voreqe “Frank” Bainimarama, a Fijian official, from staging a coup in 2006.¹⁰)

4. Regional centers promote whole-of-government solutions to security issues.

Just as the May 2010 U.S. *National Security Strategy* mandates a whole-of-government approach to U.S. security,¹¹ the United States encourages international partners to promote integrated interagency solutions to their national security challenges. Thus, in its 2011 guidance memo, OSD directed the RCs to “integrat[e] whole-of-government approaches to stabilize weak or failing States and to prevent, mitigate, and stop mass atrocities” and to “strengthen. . . whole-of-government approaches to the promotion of democratic accountability, respect for human rights, and the rule of law world-wide.”¹² The updated 2013 guidance directs all RCs to “[b]uild approaches to partnering that engage the ‘whole-of-government’—both for the U.S. and its ally/partner.”¹³

⁶ Interview with senior Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013.

⁷ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013.

⁸ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁹ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

¹⁰ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

¹¹ White House, 2010, pp. 14–16.

¹² Flournoy, 2011.

¹³ Verga, 2013b.

The RCs are especially well suited to foster interagency collaboration among partner nations. Programs on HA/DR bring together participants from multiple partner government agencies, as responsibilities for disaster response are typically shared among military and police services, as well as civilian ministries of health, emergency management, environment, and others.¹⁴ By inviting a mix of civilian and military officials from several countries in a region, the RCs are also able to foster multinational interagency partnership, which can facilitate a regional response to security-related challenges—such as natural disasters or violent extremism—whose impact is not limited by national borders.

B. Develop Relationships and Foster Pro-U.S. Outlooks

1. Regional centers shape partners' long-term strategic thinking on security issues.

RCs offer unique opportunities to shape partners' strategic thinking about security challenges in ways that are consistent with American values and, more broadly, those of the Euro-Atlantic community. Though RCs do not attempt to indoctrinate participants to accept U.S. policy positions, they do promote critical thinking, democratic values, and principles that advance good governance, including civilian control of the military, interagency collaboration, and regional cooperation.

A senior OSD official noted that a former French colony in Africa chose to send its leading officers to U.S. education and training courses (at the RCs and elsewhere) instead of French institutions because its government wanted its officer corps to be exposed to U.S. values—an engagement opportunity expected to generate “immeasurable” benefit for the United States in the long term.¹⁵ Similarly, according to officials at both EUCOM and PACOM, years of engagement by the RCs have helped former Soviet bloc countries instill their defense establishments with a Euro-Atlantic orientation and foster greater integration with the United States and NATO.¹⁶ A U.S. official involved in NATO issues pointed out that the Marshall Center has trained officers from newer Alliance members preparing to assume positions at NATO Headquarters.¹⁷

RCs have also had significant influence on the development of partners' own national defense universities, which generally instruct future defense leaders in strategic planning and analysis. Four national defense universities in Latin America have used the CHDS curriculum as a foundation for their own,¹⁸ and one country in the Middle East is even paying the NESACenter \$15 million, through an FMS case, to develop its defense university. NESACenter will develop a curriculum based on that employed by the U.S. National Defense University, hire professors and a dean, and secure accreditation for the program. NESACenter is helping four other countries in the region develop similar, though smaller-scale, education and training programs.¹⁹ One RC official described RCs' contributions to partners' strategic military education dynamic as “a unique opportunity to mold partners' defense establishments in the United States' image.”²⁰

¹⁴ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013.

¹⁵ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

¹⁶ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013; interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

¹⁷ Interview with U.S. Mission to NATO officials, Brussels, Belgium, January 11, 2013.

¹⁸ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁹ Interview with senior NESACenter officials, January 17, 2013.

²⁰ Interview with senior NESACenter officials, January 17, 2013.

As has been noted, the *Defense Strategic Guidance* states that the United States “will seek to be the security partner of choice, pursuing new partnerships with a growing number of nations—including those in Africa and Latin America—whose interests and viewpoints are merging into a common vision of freedom, stability, and prosperity.”²¹ The RCs’ ability to shape the strategic outlook of partner nations’ current and future leaders suggests that the centers should have a leading role in advancing this U.S. defense policy objective.

2. Regional centers build relationships that facilitate USG engagement.

A wide range of stakeholders asserted that the relationships built by the RCs over time are “priceless” assets that facilitate U.S. engagement with allies and partners.²² The centers have built up considerable credibility and robust networks in their regions over time, according to one senior OSD official,²³ primarily because they maintain contact with their alumni continuously throughout the course of their careers.²⁴ (Other DoD education and training programs, one APCSS official commented sardonically, don’t bother reaching out to their graduates until they become Minister of Defense.²⁵) These relationships can provide extremely valuable access to senior partner nation officials; as a EUCOM general officer said, “you can’t search for trust in the middle of an emergency.”²⁶

3. Regional centers promote policies consistent with U.S. priorities.

Even though the RCs do not press partner nation participants to adopt specific policy positions, by focusing discussions on the values and principles on which U.S. national security policy is based, the centers do encourage partners to pursue policies consistent with these principles. In one example of note, the Asia-Pacific Center has incorporated concepts from the *U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security* (WPS) into all of its programs so as to promote the *Action Plan*’s goal of “advanc[ing] women’s inclusion in peace negotiations, peace-building activities, and conflict prevention . . . in areas of conflict and insecurity.”²⁷ In their course projects, several students chose to address challenges in which gender is a key factor, and they pursued implementation of their initiatives when they returned home. One APCSS alumnus persuaded his government to incorporate women into border security forces in order to screen female refugees in a manner that would be more effective, more respectful of cultural norms, and more likely to protect the refugees from assault,²⁸ and another graduate successfully pushed for his country’s security forces to incorporate additional female personnel.²⁹

²¹ DoD, 2012a, p. 3.

²² Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

²³ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

²⁴ Interview with Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

²⁵ The veracity of this derisive comment, though made somewhat off the cuff, was confirmed by GAO, which found in an October 2011 report that the IMET program tracks only graduates who have attained “a position of prominence” in their government—a mere 1 percent of the 88,000 IMET alumni worldwide. See GAO, *International Military Education and Training: Agencies Should Emphasize Human Rights Training and Improve Evaluations*, Washington, D.C., GAO-12-123, October 2011, pp. 17–18. Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 6, 2013.

²⁶ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013.

²⁷ White House, “U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security,” December 2011, p. 1.

²⁸ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

²⁹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

4. Regional centers expose partner nations' current and future leaders to U.S. government, values, and policies.

The most valuable return on investment in the RCs, a senior EUCOM officer said, is having a network of senior officials and leaders who have been exposed to U.S. values, understand the U.S. system, have an appreciation for (if not agreement with) U.S. policies, and have relationships with U.S. counterparts and institutions.³⁰

Indeed, four out of the five centers directly expose partners' current and future leaders to U.S. governance and society by hosting core programs in Washington and Honolulu.³¹ NESa, CHDS, and ACSS arrange meetings for many foundation course participants at executive branch agencies, congressional offices, and think tanks so that they gain an appreciation for the way in which U.S. national security policy is developed, debated, analyzed, and implemented. Such discussions are not intended to convince participants to support U.S. policy, but rather to demonstrate that U.S. policy decisions are the result of a transparent, democratic process that incorporates a wide range of views and interests. A number of the centers' Washington-based courses strive to show the United States as a "city on a hill" and a model worthy of emulation.³²

U.S.-based courses, moreover, provide an extended period of time in which partner nation officials can interact with Americans and experience U.S. culture. A senior APCSS official asserted that being in Honolulu—"the Asian face of America"—is a huge asset that enables the center to "leverage the hell out of *aloha*."³³ Indeed, through barbecues, trips to baseball games, and other cultural excursions, the centers promote the notion, as one COCOM official stated, that "to know us is to love us."³⁴ An APCSS staff member recounted a story about a senior military officer's impressions of interactions between Americans and bus drivers, shopping mall staff, and others who would be deemed beneath him in his home country, where rigid caste structures shape interpersonal relations. After several weeks observing such dynamics in Hawaii, this officer concluded that Americans really do practice what they preach when it comes to treating people of all colors, creeds, and social strata equally, and he went home with a far more positive image of Americans than he held when he arrived.³⁵ To capture such experiences and measure the impact that they have on participants' outlooks, pre-course and post-course participant surveys could pose questions about participants' views of American values in order to determine whether, to what extent, and in what ways these perceptions might have changed.

By straddling academic and government worlds, the RCs serve as nonthreatening, neutral venues in which U.S. government policies can be communicated and discussed frankly.³⁶ Without proselytizing, instructors explain U.S. decisionmaking, welcome and listen to par-

³⁰ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013.

³¹ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012; interview with OSD official, Washington, D.C., January 29, 2013.

³² Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

³³ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

³⁴ Interview with PACOM officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013.

³⁵ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

³⁶ Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

ticipants' views,³⁷ and encourage participants to come to their own conclusions.³⁸ The regional centers thus "socialize" U.S. views regarding shared threats, such as terrorism, and thereby create a foundation for the emergence of common perspectives and the development of collaborative solutions.³⁹ The benefit of this phenomenon often does not manifest itself for many years, and even then it is difficult to establish a precise cause and effect, though at times a correlation can be discerned. When APCSS asked participants at the beginning of a terrorism seminar whether counterterrorism cooperation is possible, very few responded affirmatively; by the end of the course, however, the great majority of participants had changed their views. Regardless of whether they agreed with U.S. counterterrorism policy, by the end of the seminar they became convinced that countries could at least find sufficient common ground to address this shared threat collaboratively.⁴⁰

Furthermore, by presenting civilian-led interagency approaches to problems rather than just military solutions, the centers are able to present all facets of U.S. national security policy, rather than just the potentially more threatening military aspects of it. For example, several PACOM officials stated that a recent APCSS seminar on the "rebalance" (or "pivot") toward Asia was a very effective way to communicate a complex U.S. policy initiative and correct misunderstandings that were widely held in the region. APCSS, they noted, was uniquely positioned to present DoD initiatives as simply one element of a much broader strategy that encompasses political and economic (as well as military) objectives.⁴¹

C. Offer Unique Opportunities for Engagement

RCs are highly valued by OSD, the COCOMs, and other stakeholders for their ability to engage all types of countries over the long term, regardless of their size, strategic importance, or (with some exceptions) current relations with the United States.

1. Regional centers have "convening authority."

Several OSD, COCOM, and RC officials stated that the centers—because of their long experience in their regions, strong institutional and personal networks, excellent reputations, and recognized expertise—have tremendous "convening authority."⁴² As such, they are able to gather partner nation officials to address controversial topics in an environment that fosters openness and debate.⁴³ After the Nepalese government abolished the monarchy in 2008, for example, APCSS drew on its contacts in different political parties and government sectors to convene a workshop designed to help political parties communicate and work together. The event, APCSS staff members asserted, promoted interagency cooperation, fostered new per-

³⁷ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

³⁸ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

³⁹ Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

⁴⁰ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁴¹ Interviews with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

⁴² Interview with senior Marshall Center official, January 14, 2013; interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, February 6, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁴³ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

spectives on governance, strengthened politicians' commitment to a democratic system, and, as a result, contributed to political stability.⁴⁴

2. Regional centers “show the U.S. flag” and demonstrate U.S. commitment.

Countries notice “soft power” tools like RCs, PME, and the like, according to one OSD official, and they pay attention when U.S. support for them waxes and wanes.⁴⁵ The centers embody a continued U.S. commitment to engage, according to several RC officials, which is particularly important in areas with a shrinking American footprint.⁴⁶ The Marshall Center demonstrates that the United States will maintain its involvement in Europe, despite significant military force reductions and the “pivot” to Asia;⁴⁷ ACSS's two field offices in Africa (Dakar and Addis Ababa) are visible signs that Africa remains a U.S. priority, thereby helping dispel the perception that the United States is a “fair weather friend” to Africa;⁴⁸ and the NESACenter's ongoing engagement in Pakistan sends a signal to the government in Islamabad (and to Pakistani military leaders in Rawalpindi) that the forthcoming withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan is not the end of the U.S. commitment to the region.⁴⁹

The centers even send signals of U.S. intentions in regions where U.S. commitment is robust. The “rebalance” toward Asia has made clear that the United States will engage extensively on security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. However, many Asian nations are concerned that the rebalance is primarily a strategy to contain China, rather than to enhance relations with them and address their security requirements (some, but not all, of which revolve around China). Because the Asia-Pacific Center is a highly valued tool for building relationships and discussing shared security challenges, one OSD official posited that cuts to APCSS programs would send a signal to these countries that their concerns are merited.⁵⁰

3. Regional centers can engage audiences that OSD and COCOMs cannot.

As a U.S. government organization that nevertheless has a foot in the world of academia and research, the RCs have easier entrée into certain communities than Pentagon officials or senior military officers from a COCOM. Foreign academics, for one, are much more open to engaging fellow academics than uniformed representatives of the world's largest military. As a result, the centers are better positioned to learn from these scholars and to share perspectives on national security that they are likely to echo in their own teachings and writings.⁵¹ Similarly, civilian officials⁵² and members of parliament from partner nations are often more willing to interact with a civilian-led interagency educational institution than with officials from DoD staffs.⁵³ The centers' ability to engage these important nonmilitary audiences enables

⁴⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁴⁵ Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

⁴⁶ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, Tampa, Fla., January 25, 2013.

⁴⁷ Interview with NATO International Staff official, Brussels, Belgium, January 11, 2013.

⁴⁸ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

⁴⁹ Interview with senior NESACenter officials, January 17, 2013.

⁵⁰ Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

⁵¹ Interview with AFRICOM officials, Stuttgart, Germany, January 8, 2013.

⁵² Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013; interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

⁵³ Interview with EUCOM officials, January 9, 2013.

them to promote whole-of-government solutions to security challenges in ways that OSD and the COCOMs⁵⁴—whose engagement is typically limited to official defense establishments—cannot.⁵⁵ The centers' ability to host NGO employees in their programs also enables them to encourage partner nation officials to build relationships with civil society organizations and factor their views into government decisions.

4. Regional centers are critical engagement tools in “economy of force” regions.

The relative scarcity of resources for engaging Africa,⁵⁶ Latin America,⁵⁷ and the island nations of Oceania on security issues makes the RCs critical engagement tools in such “economy of force” regions.⁵⁸ ACSS is one of the few Title 10 tools that OSD can employ in Africa.⁵⁹ In Latin America, according to a senior OSD official, the primary resources for building relationships with regional security establishments are CHDS, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), and the Inter-American Defense College (IADC), though the latter is formally an arm of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Defense Board (IADB).⁶⁰

Because smaller countries are typically (though certainly not always) less strategically important to U.S. interests, they generally receive few security cooperation resources and have few opportunities to engage U.S. policymakers. SOUTHCOM has limited resources to maintain a robust security cooperation program in the Caribbean, for example, and thus relies on CHDS to be a leading element of DoD engagement there.⁶¹ Similarly, a PACOM official noted that though PACOM cannot engage every Pacific island country on a regular basis, the Asia-Pacific Center can “show the flag” in each one by inviting small numbers of personnel to APCSS programs.⁶² In fact, because of the high cost of shipping materiel to Oceania for traditional military-to-military engagement (e.g., exercises), one PACOM official asserted, APCSS is better positioned to engage Pacific island states than are other PACOM components.⁶³

As a result of these dynamics, RC programs are often one of the few means the United States has to engage these countries on a sustained basis, and because the security sectors in such countries are relatively small, a relatively large proportion of senior security officials have passed through RC programs during the course of their careers. Officials at OSD, several COCOMs, and most RCs stated that the centers therefore have an outsized strategic impact in these countries.⁶⁴ Given the scale of the United States' overall security relationships with

⁵⁴ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

⁵⁵ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

⁵⁶ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

⁵⁷ Interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012.

⁵⁸ Interview with senior OSD official, December 19, 2012.

⁵⁹ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

⁶⁰ See also Inter-American Defense College, “About IADC—Overview,” website, undated. Also interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012.

⁶¹ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁶² Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

⁶³ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

⁶⁴ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013; interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

countries like Thailand and the Philippines, one APCSS official said, admitting an additional Thai or Filipino official to an APCSS course “is like a pebble in a pond,” but including an additional Pacific island nation participant can have a significant impact on U.S. relations with that country.⁶⁵ As a senior CHDS official said regarding the smaller countries in that center’s AOR, “A little engagement goes a long way in the Caribbean.”⁶⁶ Even in regions where security cooperation remains robust, the RCs will remain important; one NATO official claimed that the United States will have fewer mechanisms for direct cooperation with many NATO allies as it reduces its troops presence in Europe and as ISAF draws down from Afghanistan, thus making soft power tools like the Marshall Center even more important for maintaining close trans-Atlantic bonds.⁶⁷

5. Regional centers offer unique openings to countries under U.S. sanctions.

Under Section 7008 of the FY2012 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act (and earlier related legislation), the United States is required to suspend security cooperation and certain other assistance programs when an elected head of government is deposed by a military coup d’état or decree. While the law requires the suspension of a wide range of traditional military education and training programs—including Foreign Military Financing (FMF), IMET, peacekeeping-related training and assistance, and Section 1206 assistance⁶⁸—the RCs remain eligible to invite officials from sanctioned countries. It could be argued that contact with the RCs should also be cut off in such cases to ensure a consistent U.S. policy. However, the centers’ continued ability to engage sanctioned governments keeps the door open for dialogue and provides the United States access to security institutions—particularly on the very issues that the United States is eager to promote in such countries, such as human rights, civilian control of the military, and good governance.⁶⁹ Furthermore, such countries’ participation in an RC program is sufficiently low-profile that it does not equate to a “reward” to a government that has otherwise been sanctioned.⁷⁰ Moreover, it preserves a modicum of engagement that can be built on in the event of a transition to a legitimate government.

U.S. foreign assistance to Fiji, for example, was suspended in accordance with Section 7008 after APCSS alumnus Commodore Voreqe “Frank” Bainimarama overthrew the elected civilian government in a December 2006 coup, and U.S. officials have stated that assistance will remain frozen until Fiji reinstates a democratically elected civilian government.⁷¹ The United States nevertheless maintains discussions with the Fijian government on security-related issues, including human trafficking, narcotics, cruise ship safety, and disaster man-

⁶⁵ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁶⁶ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁶⁷ Interview with NATO International Staff official, January 11, 2013.

⁶⁸ U.S. Embassy to the Republic of Fiji, “U.S. Policy Towards Fiji: Three Pillars,” website, undated. See also Kenneth W. Martin, “Fiscal Year 2012 Security Cooperation Legislation,” *The DISAM Annual*, Vol. 1, May 2012, p. 25.

⁶⁹ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

⁷⁰ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

⁷¹ U.S. Senate, *Frankie Reed, U.S. Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of the Fiji Islands, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu, Statement for the Record, Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, June 29, 2011.

agement and humanitarian assistance.⁷² PACOM considered sending a flag officer to Fiji to discuss such issues, but officials in Washington refused to authorize a trip by such a senior officer because they saw it as legitimizing the military-led government.⁷³ Similarly, U.S. military assistance to Mali was cut off under Section 7008 after junior military officers staged a coup in March 2012.⁷⁴ Since December 2007, U.S. law has prohibited the provision of FMF, defense export licenses, or military equipment or technology to Sri Lanka until the government there addresses concerns regarding human rights abuses committed during the last stages of the country's 30-year civil war.⁷⁵ The RCs remain one of a very limited number of tools for engaging the security establishments of these countries.⁷⁶ By engaging Sri Lankan, Malian, and Fijian officials at the RCs, DoD can continue to impress upon these countries' future leaders the need to promote human rights, good governance, and military professionalization—messages that reinforce U.S. policy without supporting or legitimizing their non-democratic practices.

RCs have even been used to recast dialogues with such countries. U.S. law prohibits security assistance to the government of Sudan,⁷⁷ for example, because of congressional concerns regarding government-sponsored violence in Darfur, Southern Kordofan, and Blue Nile; the continued conflict between Sudan and South Sudan; and government obstruction of humanitarian access to the border region.⁷⁸ However, at the request of the National Security Staff and the State Department, the Africa Center engaged the Sudanese government to share views and try to find common ground in a nonconfrontational, low-profile manner.⁷⁹

Several U.S. officials pointed out that past restrictions on military training and education caused the United States to lose contact with an entire generation of officers in Pakistan and Indonesia.⁸⁰ When these officers reached senior ranks, they had few contacts in the United States and little exposure to U.S. military values and principles, resulting in strained military-to-military relations.⁸¹ A senior OSD official stated emphatically that it is important to maintain a foundation of engagement even when other programs are suspended to prevent such schisms from emerging in the future (as well as to establish channels of communication in the near term).⁸² One senior RC official suggested that, just as metrics are used to measure RC engagement, a metric should also be designed to measure the negative impact of disengage-

⁷² U.S. Embassy to the Republic of Fiji, undated.

⁷³ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

⁷⁴ Alexis Arieff, *Crisis in Mali*, Congressional Research Service Report R42664, January 14, 2013, pp. 15–16.

⁷⁵ Government Printing Office, Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-161), Sec. 699(G), and subsequent legislation.

⁷⁶ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

⁷⁷ Government Printing Office, Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2012, P.L. 112-74 (H.R. 2055), Secs. 7015, 7043(f).

⁷⁸ See Government Printing Office, *Report to Accompany the Fiscal Year 2013 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill*, Report 112-494, 112th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 45.

⁷⁹ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

⁸⁰ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013; interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013. Email from senior NESA Center official, July 13, 2013.

⁸¹ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013.

⁸² Interview with senior OSD official, February 20, 2013.

ment from regional allies and partners as a means of demonstrating the value of “keeping lines of communication open.”⁸³

6. Regional centers offer means of engaging countries when broader bilateral relationships are strained.

As “steady state engagement tools,”⁸⁴ the RCs maintain relationships with professionals and senior leaders in partner nations’ security establishments that persist despite the waxing and waning of their countries’ bilateral relations with the United States. Thus, in India, where changes in the political leadership have led to stark shifts in policy toward the United States, the Asia-Pacific Center’s and the NESACenter’s ties to career bureaucrats and military officers have facilitated continued interactions at the working level.⁸⁵ Similarly, at a time when U.S.-Pakistani relations were at a particularly low point, the NESACenter facilitated a dialogue with Pakistani officials that helped reach an agreement on reopening the border to NATO materiel en route to Afghanistan—an accord that saved the United States hundreds of millions of dollars in transportation costs associated with the far longer NDN through Central Asia.⁸⁶

The centers serve as valuable outreach tools even when they do not engage governments through official channels. Given recent tensions in U.S.-Venezuelan relations, for example, CHDS has not invited Venezuelan government officials to attend its events. However, the center has invited Venezuelan academics, journalists, and civil society figures to participate as a means of promoting transparency and good governance.⁸⁷

Even close partners find the RCs to be less controversial means of engaging the U.S. defense establishment than through higher-profile direct military-to-military contacts. For example, officials at the Marshall Center’s NATO-affiliated counterpart, the PfP-C, commented that non-NATO states like Austria, Switzerland, and Sweden seem more willing to raise potentially contentious security issues through PfP-C and the Marshall Center than at NATO Headquarters.⁸⁸

7. Regional centers can be used as “baby steps” for engaging security establishments when no military-to-military relations exist.

Because RCs are good fora for discussing topics of concern—such as human rights, civilian control of military, and democratization—with pariah countries, they are excellent means of engaging countries or military establishments with which the United States has no relations whatsoever.⁸⁹ Pentagon officials are considering directing the Asia-Pacific Center to conduct a workshop in Burma as a “baby step” toward engaging the military-led government.⁹⁰ Burmese

⁸³ Email from senior NESACenter official, July 14, 2013.

⁸⁴ Interview with senior OSD official, December 19, 2012.

⁸⁵ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

⁸⁶ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

⁸⁷ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁸⁸ Interview with Partnership for Peace Consortium officials, January 14, 2013.

⁸⁹ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

⁹⁰ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi endorsed such a step when she met with PACOM and APCSS officials in Honolulu in January 2013.⁹¹

In the same vein, the NESA Center is one of the only U.S. government entities permitted to engage Iranian officials. Though the center does not invite Iranians to its courses, U.S. and Iranian officials do interact at NESA-organized events hosted by the governments of third countries. Previous such events have taken place in Lebanon and Thailand.⁹² NESA thus keeps open a potential channel for outreach and communication. Hence, there is a foundation on which to build in the event that the newly elected Iranian leadership proves more open to a dialogue with the United States.

8. Regional centers can overcome diplomatic barriers and bureaucratic divisions.

By maintaining robust engagements with all countries in a region, the RCs are able to bridge diplomatic divides among neighboring countries and bureaucratic gaps that hinder engagement by other U.S. government entities.

PACOM Commander Admiral Robert F. Willard highlighted APCSS's interaction with both Beijing and Taipei as a valuable tool for addressing contentious regional issues without damaging U.S.-Chinese ties. In a September 2011 memo to the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Willard wrote, "APCSS is one of the few DoD organizations that engages with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong, and Taiwan."⁹³ In testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee five months later, Willard stated, "Because the Center engages regularly and often concurrently with Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, as well as Hong Kong, it is uniquely positioned to assist in moving the U.S.-China military-to-military relationship towards a 'sustained and reliable' level of contact."⁹⁴

Similarly, the RCs can overcome bureaucratic obstacles to coherent U.S. engagement in a region. Explaining how the NESA Center would "fill an important niche in overall efforts to enhance regional security and stability," a 1999 OSD staff memo to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense argued that the United States' ability to bridge the deep divisions between countries in the Middle East "is constrained by the coincidence between the UCP [Unified Campaign Plan] boundaries and the political cleavage lines in the region. The fact that EUCOM 'owns' Israel while CENTCOM 'owns' most of the Arab states complicates DoD engagement in improving Arab-Israeli relations, while the division of South Asia between CENTCOM and PACOM raises the same difficulties with respect to the Indo-Pakistani conflict."⁹⁵

⁹¹ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

⁹² Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

⁹³ PACOM Commander Admiral Robert F. Willard, USN, "Program Budget Review Cut to Select Security Cooperation Programs," memorandum to the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 23, 2011.

⁹⁴ PACOM Commander Admiral Robert F. Willard, USN, "Statement on U.S. Pacific Command Posture," Testimony to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, February 28, 2012, pp. 22–23.

⁹⁵ Kramer, 1999.

9. Regional centers can nimbly shift to new issues.

Despite the fact that RC faculty typically take as much as six months to develop a new course curriculum,⁹⁶ the centers have at times moved very swiftly to develop new programs regarding emerging policy issues at the request of their stakeholders. APCSS, for example, developed a workshop for Timor-Leste in two months in response to a request from the commander of PACOM,⁹⁷ and it worked health and medical issues into many of its programs to address the priorities of the PACOM Command Surgeon.⁹⁸ Similarly, when a Yemeni general asked the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) for help with border security, NESAC drew on its resident expertise and its contacts in both Yemen and the U.S. interagency to arrange a workshop for Yemeni security forces in a limited amount of time.⁹⁹ At the request of NORTHCOM, CHDS developed a workshop on countering transnational organized crime for the Bahamas in three months based on existing course materials,¹⁰⁰ and the Marshall Center developed a program on the Arctic as a means to engage the Nordic states.¹⁰¹ Finally, as soon as the United States made overtures to Burma in late 2012, APCSS faculty members began compiling materials that could be used for a workshop in Burma if the administration decided to use the center as an initial tool to engage the Burmese military.¹⁰²

10. Regional centers help U.S. officials understand partner nations' views.

Recognizing that the RCs' constant engagement with senior partner nation officials provides them with windows into how U.S. allies approach and resolve policy challenges,¹⁰³ OSD has tasked the centers to "communicate and share regional reactions to U.S. policies and report these to OSD Policy, especially any changes states make to their policies/posture in response."¹⁰⁴ Feedback from the Asia-Pacific Center's seminar in the "rebalance," to cite one example, helped DoD understand the range of regional concerns about the policy.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, such feedback from partner states enabled EUCOM to frame issues and develop cooperative initiatives that are more relevant to program participants.¹⁰⁶

D. Promote Regional Dialogue and Reducing Tensions

1. Regional centers promote regional dialogue and cooperation.

The RCs are enormously useful confidence-building measures (CBMs), according to several U.S. officials. Simply bringing Africans together, a senior OSD official said, helps "bring down risk" on the continent by enabling African officials to identify shared interests instead of argu-

⁹⁶ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁹⁷ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁹⁸ Interview with senior PACOM official, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013; interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁹⁹ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁰¹ Interviews with EUCOM officials, January 9, 2013.

¹⁰² Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁰³ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Verga, 2013b.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with EUCOM officials, January 9, 2013.

ing over longstanding disagreements.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, the NESAC Center plans to place a greater emphasis on shared interests in its U.S./Afghanistan/Pakistan trilateral seminar as a way to build bridges between the two U.S. partners.¹⁰⁸ The Marshall Center, according to a senior OSD official, is well positioned to bring together partner officials who do not get along—either from neighboring countries or, in some cases, within the same government—for an open exchange of ideas in a quasi-official yet nonthreatening environment.¹⁰⁹ In some cases, the RCs even help create formal confidence-building mechanisms: The Asia-Pacific Center helped establish a framework for information sharing on piracy under the rubric of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP).¹¹⁰

2. Regional centers facilitate U.S. multilateral engagement.

The centers' ability to work in a region-wide environment itself can be advantageous to U.S. policy. A PACOM staff member, for example, noted that the Asia "rebalance" will be an overwhelmingly multilateral effort, as the United States works to enhance its ties to virtually all of its partners in the Asia-Pacific region. PACOM's TCP, however, is focused on bilateral engagements, which makes PACOM's traditional military-to-military relationship-building tools less effective at promoting multilateral aims. APCSS is therefore poised to play an outsized role in promoting multilateral engagement in support of the rebalance, particularly regarding issues that are inherently regional in nature, such as HA/DR, peacekeeping, maritime security, and nonproliferation.¹¹¹ An OSD official expressed hope that the centers might seed ideas from such multilateral discussions into the regional security architecture and thus promote greater discussion of regional initiatives among partner nations.¹¹²

3. As neutral venues, regional centers can host or contribute to regional CBMs.

Despite their official status as U.S. Defense Department organizations, the RCs' connections to academia and civil society enable them to bring together adversaries who would otherwise not engage with each other without legitimizing either side of the conflict or raising the profile of the interactions.¹¹³ Representatives from both sides of the conflict in Sri Lanka, for example, have attended APCSS programs.¹¹⁴ The centers' reputations also provide means of contributing U.S. perspectives to conflict resolution efforts that might otherwise not welcome input from the United States. Through the Marshall Center, for example, DoD was able to provide input to discussions on the Trans-Dnestria conflict in Moldova that were led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), where at least one side of the conflict would have been unlikely to assent to a visible U.S. military role in the discussions.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁷ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

¹¹⁰ Interview with PACOM officials, Honolulu, February 5, 2013. See also ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre, website, undated.

¹¹¹ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

¹¹² Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

¹¹³ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

¹¹⁴ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

¹¹⁵ Interview with Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013.

E. Serve as a Repository of Regional Expertise

1. Regional centers provide valuable expertise to stakeholders.

RC stakeholders make considerable use of the centers' resident expertise to provide perspectives on strategic challenges, particularly those whose origins or impact lie outside the traditional military sphere. The COCOMs, in particular, focus on day-to-day operational challenges and do not typically have time to think about the internal political dynamics or security perceptions of countries in their AORs, according to officials at both CENTCOM and AFRICOM.¹¹⁶

These stakeholders do have other sources of information on their AORs, of course, including the Intelligence Community and—particularly for agencies based in Washington—civilian think tanks. However, intelligence analysts naturally draw much of their information from the relatively narrow range of classified sources,¹¹⁷ typically have limited direct interaction with foreign officials, and focus on a limited number of issues affecting a country (such as internal politics, economic issues, military capabilities). Civilian academics and think tank researchers can be valuable sources of more strategic insights that are informed by extensive firsthand experience in a region, but their research is not necessarily focused on issues of importance to DoD policymakers or military commanders.

In contrast, RC faculty members have extensive regional expertise that is focused on security challenges of interest to DoD leaders and that is informed by regular access to both U.S. and partner nation policymakers over a period of time.¹¹⁸ At some centers, experts' perspectives are enhanced by the multinational character of the faculty; significant numbers of instructors at ACSS, CHDS, and the Marshall Center come from the region being studied.¹¹⁹

Given the centers' unique placement and expertise, several stakeholders have turned to the RCs for research or briefings. CHDS, for example, responded to stakeholder requests by developing papers on Iranian activities in the Americas for OSD, the reintegration of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia [FARC]) in Colombia for SOUTHCOM, and likely medium-term developments in Mexico for NORTHCOM.¹²⁰ A number of U.S. government agencies have also turned to the centers for input to their strategic planning efforts. AFRICOM's Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), for example, asked the Africa Center to review its long-term assessment of the region (the Horn of Africa in 2025), which was to serve as a foundation for its strategic planning. ACSS provided similar input to U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), CENTCOM, and the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO).¹²¹

This is not to say that regional center faculty members are “better” sources of information for OSD and COCOM officials than their counterparts at civilian institutions or in the

¹¹⁶ Interview with AFRICOM officials, January 8, 2013; interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

¹¹⁷ Studies have found that intelligence analysts tend to have a bias toward classified information, which they consider “to be more important or meaningful than ‘open’ or unclassified data.” See Rob Johnston, *Analytic Culture in the U.S. Intelligence Community: An Ethnographic Study*, Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Intelligence, 2005, p. 24.

¹¹⁸ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹¹⁹ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹²⁰ CHDS, “CHDS Brief to PDASD Board,” January 30–31, 2013, slide 5. Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹²¹ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

Intelligence Community. However, their unique combination of access, expertise, and strategic perspective allows them to complement other sources of expertise that are available to the regional centers' stakeholders.

2. Academic research adds value for stakeholders and partners.

Many of the RCs' faculty members conduct research that is published in academic journals or as policy papers in center publications. Some centers publish their own journals; CHDS, for example, issues the *Security and Defense Studies Review*, which includes articles in both English and Spanish. Three of the centers also publish articles as occasional papers: CHDS issues "Regional Insights"; ACSS issues "Africa Security Briefs" and "Special Reports"; and the Marshall Center publishes a glossy magazine, *per Concordiam*. These publications, distributed widely in print and online, help raise the centers' visibility and credibility in their regions as repositories of expertise,¹²² and they help position the centers as academic institutions with no political agenda.¹²³

Though center stakeholders generally view engagement activities as more important than research,¹²⁴ the centers' research is generally relevant to center stakeholders and valued by them.¹²⁵ PACOM staff officers draw on APCSS research for backgrounders and to prepare senior officers for trips and meetings.¹²⁶ The Africa Center's research has been incorporated into the curricula of both U.S. and African defense colleges and cited by international media and NGOs. ACSS points to a lengthy list of praise for its research products, in which officials in the U.S. and partner nations note how they have applied ACSS research products to their work.¹²⁷

Centers' leadership pointed out that faculty research generally aligns with stakeholder priorities and interests¹²⁸ or that stakeholder input helps the center determine its research agenda.¹²⁹ Of all the centers, however, only CHDS has a formal process for evaluating research proposals against stakeholder guidance. Faculty submit formal research proposals that are evaluated against eight criteria, two of which are directly related to stakeholder priorities.¹³⁰

3. Regional centers fill gaps in education for U.S. government personnel.

In addition to including U.S. officials in their foundation programs, some RCs offer short, focused, and practical regional orientation courses for U.S. government personnel that, according to a COCOM training official, do not exist at other institutions, either civilian or military.¹³¹

APCSS's APOC and SEAPOC, for example, examines "U.S. interests and the interests of the region and their relationship to the political-military, socio-economic, and transnational security dynamics facing the Asia-Pacific region" in a way that is intended to "equip

¹²² Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹²³ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹²⁴ Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013.

¹²⁵ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

¹²⁶ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

¹²⁷ ACSS, "Applications of ACSS Research Products," undated(b).

¹²⁸ Interviews with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹²⁹ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹³⁰ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹³¹ Interview with PACOM official, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013.

. . . course participants with policy perspectives and tools important for duties at interagency/inter-ministry organizations/headquarters.”¹³² APCSS also offers the course in other locations (Mobile APOC [MAPOC]) to accommodate agencies that want to focus discussions on certain issues—DTRA, for example, requested two iterations of APOC focused on proliferation issues—or to educate large numbers of staff members, as it is cheaper to pay for the travel of a small number of instructors than a large number of students.¹³³ These courses are so tailored for the needs and scheduling of U.S. officials that, a PACOM training official stated, “If APOC and SEAPOC didn’t exist, DoD would have to create them.”¹³⁴ Because U.S. government participants’ home agencies pay their travel costs, the total cost to APCSS of training roughly 350 U.S. officials each year—225 in APOC, 90 in MAPOC, and 40 in SEAPOC—is approximately \$15,000 per year.¹³⁵

The Africa Center offers similar instruction for U.S. government personnel. Its four-day “Introduction to African Security Issues” seminar, which is aimed at roughly 50 “U.S. Government personnel who have responsibilities for U.S.-Africa policy, programs, or relationships, but who possess limited experience or training in African issues,” addresses regional conflicts, transnational security threats, and human security issues. ACSS spends approximately \$12,000 of its O&M funds on this course, as participants’ home agencies pay their travel expenses.¹³⁶ ACSS also offers a graduate-level “Advanced Area Studies Seminar” for 40 AFRICOM staff members; a two-day “Horn of Africa Security Seminar” for about 50 incoming staff members of CJTF-HOA; and a seminar on water security for U.S. officials from multiple agencies that was developed at the request of the DASD for African Affairs.¹³⁷

CHDS conducts some courses specifically for U.S. government staff. Recently, it has conducted a CTOC seminar for SOUTHCOM staff, regional briefings for the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM), a conference for Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) regional analysts, and a proliferation-focused conference for DTRA. Because many U.S. universities offer courses focused on Latin American affairs, however, educating U.S. officials is not a core mission for the center; CHDS’s programs for U.S. officials tend to be designed to fill specific niche requirements.¹³⁸

Anecdotal Evidence of Impact

Every center can cite anecdotal evidence of the impact that they have had on U.S. national interests. Some—recognizing that such stories have, to date, been their most effective demonstrable outcome—have collected these methodically. APCSS, for example, developed a brochure entitled “In Their Own Words,” in which more than 50 alumni offer testimonials

¹³² APCSS, “Concept Paper: Asia-Pacific Orientation Course (APOC) and Senior Executive Asia-Pacific Orientation Course (SEAPOC),” in memo to Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), *Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 and 2014 Program Plan Submission*, May 11, 2012b, pp. 9–33.

¹³³ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹³⁴ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

¹³⁵ APCSS, 2012b, pp. 9–37.

¹³⁶ ACSS, *ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012a, cover memo and pp. 3–4.

¹³⁷ ACSS, *ACSS FY13–14 Program Plan*, 2012a, cover memo and pp. 6–8; interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹³⁸ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

regarding the ways in which the center taught them critical skills and helped advance their careers; U.S. stakeholders and graduates' supervisors also provide comments on how center programs enhanced U.S. security ties in the region.¹³⁹ APCSS also continuously updates a single PowerPoint slide—useful for stakeholder audiences—that shows how selected alumni have impacted events in their home countries by, for example, establishing a National Security Council, implementing a counterterrorism framework, passing security-related legislation, and developing procedures to govern collaboration between police and intelligence agencies.¹⁴⁰ NESA does not collect anecdotal reports of impact systematically, though it hopes to make a video with alumni testimonials, and it captures alumni feedback in a monthly report to the NESA Center director.¹⁴¹

Among the numerous anecdotes cited are the following illustrative examples:

- Africa Center:
 - After a series of ACSS Maritime Safety and Security seminars in East Africa, Tanzania passed new legislation to apprehend and prosecute pirates.¹⁴²
 - An ACSS alumnus contacted other uniformed alumni in his country during a period of political strife to encourage them (successfully) to exercise restraint.¹⁴³
- Asia-Pacific Center:
 - The military leader of a Pacific island nation asserted that he resisted encouragement to launch a coup against his government because of the principles that he learned at APCSS.¹⁴⁴
 - An Asian partner's foreign ministry acknowledged that it was not ready for the responsibility of holding a rotating seat on the UN Security Council and asked APCSS to help prepare its diplomats.¹⁴⁵
 - An Asian APCSS alumnus led the drafting of human rights provisions that were incorporated into his country's constitution.¹⁴⁶
- CHDS:
 - The first security-related step taken by a newly elected Latin American president was to request CHDS's help in developing a new national security strategy.¹⁴⁷
 - Four Latin American defense academies are using the CHDS curriculum as the foundation for their own, thus extending CHDS's ability to shape the strategic thinking of partners in the region.¹⁴⁸

¹³⁹ APCSS, "In Their Own Words," 2010b.

¹⁴⁰ APCSS, "Example Practical Outcomes" [*sic*], January 2013d.

¹⁴¹ Interview with NESA Center official, February 20, 2013.

¹⁴² Regional Center MOE Working Group, "Measuring Effectiveness at Regional Centers," April 22, 2011.

¹⁴³ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, February 6, 2013.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

- Marshall Center:
 - Two very senior officials (both GCMC alumni) in a former Soviet republic helped ensure that the military would not intervene to quash civilian protests calling for political change.¹⁴⁹
 - During a Central Asian political crisis, a cabinet-level Marshall Center alumnus gathered a team of fellow alumni in the military to restore calm.¹⁵⁰
- NESACenter:
 - NESACenter “Track 1.5” outreach to Pakistan during a period of strained bilateral relations helped secure the reopening of the Pakistan/Afghanistan border crossing to supplies for U.S. and NATO forces—a development that saved potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in transportation costs associated with the use of the much longer NDN.¹⁵¹

Measurement

The above characterizations of the centers’ contributions to DoD security cooperation objectives reflect the near-universal support for the RCs. But while center stakeholders and staffs can articulate the myriad ways in which the centers advance DoD goals, they cannot systematically measure the degree to which the centers do so and thus cannot describe the centers’ return on investment. Dozens of officials interviewed lamented measures of effectiveness as “difficult,” particularly for a *long-term* education and relationship-building initiative in which the effects are often unseen, much less quantifiable. Any effort to measure the impact of such programs requires methodical data collection over an extended period of time in order to assess consistent information and identify changes, which could indicate that progress is being made or ground lost.

Where information cannot directly demonstrate whether the center has had an impact, outcomes can often be inferred indirectly from other data. For example, high rates of participation in RC alumni associations suggest that alumni saw value in their RC experiences. By assessing this figure in conjunction with related ones—such as high rates of responsiveness to outreach efforts, attendance at alumni events, and referrals of future students—a center can infer a degree of impact. By comparing these collections of statistics across courses or across countries, centers can similarly deduce that the impact of one course appears greater than that of another, or that alumni in one country appear to have valued their RC experience more than alumni from another country. Unfortunately, with a few exceptions, the centers do not collect or assess data in a sufficiently systematic or sustained way to measure impact directly, and they generally do not evaluate the data in their possession in ways that could indirectly shed light on the outcomes of their programs.

Measuring program impact is valuable for a number of reasons, among them:

¹⁴⁹ Interview with senior Marshall Center official, January 14, 2013.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with senior Marshall Center official, January 14, 2013.

¹⁵¹ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

- **Measurement can demonstrate success.** By measuring the degree to which center initiatives have succeeded, a comprehensive measurement effort can demonstrate the impact that the enterprise has had on U.S. strategic objectives.
- **Evaluation can identify areas for program improvement.** By measuring the extent to which RC programs have or have not advanced DoD objectives, center officials can identify areas for improvement and take steps to rectify shortcomings.
- **Evaluation can help justify budget requests.** When developing program plans and budget requests, centers can use data on program impact to make the case that particular initiatives merit additional resources (or the protection of current resources) by pointing to the contributions that the programs make to U.S. objectives.
- **Comparative evaluations can lead to a better allocation of resources.** In addition to simply demonstrating the impact that center initiatives have overall, performance measures can provide useful data to compare programs to each other. If the RCs have empirical information to suggest that program X advances strategic objectives more than program Y, it might decide to divert resources or allocate newly available resources to the effort that has a greater impact. Similarly, if the center has to cut programs in order to adapt to a reduction in available resources, it might want to eliminate or reduce the programs that have the least impact on top-priority goals.

The RCs' primary stakeholders assess the centers' activities in a variety of ways but do not have ongoing programs in place to evaluate their impact. Each of the centers approaches assessments in different ways; though all gather routine feedback on program execution, only the Marshall Center and Asia-Pacific Center collect information that could be used to evaluate the extent to which they achieve their strategic objectives, and only the Asia-Pacific Center actually conducts such impact assessments.

Stakeholder Assessments

The centers' primary stakeholders—the organizations that provide the centers with guidance, taskings, and the majority of their funding—are OSD and the combatant commands. OSD does not have a process in place to assess the centers' impact; the CCOMs consider but do not measure the centers' contributions to the TCP objectives. Neither systematically evaluates whether or to what extent the centers have implemented the tasks they have been given, nor have they developed objective means of measuring the centers' impact.

OSD

OSD provides the centers with their overarching policy and program guidance but does not assess on a regular basis the extent to which the centers have successfully implemented its guidance.

As has been discussed, OSD exercises oversight of the RC enterprise through a board of PDASDs that is chaired by the chief of staff to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USDP). The board meets twice per year to “consider the current activities and future plans of the Centers” and “provide timely guidance that can be incorporated into Regional Center planning for future years.” Any assessments that the board undertakes, however, are deliberately broad and limited in detail. OSD's concept paper for the PDASD Board states, “Board meetings offer an opportunity to discuss *big-picture* and/or *cross-cutting* issues, and whether

Centers are meeting USD(P) guidance and *generally* supporting evolving regional and Geographic Combatant Commander priorities”¹⁵² [emphasis added].

The concept paper does state that “a thorough review of Center program plans within the regional and functional offices should precede Board meetings in order to highlight potential issues/questions for Board consideration,” but such program plans present centers’ proposals for the coming fiscal year and only limited information on past performance.¹⁵³ As a result, this review does not comprise an assessment of the impact that the centers’ programs have had on policy objectives.

The program plan template and guidance given to RCs by DSCA also fail to call for an evaluation of centers’ past performance. The guidance does instruct center directors to include in their cover memo “the means the Center or program will use to identify *indicators* that center/programs are achieving intermediate outcomes and respective Policy directed goals” (emphasis added), which yields a list of measurement criteria, though not a substantive measurement of impact. The template for program concept papers includes a section in which centers are to specify for each individual program “what measures will be used to determine to what extent the stated expected accomplishments have been achieved”—again, a list of measurement criteria. However, it defines “expected accomplishments” as “changes in attitude, behavior, condition, or status of the target group at the end of the program, project cycle, or soon thereafter”—not as the achievement of a policy priority or stated center objective. (Changing participants’ attitudes is one of the centers’ many objectives.) Thus, the measurement criteria that OSD directs the centers to provide (a) relate to only a portion of the centers’ missions, and (b) address how *future* activities will address OSD and COCOM goals rather than the extent to which *past* activities did so.

COCOMs

The combatant commands undertake robust assessments of their TCPs. They measure an overall “vector of progress” toward the goals of the TCPs’ thematic subcampaigns—generally referred to as lines of activity (LOAs) or lines of effort (LOEs).¹⁵⁴ Each COCOM’s assessment staff calculates this vector by collecting information from each of the command’s component organizations and weighing the extent to which they have collectively advanced the LOE/LOA¹⁵⁵ across the theater or, in some cases, in specific countries. They do not assess the performance of individual component organizations¹⁵⁶ and so cannot tell what effects specific component or RC activities have generated.¹⁵⁷

For example, according to a December 2012 EUCOM briefing on the command’s assessments process, EUCOM’s assessment staff evaluates the state of the “defense reform” LOA and several related sub-elements (such as senior leader development, national defense organization, professional military development, strategy development, military chaplaincy, human resource

¹⁵² OSD/PSO, “Concept Paper for PDASD Board,” November 18, 2011a.

¹⁵³ See DSCA, “FY13–14 Program Planning Guidance,” undated(b).

¹⁵⁴ Interviews with PACOM officials, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 5, 2013; EUCOM Assessments and Analysis Directorate (ECJ7) Theater Assessments and Analysis Division, “USEUCOM Theater Assessments Approach,” slide presentation, December 2012.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

management, and financial management) in each country in the AOR.¹⁵⁸ Though EUCOM assessors assign a red/yellow/green rating to each of these elements based in part on components' LOA progress reports, they do not address the reasons behind the ranking. Country X's grade could be the result of one or more EUCOM components, other DoD programs, or even efforts by the partner government itself. While this assessment process may help analyze the state of affairs in the AOR, it does not help determine whether or to what extent the Marshall Center's efforts yielded desirable results.

Some COCOMs do measure progress toward their TCPs' intermediate military objectives (IMOs), some of which assign tasks to the RCs.¹⁵⁹ The SOUTHCOM TCP, for example, identifies priority countries that should be the focus of engagement, then identifies IMO-related effects it desires for each country and tasks SOUTHCOM components with helping the command achieve these effects,¹⁶⁰ which are referred to as Security Cooperation Desired Effects, or "skidoos."¹⁶¹ A SOUTHCOM official stated that the command measures the extent to which CHDS has advanced SOUTHCOM IMOs.¹⁶² By contrast, a CENTCOM official stated that it does not measure the centers' contributions toward IMOs or, more broadly, whether the "skidoos" were achieved at all.¹⁶³

A PACOM officer reported that its forthcoming (mid-2013) assessment would assess component organizations (including APCSS) against TCP IMOs for the first time by first showing the baseline state of each subcampaign, then noting the related activities that took place, and then characterizing the new state of the subcampaign. Such an approach can show correlation between activities and outcome—e.g., that X/Y/Z activities occurred and that the new state of affairs has improved—although it cannot show definitively that the activities caused the outcome, nor can it show which activities were responsible for what share of the result (if any). PACOM assessors will instead infer that the activities that were undertaken led to the observed/assessed outcome¹⁶⁴—a process that takes little account of the impact of external events.

In many cases, the centers' fulfillment of COCOMs' guidance is not measurable, primarily because they direct activities rather than define desired outcomes. For example, PACOM's TCO, which is meant to operationalize the TCP, directs the APCSS to "conduct executive education, outreach, and research activities" in support of certain objectives, "build new partnerships and facilitate network-building," and "emphasize multilateral forums in program planning and execution."¹⁶⁵ PACOM does not make a systematic effort to measure the results from these taskings. The TCO tasks APCSS to promote defense reform, for example, but because defense reform is not a PACOM TCP sub-campaign, the PACOM assessment staff will not attempt to evaluate the center's activities in this area.

¹⁵⁸ EUCOM Assessments and Analysis Directorate (ECJ7), 2012, slides 8, 10.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013; interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013.

¹⁶¹ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

¹⁶² Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013.

¹⁶³ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

¹⁶⁵ PACOM, *PACOM Fiscal Year 2013 Theater Campaign Order*, para. 3.C.12.

The COCOMs typically do not measure the impact of RC initiatives that they themselves selected or commissioned. For example, though PACOM sends a considerable number of staff members to the Asia-Pacific Center's regional orientation courses (APOC and SEAPOC), the command's training office does not assess whether PACOM staff found the programs to be useful.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, though SOUTHCOM has commissioned research products from CHDS that its staff says have been helpful, a SOUTHCOM senior staff member commented that the command has never assessed whether such products truly add value to what it is trying to achieve in the region.¹⁶⁷

Regional Centers' Self-Assessments

Several of the centers do not see measures of effectiveness as particularly valuable. A senior APCSS official, for example, stated that MOEs are essentially a marketing tool; they are important, the official said, "for building appreciation for the centers' capabilities and accomplishments" among stakeholders, but not for evaluating the RCs and their programs.¹⁶⁸

Officials at all of the RCs asserted that measuring soft power tools like the centers is "difficult." Many suggested that because such outcomes cannot be quantified, spending scarce time and resources on the time-consuming process of collecting and analyzing data on MOEs is not merited; the centers, one senior center official stated, "should do, not measure" with their limited resources.¹⁶⁹ It is easy to sympathize with such a position, as it seems intuitive that the best way for a center to generate additional benefit is to conduct more programs. However, if measuring the impact of a center's repertoire of events enables it to focus its programs more effectively and to allocate its resources more efficiently, the effect of the resulting improvements should yield a benefit commensurate with the effort.

The lack of metrics creates a further challenge that is particularly relevant in an era of austerity: Without data on each program's impact, it is difficult for a center to make an objective decision about which programs to cut if budgets must be reduced. Centers can easily identify cuts that cause the smallest reductions in participant throughput or course days, but in doing so the centers would be working to maintain its levels of *output*. Centers need data on program *outcomes* if they are to identify reductions in programming that do the least damage to their impact. If a center could sort assessment data by program, for example, it could determine which program adds the least value; if it could sort data by participants' country of origin, it could decide to invite fewer students from the countries in which RC attendance seems to have the least impact on one's career; if data showed that military officers tend to benefit from center participation less than civilian officials, it could rebalance the mix. In the absence of such data, however, RCs cannot objectively determine how to cut budgets in a way that preserves the centers' *impact* to the greatest possible extent.

Each of the RCs conducts its own program assessments, but these evaluations are generally focused on the effectiveness of program delivery, not the impact that center programs generate. The centers assess whether program learning objectives were achieved, for example, by

¹⁶⁶ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

¹⁶⁹ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

assessing or grading student performance during exercises,¹⁷⁰ conducting after-action reviews at the close of each program,¹⁷¹ and surveying participants at the close of each program.¹⁷² An Africa Center official noted that ACSS is very good at doing exit surveys at the end of each program and using the feedback to make adjustments to the program delivery in the future.¹⁷³ APCSS goes a step further by comparing exit surveys across iterations of a program to assess whether participants' views of the program changed over time and, if so, whether adaptations are needed.¹⁷⁴

All of the centers conduct occasional internal curriculum reviews, either formally or informally. Two of them (APCSS and Marshall Center) have had outside entities evaluate at least one program curriculum each, though these assessments focused on program content and execution: whether the program in question continues to address stakeholder priorities, meet its learning objectives, examine issues of current interest, and be conducted efficiently.¹⁷⁵ When NESAC conducted a comprehensive review of its foundation programs in 2012, for example, the review examined "topics/currency of issues, interpretation needs, exercises and policy-relevant activities, as well as plenary versus breakout group ratios and shift to more interactive learning strategies."¹⁷⁶ Neither NESAC's "comprehensive" review nor the other centers' curriculum reviews have examined the *impact* that their programs have had.

Outside of academics, the centers also evaluate their programs' execution but not their impact. The alumni offices at NESAC and CHDS, for example, use software that allows them to assess the effectiveness of their outreach efforts; they can analyze exactly who opened their email message, who opened the newsletter, who clicked on links in the newsletter, and so on.¹⁷⁷ This in itself is useful, though neither has analyzed these data to determine how they might reach more people more effectively, nor have they examined the data for indications of the relative impact of center programs. Echoing sentiments expressed by managers and faculty members throughout the RC enterprise, a CHDS staff member explained the center's inaction in this regard by stating that the center is "focused on doing, not measuring."¹⁷⁸

All of the centers do acknowledge, at least in theory, the need to measure their programs' impact, though they collect very little data that could be used to assess impact, either directly or indirectly. More fundamentally, the centers do not generally define what "success" would

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁷¹ The Marshall Center provided after-action reviews (AARs) for some two dozen programs. Also, interview with NESAC officials, February 20, 2013; interview with NESAC Center official, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁷² NESAC has only conducted one exit survey to assess whether a program's objectives were met, and it is still assessing whether the value of conducting such surveys and analyzing the results is worth the expense. Also interview with NESAC officials, Washington, D.C., February 20, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with APCSS officials, February 19, 2013; interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁷³ Interview with APCSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with NESAC officials, February 20, 2013; interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with APCSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁷⁶ Email message from NESAC Center official, March 22, 2013.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with NESAC Center official, February 20, 2013.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

look like in measurable ways. Without clear targets to aim for, it is difficult to ascertain whether whatever progress a program made toward an objective was subpar, acceptable, or exceptional.

Below are brief descriptions of what each center does to measure the impact of its programs.

ACSS

The Africa Center, like the other centers, evaluates the execution of each of its programs. ACSS undertakes no formal assessment of its programs' impact, however, though senior ACSS officials do recognize this as a shortcoming.¹⁷⁹ The center does not define what outcomes it would measure or what it would measure them against. ACSS program concept papers, for example, all list a number of "indicators of achievement," but many of these are not measurable. Many are measures of performance—actions like "execute campaigns," "propose means," and "offer suggestions"—which means that simply taking the action is considered a sign of success, whether or not it had the desired impact. Others are not readily measurable, including such aspirations as "reinforce cooperation" and "strengthen relationships." To the extent to which they can be characterized, if not quantitatively measured, the center does not specify what observable events or dynamics would demonstrate that cooperation has been reinforced or relationships strengthened.¹⁸⁰

CHDS

A senior CHDS official stated that the center frequently surveys alumni for information. Participants are given a pre-course survey to establish their baseline views on U.S. policy and regional security, as well as their initial expectations, which are followed by an exit survey at the end of the program. The center has sent long-term impact surveys to all alumni en masse,¹⁸¹ which makes it more difficult to identify whether it takes a certain amount of time for CHDS programs to have an impact on its graduates' views or career development. The center had not conducted a survey of this type, a center staff member stated, since sometime in 2011.¹⁸²

Instead, a senior CHDS officer said, it looks to alumni publications, requests for center course materials, and participants' successful implementation of their course projects upon their return home as "indicators" of the center's impact.¹⁸³ While these indicators can suggest that alumni look back favorably on their experiences, they do not directly demonstrate impact. If a CHDS graduate publishes an article on a topic marginally related to his CHDS experience, the center may not have been a deciding factor in the alumnus's success; indeed, the article itself may not have a substantial impact on CHDS or U.S. objectives.

CHDS wrote in its FY2013–FY2014 program plan that in FY2012 it conducted a "clean slate" top-to-bottom review of every element of the CHDS program, "with a focus on quantifiable measures of effectiveness and efficiencies, and determined which program elements best supported policy, program, and fiscal guidance."¹⁸⁴ Despite this plan, however, when the center captured several graduates' post-CHDS experiences in a "return on investment" case

¹⁷⁹ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

¹⁸⁰ ACSS, 2012a.

¹⁸¹ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁸² Interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁸³ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

¹⁸⁴ CHDS, *CHDS FY13–14 Program Plan*, May 24, 2012e, p. 2.

study narrative, it concluded that “CHDS’s data on whether students bridge the gap between academic knowledge and apply that knowledge creating regional or multilateral security policies, strategies, or institutional changes is only anecdotal.”¹⁸⁵

CHDS program concept papers do list measurable “indicators of achievement,” such as test scores, quality of class participation and student projects, and interaction with faculty. This is an important start, though in itself it is only one input by which to assess whether and to what extent that program succeeded, as well as to track its impact over time.

NESA

NESA polls participants at the end of its in-residence foundation courses to gather data on program effectiveness and execution. It does not gather similar feedback at the end of nonresidential programs.¹⁸⁶

The criteria that NESA considers to measure its long-term impact are purely quantitative measures that give little indication of the center’s impact on U.S. policy objectives. A NESA official stated that the center counts the number of participants, the number of alumni who have become flag officers or senior policymakers, the number who are promoted, the number who remain engaged, and the number who return for advanced programs.¹⁸⁷ Many of these developments are influenced by factors other than the NESA Center, making it difficult to assert, for example, that an official’s NESA experience caused him or her to get promoted. The center has not set a target for these measurements; if 15 alumni return for advanced programs, is that a success? The answer, of course, is that it depends on the desired result; if NESA only expected 10 returning students, then on this criterion NESA exceeded its objective.

In 2010, NESA developed a comprehensive plan to measure effectiveness that identified quantifiable metrics and suggested measuring programs using the Kirkpatrick evaluation model, a widely used tool that identifies evidence of change at four different levels that culminate in desired outcomes.¹⁸⁸ The draft plan called for data collection through surveys of alumni and their supervisors at specified intervals, soliciting feedback from stakeholders, and conducting open source research.¹⁸⁹ For reasons that are unclear, NESA never implemented the plan.

A NESA official asserted in February 2013 that the center had “no plans” to survey alumni.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, NESA has conducted only a single impact-focused survey. It asked participants in the center’s November 2012 South Asia and Gulf Strategic Forum, held in Bangkok, an 18-question survey covering NESA Center values, engagement with the NESA alumni office, and U.S. government policy and programs. A NESA staff member noted three months later that the center had not yet decided whether to conduct additional similar surveys because of the cost and complexity.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ CHDS, “CHDS Case Studies—Return on Investment,” 2012a, p. 18.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with NESA Center official, February 12, 2013.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with NESA Center official, February 12, 2013.

¹⁸⁸ The four Kirkpatrick levels are (1) reaction to the training event, (2) learning new knowledge or skills, (3) changes in behavior, and (4) actions that generate results.

¹⁸⁹ NESA Center, “Measures of Effectiveness,” slide presentation, September 1, 2010.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with NESA Center official, February 12, 2013.

¹⁹¹ Interview with NESA Center officials, February 20, 2013.

Though NESAs, like other centers, has collected anecdotes about its alumni's successes, a center official reported that it has no systematic way of collecting and reporting such stories.¹⁹² Another NESAs official stated that center staff members do enter relevant anecdotes into alumni profiles in RCPAMS so they can be extracted when necessary, though the official said that the center has not actually drawn on the database to compile such narratives.¹⁹³

Marshall Center

The Marshall Center collects data on the near- and long-term impact of one subset of its programs (residential courses), although it does not appear to analyze these data to identify trends or measure impact over time.

GCMC conducts two types of alumni surveys to track the impact of its residential programs and workshops. It conducts post-course surveys roughly six months after the completion of each program. These surveys are primarily intended to obtain feedback about the course content and execution—for example, whether the right topics were addressed, whether readings and group outings added value, and whether the course was the ideal length—in order to improve future iterations of the event.¹⁹⁴ However, these surveys also compare graduates' perceptions of specific national security topics with responses they provided in a pre-course survey,¹⁹⁵ which provide insights into the programs' near-term impact on partner capacity.

GCMC also collects longer-term impact data from follow-up surveys sent one to two years after a participant has completed his or her course. These surveys capture a fair amount of data regarding the impact of GCMC programs. The most recent survey, *2012 Survey of Resident Program Graduates*, asks a range of questions regarding the impact the course had on graduates' values, knowledge, skills, and career development, as well as their involvement in Marshall Center alumni activities and their participation in Marshall Center professional networks. It asks respondents to identify the program(s) (title and year) in which they participated and their home country, making it possible to sort responses by course and by national origin.

Marshall Center staff have not conducted surveys routinely to assess the impact of non-residential events, though the center's FY2013–FY2014 program plan states that in FY2013 it will do so in earnest by surveying participants in alumni events, interviewing U.S. embassy country teams, and systematizing its collection of anecdotes.¹⁹⁶ A review of after-action reports from 36 nonresidential programs in 2012—primarily ONE, distinguished alumni conferences, alumni workshops, and alumni association events, which ranged from one to four days in duration—indicates that instructors solicited some form of immediate feedback in only a small number of these events. Because many of the Marshall Center's short nonresidential programs are targeted at alumni of residential programs, it would be difficult at best to attribute

¹⁹² Interview with NESAs Center official, February 20, 2013.

¹⁹³ Interview with NESAs Center official, February 12, 2013.

¹⁹⁴ See, for example, GCMC, College of International and Security Studies, Office of Alumni Programs, "Marshall Center STACS Alumni Community of Interest (COI) Workshop: Shaping the Future of Transatlantic Civil Security Education, 16–19 April 2012," Memorandum for Record/After-Action Report, April 20, 2012c. See also GCMC, "STACS Alumni Community of Interest (COI) Workshop: 'Shaping the Future of Transatlantic Civil Security Education, 16–19 April 2012,'" participant evaluation form, 2012a.

¹⁹⁵ See, for example, Marshall Center, "STACS Alumni Survey Results Summary," April 16, 2012.

¹⁹⁶ GCMC, *FY13–14 GCMC Program Plan*, April 30, 2012e, Annex F, pp. 19–20.

specific impacts to one or the other course. That said, surveys should ask alumni to offer their own assessments of the long-term value of each of the courses they attended in recent years.

Asia-Pacific Center

APCSS is the only center to define measurable standards and to execute a methodical plan for collecting the necessary data.

The concept paper for each APCSS program identifies measurable indicators of achievement categorized according to the four levels of the Kirkpatrick Model.¹⁹⁷ Though the center does not set specific target levels for each measure, it does identify change in these indicators by measuring them methodically over time through participant and alumni surveys.¹⁹⁸ As CHDS does, the Asia-Pacific Center identifies the immediate impact of its programs by conducting a pre-course survey to identify participants' baseline views, opinions, perceptions, and skills and then comparing the results to an exit survey taken at the end of the program. The center continues such polling over the long term. It polls both alumni and their supervisors regarding the impact that the APCSS program had on the graduates' job performance either three months after the APCSS program ended (for alumni of workshops and projects) or six months after it ended (for foundation courses). The center follows up with annual surveys of alumni regarding the impact that the APCSS program had on their job performance and career advancement.¹⁹⁹

More important than the data collection is the data analysis. APCSS dedicated assessments staff sort alumni surveys and feedback to compare impact assessments by program, country, and sector. This analysis enables it to assess not only how impactful each program was but also how that impact changed over time, as well as whether alumni from certain countries or in certain sectors benefited more.²⁰⁰

Value for Money

The RAND research team reviewed the information collected from relevant documents and interviews to assess the "return on investment" of the RC enterprise. While many of the interviews involved center stakeholders in OSD and the COCOMs, attention was also paid to expressions of value from "client" organizations that lacked an incentive to cast the centers in a favorable light (such as NATO International Staff officials, who offered observations on the utility of Marshall Center programs).

There is widespread—indeed, universal—agreement that the RCs provide excellent "value for money" even though the exact return on investment cannot be quantified. On a memo urging the Deputy Secretary of Defense and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to refrain from cutting the RCs' budgets, PACOM Commander Admiral Robert Willard wrote by hand, "These are high payoff" (emphasis in the original).²⁰¹ A PACOM assessments officer said that APCSS has "a high benefit-to-cost ratio," given that the command views APCSS very favorably and that the center's budget is far lower than those of other PACOM compo-

¹⁹⁷ APCSS, 2012c.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

²⁰¹ Willard, 2011.

nents.²⁰² Similarly, a CENTCOM staff officer said, “Comparing the \$500 million required to run Office of Security Cooperation—Iraq (OSC-I) to the \$15 million for NESA—we got far more bang for the buck out of NESA.”²⁰³

If the RCs are indeed extremely cost-effective, it could be argued that in a tight fiscal environment DoD should allocate more resources to the centers—or at the very least maintain its level of support—even as other programs are cut.²⁰⁴ Because the centers already have more demand for programs than they can handle,²⁰⁵ they could presumably make good use of additional resources.

With effective metrics, one could make a measured judgment as to whether this is true and identify the point of diminishing returns.²⁰⁶ With knowledge of which programs add the most value, centers would have an objective framework for determining how they can allocate additional funds to the most productive use.

²⁰² Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

²⁰³ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

²⁰⁴ Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

²⁰⁵ Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

²⁰⁶ Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

Improving Measurement of Impact

The RCs are charged with shaping the ways partner nation officials think about national security challenges, building relationships, and promoting systemic but subtle reforms in partners' security establishments. These outcomes are difficult to measure and even more difficult to attribute directly to RCs' efforts. So it is not surprising that the centers have had difficulty measuring their success.

This chapter examines some of the obstacles to evaluating the long-term impact of programs like those undertaken by the RCs. In an effort to identify potential lessons learned from other program assessment efforts, it describes some of the ways in which other U.S. government educational programs with long-term scopes—such as the IMET programs and the Fulbright Scholars program—have attempted to characterize and measure their own results.

While it can be difficult to collect “hard” data to measure “soft” outcomes, this chapter offers several ways in which the RC can improve their assessments in two overarching ways. First, they can collect more relevant data with both existing and new tools. Second, they can analyze the information in ways that enable them to compare the impacts of different programs on different audiences. Third, they can identify “proxy” indicators that suggest—even when they cannot prove—outcomes. For example, if a partner nation official cites an RC research publication in his own writings, it suggests that the publication shaped that official's thinking and perhaps even his contributions to policy decisions. Finally, stakeholders themselves must contribute to the assessment process by issuing clearer, more measurable guidance and by conducting their own evaluations of whether the centers have executed their responsibilities effectively.

Measurement Challenges

Educational programs like those undertaken by the RCs shape the ways in which participants think about security challenges and influence their perceptions of the United States. Results are therefore typically not seen for a long time. Moreover, given that RC participants have many educational, professional, and personal experiences that affect their views and actions, it is difficult to attribute their subsequent views or actions uniquely to the RC or to any other single influence.

Thus, a wide range of factors makes it difficult to measure the impact of RC initiatives. Some of them are described below.

It Is Far Easier to Measure Input or Output Than Outcome or Impact

It is straightforward to measure things that are purely quantitative in nature. As a result, such measurements are often cited to demonstrate that “more” is being done, with an assumption made that more activity yields more benefit. An emphasis on numerical measurements, however, can be misleading and even counterproductive. If a center increases its student throughput, it would give the impression that it is providing more instruction and generating more benefit overall. However, if the additional students pass through short courses, they will gain comparatively less benefit from the experience than graduates of extended residential programs. Is it better to expose more people to center programs or to provide a more transformative experience for a smaller number of officials? There may be advantages to both approaches, but a focus on the numbers themselves provides little insight.

Tracking inputs—resources, staff members, physical space—is a way of measuring the costs of an initiative, but it provides little insight into the outcomes that those expenditures generate. Measuring the centers’ outputs—the number of courses offered, students hosted, alumni engaged—gives a sense of the scale of activities but generates limited insight into their overall impact.

The Impact of Professional Military Education (PME) Is Often Not Seen for Years

RC programs transmit a great deal of information, and many participants undoubtedly take away insights that can immediately improve their ability to execute their professional responsibilities. Center programs also expose participants to U.S. values, policies, and personnel, which can generate “aha!” moments in which a partner nation official comes to a newfound appreciation for the United States. Such short-term impact of RC programs can be assessed by comparing pre-course baseline survey responses with survey responses provided at the conclusion of a program. Changes to participants’ knowledge of relevant issues, perceptions of regional security challenges, and understanding of U.S. policies can be reasonably attributed to participants’ experience at the RCs. Such evaluations are relatively easy to undertake because all participants are physically present and thus easily accessible at both the beginning and the end of RC programs.

Intermediate and long-term outcomes can take many months or years to manifest themselves, and, indeed, several of the goals outlined in the February 28, 2011, USDP Flournoy memo—such as promoting new ways of critical thinking about global security challenges, institutionalizing whole-of-government approaches to decisionmaking, and developing collaborative communities of interest—are long-term processes. These objectives are achieved by educating enough partner nation officials over time to alter their security establishments’ corporate cultures, values, procedures, and expectations—accomplishments that are extremely difficult to measure.

Even Over Time, the Impact of PME Is Often Not Recognized, Not Attributed to the Educational Experience, or Simply Not Reported

Many of the results that the RCs strive to achieve—promoting new ways of thinking, inculcating an appreciation for U.S. values and policies, and facilitating professional networks that enhance participants’ career development—are subtle. A partner nation official may not even consciously realize the extent to which the approach he takes to a security dilemma was shaped by his training and education, much less attribute his actions specifically to the experiences he had at a DoD RC years earlier. If alumni do not recognize the ways in which their RC expe-

riences inform their subsequent work, they cannot inform the center about the impact of its programs.

Even self-aware alumni do not always report results that might be of interest to the RCs, especially as time passes. As with civilian colleges and universities, only a percentage of alumni will remain in touch with the centers. The NESACenter, for example, has 4,080 alumni worldwide as of February 2013.¹ When it sent an alumni newsletter that month, it had valid email addresses for just over half of its alumni (2,355, or 56.5 percent). Of these, the software it uses for alumni outreach reported that only 560 recipients (13.7 percent of all alumni) opened the email within a week of receiving it. Only 13 recipients (0.3 percent of all alums) clicked on the update form to provide information about their accomplishments or career development.² If this response rate were to remain constant, only 780 alumni (or 20 percent of the current alumni cadre) would provide information on themselves through this mechanism over a five-year period.

Many RC alumni come into contact with American officials after they return home, though no U.S. government officials are specifically charged with reporting on notable actions taken by RC alumni. Though U.S. embassies may report on the activities of senior-level distinguished alumni, they do not routinely do so when mid-level RC graduates take notable actions that reflect positively on the centers' success; even if they do so, the embassy report writer may not know that the host nation official in question is an RC alumnus, given that records on RC participation would be held by a different embassy's office. To report on the work or accomplishments of RC alumni, multiple embassy staffs—such as State Department employees in the political section and DoD employees in the defense attaché office and security assistance office—would need clear guidance on what to report, more direct access to RC alumni databases, and potentially even more resources to manage the additional reporting responsibilities.³

It Is Difficult to Prove That Regional Center Programs Caused an Identified Impact

It is difficult to prove that professional military education *caused* a partner nation official to take a certain action or generate a certain result. Strategic benefits from PME activities are typically subtle and take time to manifest themselves. Second, many other factors contribute to policy outcomes or partner nation decisions, such as regional dynamics, changes in leadership, or changes in resource availability.

Third, even if an RC graduate was the driving force behind a notable accomplishment, it would be difficult to establish that an RC program led uniquely to the result. The Marshall Center, for example, reported that 378 of its 9,536 alumni—or 4 percent—were serving or had served in high-level positions (such as head of state, head of government, legislator, minister/deputy minister, chief of defense, or ambassador).⁴ It is most likely that their successes were due to a *combination* of U.S. training and education, personal skills, and earlier career achievements.

¹ NESACenter, "NESACenter Alumni by COCOM," February 19, 2013c.

² NESACenter, "E-Mail Stats from the Last NESACenter Monthly Report Using Constant Contact," February 13, 2013. Provided by NESACenter February 20, 2013d.

³ GAO, 2011, pp. 20–21.

⁴ Marshall Center, "Marshall Center Alumni: Continuing the Experience," briefing by director of alumni programs, February 12, 2013d, slides 4–6.

Unless an RC alumnus reports that his or her RC experience was a driving force behind a notable outcome, an assessment of impact can generally only demonstrate *correlation* rather than *causation*. It can show that after the centers educated partner nation officials, a related result manifested itself, and one can infer (at best) from this correlation that the centers' initiatives contributed to the success.⁵ Survey questions that ask alumni directly whether and how their RC experiences led directly to certain outcomes could help clarify a causal relationship and bolster the argument that RC programs contributed to desired results.

Anecdotes Do Not Directly Measure Impact, Though They Can Indicate It

Each of the centers is able to cite graduates who credited subsequent successes to their RC experiences. While it is impossible to measure impact with anecdotes alone, even quantifiable anecdotes can only suggest the impact that the centers generated. The fact that 4 percent of Marshall Center alumni were serving or had served in high-level positions, for example, is a more impressive statistic than the comparable rate for the U.S. government's flagship PME initiative, the IMET program: "As of June 2011," GAO reported, "DSCA data indicate that only 1 percent of the nearly 88,000 IMET trainees in the database—978 IMET graduates—had attained a position of prominence."⁶ These numbers could be partially explained by the sheer selectiveness of the programs; IMET educates a wider array of foreign students early in their careers, whereas most RC participants are more experienced officials who have already demonstrated significant potential. Neither statistic, however, indicates whether or how the U.S.-trained officials applied what they learned in ways that advanced U.S. interests.

Cultural Issues Can Make Data Collection Difficult

Several RC officials stated that cultural sensitivities would likely hinder the collection of accurate feedback. A NESAC Center official and a CHDS senior official asserted that Arabs and Latin Americans, respectively, are unlikely to provide critical evaluations, given a cultural reticence to insult one's host.⁷ The CHDS official stated that the most senior speakers typically receive the most positive written reviews, primarily out of deference to their rank or status.⁸ He also pointed out that because CHDS alumni are afforded the opportunity to take part in both advanced residential courses and in-region specialized events, they are less likely to risk jeopardizing their chances of participating in subsequent programs by criticizing their initial program.⁹

A Key Measurement Tool on Which the Regional Center Enterprise Relies—the Kirkpatrick Model—Is Only a Partial Solution

In FY2008, OSD directed DSCA and the RCs to measure program outcomes using the Kirkpatrick model. In November 2010, the five RCs collectively submitted an MOE Plan to DSCA

⁵ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

⁶ GAO, 2011, p. 18.

⁷ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with NESAC Center official, February 12, 2013.

⁸ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁹ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

in which they recommended using both quantitative and qualitative factors to measure success at each of the four Kirkpatrick levels.¹⁰

At OSD's request, a team of RAND analysts evaluated the MOE Plan and provided an assessment in September 2011. One of the key findings of this unpublished report was that while the Kirkpatrick model might be a valuable means of assessing the impact of knowledge transfer, it is "insufficient to capture the full spectrum of RC contributions to U.S. national security objectives . . . [which] include building international networks of security leaders, strategic communications, strategic listening, building support for U.S. policies abroad, and assisting U.S. policymakers in formulating effective policy." The RAND authors recommended that "the Kirkpatrick training evaluation model [should] be a component of a more comprehensive performance measurement framework."

Lessons from Measurement Strategies Applied by Other International Education, Training, and Outreach Programs

Other international programs have also found it challenging to establish performance plans and measure impact. The RCs might find efforts by the IMET program and the Fulbright program to assess their own initiatives to be useful models. Some of the more promising strategies are described below.

IMET

Although IMET operates differently from the RCs—it generally integrates foreign students into military education programs focused on training U.S. military personnel, for example—comparisons of assessment efforts by long-term international education, training, or outreach programs can provide helpful insights.

GAO found a range of planning, programming, and evaluation shortcomings in its comprehensive assessment of the IMET program, for which the administration requested \$102.6 million in FY2013.¹¹ GAO reported in October 2011:

State and DOD's ability to assess IMET's effectiveness is limited by several weaknesses in program monitoring and evaluation. First, State and DOD have not established a performance plan that includes IMET goals, objectives, and measures. Second, the agencies have limited information on most IMET graduates resulting from weaknesses in DOD's efforts to monitor and share information on these graduates after training. Third, the agencies' evaluation efforts include few of the elements commonly accepted as appropriate for measuring training programs, and do not measure how IMET contributes to long-term program outcomes. Finally, the agencies have not incorporated into their evaluation efforts existing practices—including those of State and DOD entities—and the input of IMET training managers.¹²

¹⁰ ACSS, APCSS, CHDS, GCMC, and NESA, "Regional Center Enterprise Measures of Effectiveness," MOE Plan submitted to DSCA, November 1, 2010, Section 3: Assessment Tools, pp. 19–24.

¹¹ U.S. Department of State, *Congressional Budget Justification, Volume 2: Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2013*, Washington, D.C., 2012, p. 13. NOTE: The State Department funds IMET, but DoD implements it.

¹² GAO, 2011, p. 16.

In some ways, the RCs are further along in their efforts to assess impact. For example, traditionally, the IMET program has not implemented any of the following assessments:

- It has not tracked alumni career development for the 99 percent of IMET graduates “who have not attained a position of prominence”—despite being required by law to track as many alumni as is practicable.¹³
- It has not collected performance data beyond the immediate training outputs—essentially, feedback on knowledge transfer and program execution along the lines of the exit surveys that most RCs collect at the completion of their programs.¹⁴ Moreover, IMET does not survey students before training to establish a baseline, so it is more challenging to identify the extent to which training generated a near-term change in knowledge or perceptions.
- It has not followed up with subsequent surveys to evaluate the long-term impact of the training on the participants’ job performance or career development.¹⁵ That said, State and DoD *have* conducted follow-up surveys to assess the long-term impact of another IMET program goal: whether IMET graduates’ perceptions of the United States change over time. Program managers have posed consistent survey questions to a statistically representative sample of IMET graduates (several thousand) since 2007.¹⁶

For the most part, GAO reported, IMET’s assessments are based on anecdotal reporting of the impact that IMET training has had on partner nation capabilities. Though far from perfect, IMET program managers could analyze these reports to see if trends or patterns emerge that indicate program success.¹⁷

From 2007 to 2009, however, State and DoD did ask IMET students questions linked to the program’s substantive goals (e.g., understanding of human rights standards, perception of U.S. policies) in questionnaires provided at the end of training courses. The survey results generally showed that students felt that the IMET experience improved both their professional expertise and their perceptions of the United States and its values. However, students had not been given a pre-course survey to establish their baseline perceptions, nor were they sent follow-up surveys to see whether any positive effects endured.¹⁸

The State Department has begun to make assessments an integral part of its security cooperation programs writ large, and it has launched an effort to gather data to assess the IMET program. While much will depend on how the IMET program implements this guidance, State and DoD have taken steps to improve program planning, data collection, and information management that could serve as models for the RC enterprise.

At a strategic level, State is implementing assessment-related guidance for all security cooperation programs undertaken under its authority (Title 22), including IMET. The 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review established a requirement for robust moni-

¹³ GAO, 2011, pp. 17–18.

¹⁴ GAO, 2011, p. 22.

¹⁵ GAO, 2011, p. 23.

¹⁶ Interviews with State Department officials, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, March 15, 2013, and May 28, 2013.

¹⁷ GAO, 2011, p. 24.

¹⁸ Mark Ahles, Michael T. Rehg, Aaron Prince, and Litsu Rehak, “State Department and Defense Department Study on the Effectiveness of the International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program: 2007–2009,” undated.

toring and evaluation processes as of 2014.¹⁹ The White House issued a PPD on Security Sector Assistance in April 2013 to define foundational goals and offer guidelines on how to “inform policy with rigorous analysis, assessments, and evaluations,”²⁰ including developing common performance standards, designing measurable objectives, and collecting impact-related data. The State Department plans to conduct a high-level review of how IMET, FMF, and other Title 22 programs advance overall security sector assistance objectives.²¹ OSD should consider undertaking a similar, top-down effort to define assessment standards and methodologies that are consistent with the PPD and other strategic guidance documents.

At the programmatic level, State and DoD have launched an effort to measure the impact of IMET more effectively.²² Surveys of IMET alumni and graduates of foreign PME institutions will be used to analyze, among other things, whether IMET alumni gained skills and perspectives consistent with U.S. interests to a greater or lesser extent than officers who attended their own nations’ PME programs. During 2013 and 2014, analysts will collect data from two countries per year in each GCC, surveying about 50 to 100 IMET alumni and about 30 to 50 graduates of indigenous national defense colleges. Preliminary data indicates that IMET graduates have a greater understanding of international human rights standards and hold a more positive perception of democracy in the United States than their locally educated counterparts—results which suggest that IMET training does generate benefits for the United States.

The IMET survey results no doubt contain a measure of bias. A U.S.-offered course designed to promote IMET objectives would be expected to generate a better appreciation for IMET goals than a course developed by another country. Furthermore, the survey team plans to reach out to IMET graduates who attend a reception hosted by the local U.S. ambassador—a self-selected group likely to include a greater proportion of people who were satisfied with their IMET experiences. That said, for all their challenges, these surveys can still provide program managers with useful feedback and may continue to be refined as techniques—informed by experience—improve.²³ RC assessment staff should consider exchanging information with the teams conducting surveys of IMET alumni so the centers can learn what types of questions and outreach methods are most likely to generate useful information from a similar target audience.

In addition to expanding its survey efforts, the IMET program is upgrading its databases to better track all alumni rather than just those who have achieved positions of prominence. IMET program managers are still working to determine the necessary categories of information that can feasibly be compiled, given the challenges of collecting information from partner nations and limits on U.S. country team time and resources.²⁴ Because the RCs face similar obstacles to tracking their own alumni, it might be fruitful for alumni outreach officials and

¹⁹ U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development, “Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review,” Washington, D.C., 2010, see especially pp. xi, 18, 35, 103, 156, 159, 188, and 197–199.

²⁰ The White House, “Presidential Policy Directive on Security Sector Assistance Policy,” April 5, 2013a. Also the White House, “Fact Sheet on U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy,” 2013b.

²¹ Interviews with State Department officials, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, March 15, 2013, and May 28, 2013.

²² Interviews with State Department officials, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, March and May 2013.

²³ Interviews with State Department officials, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, March 15, 2013, and May 28, 2013.

²⁴ Interviews with State Department officials, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, March 15, 2013, and May 28, 2013.

database managers at the RCs to meet with their counterparts who are tackling this challenge for the IMET program to identify best practices in assessing program outcomes.

Fulbright Educational Exchange Program

The 67-year old Fulbright program, which is sponsored by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), is one of the U.S. government's most prominent international educational exchange initiatives. The Fulbright program is "designed to:

- Increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.
- Strengthen the ties that unite the United States with other nations.
- Promote international cooperation for education and cultural advancement.
- Assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world."²⁵

The Visiting Fulbright Student Program, one of several Fulbright initiatives, provides awards to non-U.S. citizens to study at the graduate level in the United States. Approximately 1,300 grants are awarded each year.

On a periodic basis, ECA assesses the outcomes and impacts of its Fulbright programs. ECA contracted with SRI International to "assess and document the outcomes and impact of the Visiting Fulbright Scholar Program and the Program's effectiveness in achieving its legislative goal of fostering mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries."²⁶ SRI posed similar questions to samples of alumni in two separate surveys conducted in 2003²⁷ and 2004,²⁸ thereby gathering at least a measure of multiyear data that could identify trends in the program's impacts over time.

SRI posed questions designed to measure four indicators that generally align with the four levels of the Kirkpatrick assessment model (satisfaction, learning, impact, and results):

- **Satisfaction:** Happiness with grant conditions and with opportunities to study, research, and develop interactions with American friends and colleagues.
- **Educational/professional and cultural learning:** Activities and interactions at host institutions, participation in social community and enrichment activities, and learning about U.S. culture and society.
- **Linkages, ties, and institutional change:** Personal, professional, and institutional ties.
- **Effects on behavior:** Personal and professional enhancement; professional contributions to products, resources, and knowledge of home/host institutions; and using and sharing new knowledge and skills.

Questionnaires posed both open-ended and closed-ended (multiple choice) questions designed to measure each of the four indicators quantitatively and qualitatively. To measure the extent of participants' ties to the United States, for example, the survey asked whether they

²⁵ Fulbright Scholar Program, website, undated.

²⁶ See U.S. Department of State, "Visiting Fulbright Scholar Program Outcome Assessment," September 27, 2005a.

²⁷ See U.S. Department of State, 2005.

²⁸ See U.S. Department of State, "Visiting Fulbright Student Program Outcome Assessment," January 18, 2006.

maintained friendships and professional relationships, revisited the United States, participated in professional discussions about the United States, and participated in organizations that foster international cooperation.

ECA conducts similar analyses of other exchange programs under its purview. It includes 11 such programs in the bureau's Performance Measurement Initiative, through which it methodically collects data to measure program effectiveness over time and use lessons learned to improve program design. Under this ECA initiative, "baseline, end-of-program, and follow up data are collected from program participants and compared across these three points to assess effectiveness. Data are also compared annually by the three points to assess overarching trends. Both program officers and senior management incorporate this data into program planning and goal setting."²⁹ RC officials may be able to draw useful lessons from ECA's Performance Measurement Initiative and identify best practices that could prove useful in their own program evaluation.

Recommendations

In September 2011, RAND provided OSD with an evaluation of the MOE Plan developed collaboratively by the five RCs. One of the principal recommendations of this unpublished report was to make explicit, to the extent possible, linkages between the centers' activities and accomplishments in contributing to the strategic goals that the centers are charged with advancing. "The plan needs to clearly articulate the strategic objectives [that] the MOEs are designed to measure progress towards achieving and elevate the importance of policy and strategic guidance in developing the assessment tools," the authors wrote. "Accordingly, the measurement tools should be tailored to the objectives sought." The RAND analysts proposed that objectives be written so as to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), a best practice for developing effective measurements; that MOEs be developed to measure all of the centers' strategic objectives; that a variety of metrics or indicators be developed to measure progress; and that data be collected to evaluate each metric.

Staff from all of the centers considered RAND's 2011 evaluation of the centers' MOE Plan, and all of them have incorporated some elements of the Kirkpatrick Method into their program assessments. That said, only the Asia-Pacific Center appears to have factored the 2011 recommendations into its program assessment plan. While all of the centers have identified metrics to measure progress toward strategic objectives, only two—APCSS and the Marshall Center—undertake comprehensive efforts to collect and analyze the data needed to conduct objective measurements. Officials from multiple RCs repeatedly emphasized that because each of the centers attempts to accomplish different objectives by doing different things with different audiences, it would be inappropriate to develop common measures of effectiveness and apply them across the RC enterprise.³⁰ To some degree, this uniqueness is overstated. The RCs are charged with advancing common strategic objectives, such as promoting a better understanding of U.S. government and policy priorities, promoting defense reform and professionalism, establishing vibrant professional networks, building partner capacity to address critical

²⁹ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, "Performance Measurement Initiative," undated.

³⁰ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

threats, and fostering whole-of-government solutions to security challenges. These can all be measured with similar yardsticks, even though each of the centers engages its partners differently. For example, while all the centers are charged with building professional networks, the Marshall Center emphasizes extended foundational programs to establish strong interpersonal relationships, NESAs conduct mostly brief outreach events, and CHDS makes extensive use of distance learning tools. Similarly, NESAs promote U.S. policy priorities by devoting a significant amount of time and resources to Track II diplomatic initiatives, and CHDS engages senior-level partner nation officials in hands-on national security planning exercises, while the other centers conduct few such activities. These differences in approach have arisen through a combination of policy directives, partner nation preferences and requests, faculty expertise, resource availability, and management decisions about what tools are likely to be the most effective, given the unique dynamics in each region.

Because of this combination of common objectives but different means of engagement, the RCs will need to develop metrics that differ from region to region. Still, the data necessary to conduct performance evaluations will largely be the same across the enterprise. Thus, this section identifies the study team's judgment as to what information would be needed to inform these measurements and the ways in which centers could analyze such information to assess their impact on strategic objectives.

Improved Data Collection and Analysis

To make effective use of performance metrics, the RCs will need to collect impact-oriented data systematically over time. They need not start from scratch, as they can utilize existing information-gathering tools more effectively at minimal additional cost. They should also develop new means of acquiring information on the ways in which their graduates have applied their RC experiences.

Centers should collect consistent data on a regular basis for several years so that they can identify changes over time. The centers can gather both quantitative and qualitative information needed to assess their objectives, from knowledge transfer to professional capacity-building to network-building.

Use Existing Tools to Collect Measurement Data

The RCs already use a range of tools to gather information on alumni learning, perceptions, activities, and accomplishments. As called for by the Regional Center Enterprise MOE Plan, several centers conduct surveys, including pre-course questionnaires, immediate post-course surveys focused on program execution, and alumni surveys that target different audiences at different points in their post-RC careers.³¹ Some centers do not survey participants in a formalized way once they graduate, however. All centers request that alumni provide self-initiated narrative statements through their newsletters, websites, social media, and other outreach efforts. While the information alumni send is of interest, self-reported insights have limited use in comparisons or methodical measurements.

The centers should ask consistent questions of consistent audiences over an extended period of time at fixed intervals—a step that would permit each center to assess the extent to which near-term acquisition of knowledge and new perspectives translate into long-term impacts that advance the RCs' strategic objectives and, as a result, U.S. interests. Participants

³¹ ACSS, APCSS, CHDS, GCMC, and NESAs, 2010, pp. 19–24.

should be issued surveys at the beginning of a program, to establish a pre-course baseline; at the end of the program, to identify immediate near-term impacts (as well as assess program execution); and at specific intervals after they have completed the course. Survey questions should be consistent or linked in some way so that the evolution of participants' expertise and/or views can be traced over time and compared to the pre-course baseline, though questions can also be added at each stage to gather information on developments that would only manifest themselves after a period of time. If questions are modified to adapt to changing regional circumstances, new course objectives, or other developments, however, all surveys for that cohort of students should be modified to enable consistent tracking over time.

By conducting the surveys at specified intervals after program completion, centers can ask questions appropriate to graduates' career progression and likely improve response rates. Sending a long-term impact survey to all alumni at the same time, as CHDS recently did,³² makes it more difficult to assess whether it takes a certain amount of time for certain types of impacts to manifest themselves.

In addition, repeated requests for time-consuming responses—those more complex than a simple narrative career update—can create fatigue among alumni and reduce response rates. When ACSS and the Marshall Center sent surveys in FY2010 to alumni of programs that exceeded five days in duration, they received relatively high response rates of 29 percent and 27 percent, respectively;³³ response rates would likely be lower if surveys were sent more frequently. Moreover, if surveys are sent too often, only the most eager alumni are likely to respond every time, thereby potentially skewing the results.

Centers should survey participants in all RC programs, rather than just foundational or residential programs. Naturally, centers might develop different survey questions for participants in advanced or specialized courses than for participants in foundational programs, depending on the relative importance of programs' objectives; for example, knowledge transfer may be more critical than promoting new ways of strategic thinking in a course filled with experts on a narrow topic.

Immediate post-event surveys related to alumni-focused programming might be focused so as to measure the perceived near-term impact of specialized versus generalized discussions, the value of continued networking opportunities within one's own country as opposed to across a geographic region, changes in perceptions of U.S. policies, and the benefits of late-career RC experiences as compared with initial engagements earlier in one's career. Long-term impact surveys can pose similar questions in separate sections designed specifically for respondents who participated in alumni programs.

All of the RCs highlight their "distinguished alumni"—graduates who have gone on to serve in the highest levels of their government or in other influential positions. While the centers can take pride in their graduates' accomplishments, they cannot demonstrate conclusively whether, to what extent, and in what ways they contributed to their former participants' successes. They could, however, conduct a formal survey of distinguished alumni designed to

³² Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

³³ Regional Center MOE Working Group, "Measuring Effectiveness at Regional Centers," April 22, 2011. As points of comparison, when the State Department's Fulbright program surveyed recent Fulbright scholars in 2002 and 2004, they received response rates of 80 percent and 70 percent, respectively. See U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Fulbright Scholar Program Outcome Assessment," August 27, 2002. Also see U.S. Department of State, "Visiting Fulbright Student Program Outcome Assessment," January 18, 2006.

elicit such information. By capturing such officials' own assessments of the significance of their RC experiences, the centers can evaluate and measure the impact that they have had on senior leader development in partner nations.

Use New Tools to Collect Measurement Data

The centers should employ new tools—including surveys aimed at new audiences—to gather data on the impact of their events. Possible steps include the following:

- **Survey both U.S. and foreign participants in Track II programs.** The individuals from outside of government who take part in such “non-official” exchanges may be more focused on whether and to what degree their discussions lead to conceptual breakthroughs than whether they lead to concrete policy outcomes. To measure the impact of Track II events on policy outcomes, the RCs should survey and/or interview U.S. officials who are in a position to evaluate the impact of such events. To the extent that the centers have relationships with foreign government officials who can provide similar insights, they should solicit feedback from such officials as well. For example, foreign ministry officials in New Delhi and Islamabad who work on Indian-Pakistani bilateral relations would be well placed to evaluate the impact of the NESAC Center’s India-Pakistan confidence-building measures.
- **Survey stakeholders, U.S. country team officials, and alumni regarding the centers’ success in promoting bilateral engagement.** The centers have proven to be valuable channels for strategic engagement and communication with countries that have limited military-to-military relations with the United States. Officials at the State Department, OSD, the COCOMs, and in-country U.S. embassies would be well positioned to identify whether and to what extent the centers continue to play such roles each year. Given the relative scarcity of other forms of military engagement in many such countries, such officials should be able to identify ways in which center activities promote high-level access, permit insights into the host government’s policies, and create an avenue for engagement that was previously unavailable.
- **Solicit input from U.S. government personnel participating in RC programs.** U.S. government employees comprise roughly 23 percent of participants in RC foundational courses. (See Table 4.5.) They take part to advance their own education, professional networks, and career development, but also to air American perspectives in the programs’ discussions. American participants should be surveyed by the RCs and by their employing organizations to assess the value of RC programs as educational opportunities, both to identify areas for improvement and to evaluate whether sending American officials to RC programs is a good use of education and training resources. U.S. government agencies (such as DTRA) that commission the RCs to design custom courses for their own personnel should conduct their own assessments of the programs’ value. Similarly, surveys of foreign participants could include questions on the ways in which the presence of American officials impacted their own experience.
- **Conduct regular surveys of U.S. officials who engage RC alumni.** After returning to their home countries, many RC alumni are likely to have opportunities to engage a range of U.S. officials, including U.S. embassy staff. By surveying these U.S. officials on a regular basis, the centers can compile third-party insights on the ways in which RC graduates work and the extent to which they appear to have contributed to policy decisions that

are consistent with U.S. values.³⁴ Structured anecdotal reports could help to validate self-reporting by RC graduates.

- **Encourage national alumni associations to gather insights from their own members.** Alumni associations can be valuable tools for soliciting and compiling information from RC graduates. Because the association leaders are likely to have good personal relationships with fellow alumni in their own country, they may be well positioned to request feedback on a regular basis.

Use Indirect Data as Proxies for Value and Impact

The centers already collect a great deal of information about alumni that, when properly analyzed, can provide indirect indicators of impact. For example, the centers' routine alumni outreach activities generate feedback that provides insights into graduates' perceptions of their experience. One can hypothesize that alumni who more frequently (or rapidly) read or forward outreach materials, click on links in outreach materials, or actively engage on social media sites found greater value in their RC experiences than graduates who do not appear to appreciate the centers' communications. Similarly, alumni who more frequently attend alumni events, recommend potential participants, or request information from the center presumably saw more value in their experience than alumni who do not proactively engage the centers in such ways.

Other factors could provide indications that the RC programs have had constructive impacts. GAO suggested a number of such criteria in its assessment of the IMET program, including

- assessing the career progression of program graduates compared with non-program graduates within specific countries
- analyzing the proportion of positions of prominence held by program graduates, compared with non-program graduates
- reviewing the extent to which program graduates are serving in positions that utilize the training.³⁵

Such "proxy" indicators—while clearly imperfect—can complement survey data, and even supplement it when questions are too sensitive to pose directly or when self-reporting might not be reliable.

Improve Data Analysis

Once better data are collected, they can be analyzed in ways that generate insights on the programs' impacts, such as by sorting data to isolate individual factors and analyze their contributions to desired outcomes:

- **Sort data by RC program to compare the impact of each.** By grouping responses by program, centers can both track the impact of individual programs over time and compare programs with each other.
- **Sort data by country to compare U.S. access and relationship-building.** RC programs are likely to bolster relationships with partner nation officials—and hence enhance

³⁴ GAO, 2011, pp. 20–21.

³⁵ GAO 2011, p. 25.

U.S. access—in different ways in different countries. Sorting survey response data by country could help the centers identify whether they have greater impact on professional networks in certain individual countries or even certain categories of countries.

- **Sort data by demographics to compare programs’ impact on different audiences.**

The centers should break down survey responses demographically to assess whether RC participation has a more significant impact among civilians or military officers, civilian officials from the defense sector versus the civil sector, or mid-career versus senior-level participants. If the centers do seem to have greater impacts among certain demographics, they might consider inviting more participants from these groups.

Data could also be matched against widely available political assessments and analyses, such as World Bank governance indicators, state fragility indexes, Freedom House measures of political rights and civil liberties, Transparency International’s *Corruption Perceptions Index*, and the like. If patterns emerge—e.g., if participants from countries with generally lower rankings report that the centers made greater contributions to their professional values and career successes—the centers may want to consider shifting resources accordingly.

- **Identify potential drivers of near-term and long-term impacts.** Comparing participants’ near-term feedback (e.g., pre-course and immediate post-course surveys) with their answers to subsequent questionnaires could enable the centers to identify participant characteristics that correlate with more significant long-term outcomes.
- **Identify potential causes of missed opportunities.** Comparing near-term feedback with long-term self-reporting could enable centers to evaluate whether certain program attributes hinder the achievement of strategic objectives. For example, do graduates of programs with fewer opportunities for social interaction—e.g., shorter courses or programs with a significant online component—report less success in developing professional networks that enhance their ability to perform their jobs?
- **Develop systematic ways to collect, compile, and promote anecdotal evidence of RC impacts.** When requesting narrative feedback from alumni, the centers should pose their requests in ways that elicit direct links between their accomplishments and specific outcomes that the centers wish to measure. To evaluate the extent to which the centers prepared alumni to manage whole-of-government solutions to complex problems, for example, centers could ask alumni to “describe how your regional center experience prepared you to collaborate more effectively with officials from other elements of your government and enhanced your ability to develop and implement complex security challenges.”

The centers should then present these success stories in ways that link their successes to the advancement of U.S. strategic objectives. As examples:

- A senior Marshall Center graduate from Central Asia who mustered fellow alumni to keep the military from crushing civilian protests demonstrates the center’s impact on senior-level policy decisions and its promotion of democratic institutions,³⁶ as does a South American country’s request for CHDS to facilitate a multi-day cabinet-level meeting to develop a new national security strategy.³⁷

³⁶ Interview with senior Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013.

³⁷ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

- An ACSS graduate who took a call from the ACSS director when he refused interaction with other U.S. officials demonstrates how the centers build relationships that promote high-level access.³⁸
- An APCSS alumnus who reported that he was able to manage hundreds of thousands of refugees more effectively because of what he learned in the center’s HA/DR course shows how the centers build critical partner nation capacity.³⁹
- Stories that Marshall Center alumni from several neighboring countries collaboratively addressed cyber security challenges highlight how the centers foster professional networks that yield improved capabilities and nurture regional cooperation.⁴⁰

Several centers have developed documents that concisely map outcomes to objectives in this way.⁴¹ APCSS has taken a further step toward systematizing its compilation of anecdotal successes by creating a database dedicated to this purpose. It established a Contact Historical Information Reporting Point (CHIRP) system “for the purpose of collecting, sharing, and categorizing significant impacts and outcomes of programs,” most notably outcomes categorized as Level 3 or 4 impacts on the Kirkpatrick scale, of which it identified 75 in FY2010–FY2011.⁴² This database appears to be a useful tool that could be replicated at other centers or shared by the entire RC enterprise, though OSD officials should consider whether RCPAMS—which is intended to be a comprehensive repository for participant data—could be used to compile anecdotal information on alumni accomplishments.

Improve Stakeholder Guidance and Assessments

RC stakeholders can take some very basic—but critical—steps to ensure that the centers can measure their performance.

First, stakeholders should make clear to the RCs that they are expected to assess the impact of their programs. Although OSD has twice directed the RCs to measure the effectiveness of their programs, the centers have nevertheless resisted implementing a comprehensive data-based approach to assessing their effectiveness. In 2008, USDP Edelman directed the centers to assess their effectiveness with performance metrics, and in January 2013, OSD Policy Chief of Staff Pete Verga directed the RCs to “prioritize ruthlessly by focusing on and measuring high quality and the cost effectiveness of activities.” The RCs should follow through on OSD’s guidance despite the difficulty of measuring programs and despite the fact that the centers would prefer to spend their time and resources executing programs rather than evaluating them.

Second, stakeholders should establish clear, measurable objectives for both the intermediate and long terms. In its report in the IMET program, GAO wrote, “Our prior work has noted the importance of developing program evaluation plans that include clear goals and performance measures, as well as intermediate measures to demonstrate performance linkages

³⁸ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

³⁹ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

⁴⁰ Interview with Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013.

⁴¹ APCSS, “Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies Impacts,” January 25, 2013a. Also NESA Center, “NESA: MOE Matrix,” undated(d).

⁴² APCSS, “Mapping APCSS Global Impacts and Outcomes,” January 25, 2013b.

for programs, such as IMET, where outcomes may not be apparent for years.”⁴³ As stated earlier, many of the goals and responsibilities given to the centers by OSD and the COCOMs are not measurable or are focused on outputs rather than outcomes. Particularly because PME is a long-term investment with a deferred payoff, intermediate objectives can help the centers assess whether they are making progress even if the ultimate results for which they are striving have yet to become evident.

Third, stakeholders should improve the forms in which they provide their guidance to the centers. Guidance is most effective when clearly articulated and assigned to the RCs in written form—ideally in key policy or program documents, such as OSD regional strategic plans, OUSD(P) memos, or COCOM TCPs, that identify measurable outcomes and are integrally linked to standing strategic goals such as those articulated in the *Defense Strategic Guidance*, the Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF), or the COCOMs’ TCPs. It is imperative that all strategic guidance be codified in writing in documents that are easily accessible by officials at all levels at both RCs and stakeholder organizations.

The need for written guidance does not preclude informal interactions between stakeholders and center officials. Indeed, such back-and-forth exchanges are critical to augmenting written guidance with valuable detail, directing moderate changes of emphasis, or generating unanticipated initiatives to meet emerging requirements. That said, such ad hoc or mid-term course corrections should be limited to shifts in emphasis or adjustments to program execution, rather than major modifications to the centers’ strategic direction. Even such subtle alterations must be captured in writing in an accessible form, such as a memo from a DASD to a center director or a memo from a center director to his or her staff.

Finally, center stakeholders must measure the center’s accomplishments against these clear objectives in regularized assessments. Currently, neither OSD nor the COCOMs evaluate whether or how well the centers executed the tasks they were assigned, nor do they measure the degree to which the centers (or any component organization) contribute to overall progress made toward achieving strategic objectives.⁴⁴ On an annual basis, these stakeholders should determine the extent to which the RCs met measurable targets set by both stakeholders and the centers themselves and establish a process for isolating and evaluating the contributions of the centers to the stakeholder’s overall “vector” of progress.

⁴³ GAO, 2011, p. 16.

⁴⁴ Interview with senior PACOM official, February 5, 2013; interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013; interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

Maximizing Future Impact

The five RCs have a strong track record of running a wide range of programs that are well-received by participants, valued by stakeholders, and operated at a modest cost. The vast majority of people familiar with the RC enterprise offer praise for its contributions to U.S. national security objectives, though few have been able to measure those contributions with fidelity. A rigorous performance measurement process can help the centers enhance their programs, magnify their impacts, and, should cuts be necessary, identify which programs can be eliminated or curtailed to generate the greatest savings with the least adverse effects.

This chapter assesses the shortcomings in existing center governance and management and suggests ways to mitigate them. Addressing the challenges identified herein should in all cases enhance the centers' contributions to U.S. national interests; in many cases, doing so will also make them better able to measure their successes.

This chapter will also address whether the centers should be oriented functionally instead of regionally, and whether they have shifted too far away from the core, foundational programs that were their initial focus. It will identify issues that the center enterprise can consider to help resolve these dilemmas. It will conclude with an examination of several ways in which the RC enterprise can adjust to new fiscal constraints while mitigating impact on core missions and operations.

Management and Guidance Recommendations

OSD and the COCOMs can improve their oversight and management of the RC enterprise in a number of ways that are likely to make the centers better able to target their activities to the objectives and priorities of their stakeholders.

1. Maintain the RCs' Regional Focus

A small number of officials in OSD—primarily those who focus on transnational threats—have argued that the centers should be transformed into functional centers of excellence rather than incubators for building and maintaining bilateral relationships.¹ Such an approach would enable a greater focus on the global threats that have dominated U.S. national security for the past decade—such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and proliferation of WMDs. The argument also posits that this approach would be more efficient, as programs addressing a specific threat (such as terrorism) would be undertaken at one center instead of at five.

¹ Interview with senior OSD official, December 19, 2012; interview with senior OSD official, February 20, 2013.

Given that most OSD Policy offices, all of the *geographic* combatant commands, and all of the five *regional* centers are concerned with regional security issues and engagement with countries in specific geographic regions, few officials involved in the RC enterprise support such a shift.² These officials argue that regional context is important, and that both the nature of global threats and the range of potential responses to them differ from region to region. Terrorism is viewed very differently in Latin America than in South Asia, for example, and narco-trafficking poses different challenges to governments in producing regions (such as Latin America), transit regions (like West Africa and Southeast Asia, with extensive coastlines, porous borders, and weak governance), and consuming regions (such as Western Europe).³

Several officials asserted that reinventing the centers as functional centers of excellence would dilute the effectiveness of the centers' programs. A senior SOUTHCOM official stated that courses would no longer be able to incorporate important regional nuances and that centers would be less able to consider regional responses to security challenges.⁴ A senior OSD/PSO official similarly suggested that global functional centers, by including participants from all over the world in their events, would de-emphasize intraregional interactions and relationship-building, thereby hindering their ability to promote communities of interest—one of the RCs' current overall objectives.⁵

Interviewees also claimed that a functional reorientation would also hinder a wide range of regionally focused initiatives. Track II programs would become more ad hoc, according to a senior CENTCOM official who reported significant benefits from such initiatives, because no center would have extensive regional expertise or strong contacts in a region.⁶

One senior OSD official noted that DoD also has other PME programs focused on specific transnational threats. As an example, the senior official cited the CTFP-funded International Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (ICTF) at NDU's College of International Security Affairs (CISA), which offers a one-year master's degree focused on terrorism.⁷ Though this degree-granting program differs in many ways from RC initiatives, it does accomplish similar objectives by providing subject-matter expertise to partner nation officials and building networks of like-minded professionals with a common perception of the threat and how to combat it.

A senior OSD official responsible for U.S. policy toward Europe pointed out that the Marshall Center had previously been directed to shift its focus to a global challenge, with a deleterious impact on DoD regional engagement. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz directed the Marshall Center in 2002 to focus on counterterrorism rather than regional security issues and to emphasize Afghanistan in its engagement with the still-nascent former Soviet Central Asian republics at the expense of the promotion of Euro-Atlantic values. The guidance, the senior OSD official said, reflected the new priority given to the global war on terror and the aversion to promoting traditional allies, who Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld

² Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013; interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

³ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

⁴ Interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013.

⁵ Interview with senior OSD official, December 19, 2012.

⁶ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

⁷ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, D.C., January 2, 2013.

derided as “Old Europe” in early 2003. OSD’s Europe and NATO offices—which remained focused on European security challenges—increasingly disengaged from the Marshall Center, which meant that the more the Marshall Center focused on a specific threat, the less effective it became as a tool for advancing overarching U.S. objectives in Europe and Central Asia.⁸

2. Stakeholder Guidance Should Direct the Centers to Achieve Measurable Outcomes

One of the most fundamental steps that OSD and the COCOMs can take is to develop clearer, more easily measurable, written standards. In many cases, stakeholder guidance is written as measures of *performance*,⁹ which focus on outputs rather than outcomes. For example, the guidance that PACOM provides to APCSS in its TCO primarily directs the center to undertake activities—e.g., “conduct executive education, outreach, and research activities”¹⁰—rather than to achieve a desired end state.¹¹ Similarly, consolidated SOUTHCOM/NORTHCOM guidance to CHDS for FY2012 directs the center to “provide mentoring and educational activities” that address specified threats, but it does not specify the result that the COCOMs want to achieve.¹² Given the wording of these instructions, even if the two centers fell short of conducting activities that advanced COCOM priorities or U.S. national security objectives, they could claim to have successfully implemented the assignments given to them. Moreover, the formulation of these taskings does not provide opportunities for measurement; either the centers conducted the programs (and thus succeeded) or they did not (and thus failed). Effective performance metrics could provide opportunities to measure gradations of success; measuring *the extent to which* a goal is achieved (as opposed to *whether* it is achieved) would generate greater nuance regarding the centers’ accomplishments and would permit the centers to assess whether they are improving from year to year.

3. Stakeholders Must Issue Guidance in a Timely Fashion

Though the COCOMs issue TCPs on a regular schedule (usually every two years), OSD issues policy guidance intermittently. While it is not necessary to issue new written guidance if policy goals have not changed significantly, the fact that centers develop annual program plans means that they could adjust their programming each year in response to even modest shifts in priorities.

That said, when OSD does seek to update guidance and directives, it often takes a long time to generate and finalize the revisions, which leaves the centers in the awkward position of knowing that changes are forthcoming but being unable to accommodate them for extended periods of time. As one senior center official stated, OSD priorities are “either ‘draft’ or ‘guidance’—but they can’t be both.”¹³

⁸ Interview with senior OSD official, February 15, 2013.

⁹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

¹⁰ PACOM, *PACOM Fiscal Year 2013 Theater Campaign Order*, para. 3.C.12.

¹¹ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

¹² “CHDS should . . . (d) provide mentoring and educational activities (including defense civilian education workshops) for defense and security ministry personnel to address institutional corruption, transparency, accountability, sound management, adherence to the rule of law, and respect for international human rights standards” (CDRUSSOUTHCOM, 2011, para. 2[d]).

¹³ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

4. Stakeholders Should Assess the Centers' Responses to Their Taskings

The stakeholders can measure the centers' contributions to their objectives only if they assess what the centers do. Some of PACOM's TCO taskings to APCSS, for example, such as "promote defense reform," are not linked to its TCP's thematic sub-campaigns; because PACOM's assessments (J8) staff evaluates the command's progress toward meeting the goals of the sub-campaigns, it will not evaluate the extent to which APCSS meets the command's overall objectives.¹⁴ In essence, PACOM gives APCSS assignments but does not grade its performance. The same is generally true for the other COCOMs.

5. Stakeholders Should Issue Guidance to All RCs Active in Their Regions

As discussed earlier, the fact that several of the RCs operate in wider geographic areas than those covered by their primary OSD and COCOM overseers means that they operate in some areas with little or no guidance from stakeholders. For example, although OSD's African Affairs office covers both sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, it provides little policy direction to the Marshall Center, which invites hundreds of Africans to its courses each year, or to the NESACenter, which is the primary RC operating in the Maghreb.¹⁵ As a result of such "guidance gaps," when the Marshall Center includes Africans in its residential programs, and when the NESACenter conducts programs in the Maghreb, these efforts are informed only generally by OSD's priorities. Similarly, though both APCSS and NESACenter conduct programs in and regarding South Asia, CENTCOM provides direction in its TCP only to NESACenter, while PACOM provides direction in its TCP only to APCSS. To ensure that all center programs are appropriately linked to COCOM priorities, COCOMs should issue formal guidance to all of the RCs operating in their AOR. Informal communications between stakeholders and the centers at the staff level do help inform center programs, but they are no substitute for written guidance containing measurable objectives whose accomplishments can be tracked over time.

Stakeholders should also fill gaps in guidance regarding emerging topics that the centers feel compelled to address, either because they are becoming integral to national security discussions or because partner nations have begun to ask for related programs.¹⁶ For the most part, these gaps exist on transnational and highly technical security challenges, such as cyber security and space policy. OSD's statement of FY2014 policy priorities for the RCs tasks all of the centers to "assist in horizon-scanning and the identification of future trends regionally and globally that will shape the future security environment in the decades ahead," which could be construed to include these topics. The document's center-specific sections specifically task the Marshall Center and Asia-Pacific Center with addressing cyber security and space policy.

OSD's direction that the centers address these emerging transnational threats is too broad, however, for the centers to develop related programs that effectively advance DoD priorities. The Marshall and Asia-Pacific centers have begun to take up cyber and space issues in their programs, though officials from both stated that they need guidance from OSD on *how* to address them in order to ensure that their discussions advance DoD priorities.¹⁷

¹⁴ Interview with PACOM official, February 5, 2013.

¹⁵ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

¹⁶ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013; interview with NESACenter officials, February 20, 2013.

¹⁷ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013.

6. OSD Should Simplify and Clarify Center Governance

A senior OSD official stated bluntly that the oversight structure for the RC enterprise is so complex that it is “dysfunctional,” with each center having too many stakeholders and too many raters. This may be an overstatement, but the current process of providing guidance to the centers is indeed complex, conflicts with written policies, and makes it far easier for the COCOMs than for OSD to provide direction to entities that are intended to be instruments of policy.

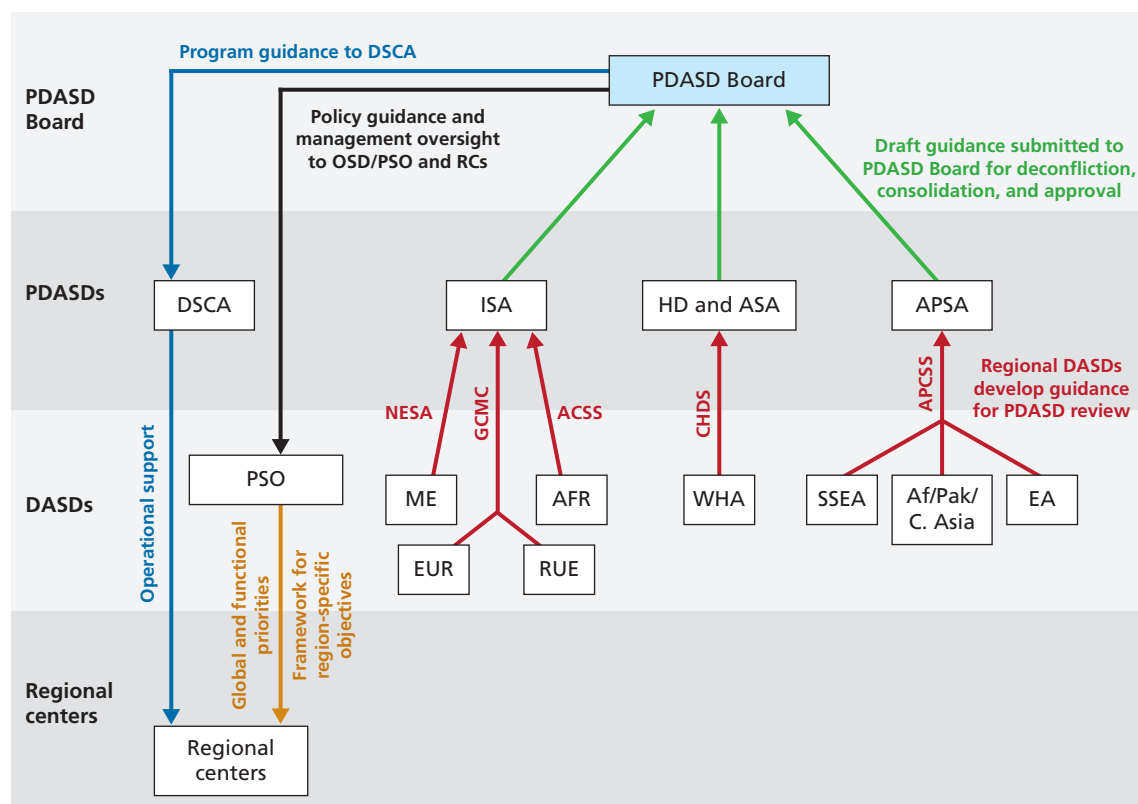
As discussed earlier, the process by which guidance is developed, coordinated, approved, and provided to the centers (Figure 3.1) is convoluted. The process established by the 2011 Flournoy guidance calls for virtually every office in OSD Policy to provide some degree of input, and many of the offices complement their formal guidance with informal direction that is not captured in written materials. OSD subsequently added the PDASD Board to this oversight structure without formally modifying the Flournoy guidance or creating a written charter (other than an informal concept paper) that defines the board’s roles and responsibilities. The board appears to be a useful mechanism for conveying priorities and sharing information, as board meetings allow all interested parties to share their views and acquire greater situational awareness about the policy context in which the centers operate. However, it appears to be more of a consultative mechanism than a decisionmaking or guidance-issuing body. The board would be strengthened if OSD leadership were to formalize the board’s structure, authorities, and responsibilities in an update to the governance structure described in the Flournoy memo.

In a more streamlined process, the PDASD Board would play a more active role in developing and ratifying coordinated, consolidated OSD Policy guidance, which could ensure that each RC receives clear guidance despite having multiple OSD stakeholders. A simplified governance structure, depicted in Figure 8.1, might have the following traits:

- In an update to the 2011 Flournoy guidance, the PDASD Board would be formally charged with reviewing and approving consolidated OSD policy guidance to the RCs.
- The regional DASDs (consulting with each other, as appropriate, when their interests in centers overlap) would develop region-specific guidance to the centers. Such guidance would be presented to the PDASD Board for review and approval. PDASDs would ensure that priorities from different regions are deconflicted and that functional offices’ equities are included.
- The functional DASDs and COCOMs would not have an explicit role in the development of RC guidance, as the 2011 Flournoy memo provides, for three reasons: (1) The regional DASDs should be consulting these counterparts and incorporating their priorities into policy direction as a matter of course; (2) functional PDASDs would ensure that their priority issues are incorporated into OSD’s approved guidance; and (3) COCOMs issue their own guidance directly to the centers through TCPs and other documents.
- ASDs would not approve DASDs’ draft guidance, as their deputies (PDASDs) would issue final guidance through the PDASD Board.
- The Policy Chief of Staff would serve as the chair or executive secretary of the PDASD Board but would not have an independent role.

While OSD faces many obstacles that hinder it from providing clear, timely guidance to the centers, the COCOMs—enabled, perhaps, by more vertical organizational structures and narrower geographic lanes—face few such institutional challenges. Furthermore, two of the

Figure 8.1
Recommended Streamlined Regional Center Oversight Mechanism



RAND RR388-8.1

centers are closer to their primary COCOMs than to Washington, making it easier to interact at all levels on a more regular basis. Despite the flaws in the COCOMs' written guidance materials, as described above, they often engage more directly and more frequently with the RCs than OSD does. As a result, although the 2011 Flournoy guidance calls for the COCOMs simply to "coordinate" on guidance drafted by the regional DASDs, they play a far more integral role in defining the centers' activities than what the Flournoy memo envisioned.

7. OSD Regional DASDs Should Engage the Centers More Robustly

Some regional DASD offices integrate the RCs into their policy initiatives and outreach efforts as much as they can. OSD's Africa office, for example, invites the two Washington-based centers that are active in its region to its weekly staff meetings (though only one participates). Others have limited engagement with the centers. Officials in OSD's Office of Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia and its Office of European and NATO Policy acknowledged that neither had drawn on the Marshall Center's capabilities as much as it might have,¹⁸ and OSD's Africa office communicates very little with the Marshall Center, despite the fact that many Africans participate in GCMC programs.¹⁹ A senior official in OSD's Middle East office said that the office

¹⁸ Interview with senior OSD official, December 17, 2012; interview with senior OSD official, February 15, 2013.

¹⁹ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012.

has no interaction with the NESACenter; as a result, the office neither factors NESACenter into its regional strategies, nor does it contribute to the center's plans.²⁰

An official in an OSD regional office posited that regional DASDs might feel less compelled to engage the RCs because OSD/PSO and DSCA manage the organization's formal interactions with the centers.²¹ However, while PSO and DSCA serve as program managers for the enterprise and communicate OSD guidance to the centers, the regional offices have even greater interest in the centers' programs and outreach. It is in the regional DASDs' interests to engage the centers frequently, robustly, and at all staff levels so the centers can be better positioned to advance DoD's regional policy objectives.

8. OSD Should Ensure That Regional Centers Have Defined Lanes and Stay in Them

OSD has authority over the RCs, defines their missions, and sets their priorities. In executing this authority, OSD can tell the centers what they should focus on *and* what they should not focus on. To the extent that the centers' programs overlap or conflict with each other, it is thus OSD's responsibility to define each center's "lanes in the road," ensure that the centers remain in them, and ensure that all interested parties are kept aware of enterprise activities.

The December 2011 concept paper for the PDASD Board states clearly, for example, that OSD—in the form of the PDASD Board itself—would have the authority to resolve geographic overlap among the centers. The concept paper stated, "The PDASD Board could consider countries or regions in which multiple Centers have an interest/stake (e.g. Bangladesh, Nepal, North Africa, Central Asia) and offer guidance to avoid duplication of effort and/or capitalize on specific Center expertise and resources."²² Indeed, in 2012, OSD and COCOM stakeholders became frustrated when centers began undertaking uncoordinated activities in regions in which other centers had significant interests, in part out of concern that the centers would work at cross-purposes or send conflicting messages about U.S. policy and priorities. In response, OSD issued a memo in January 2013 conveying the PDASD Board's definition of each center's primary and secondary geographic AORs and directing that centers communicate with each other about their cross-regional activities. Yet one RC director complained about this memo, asserting that such guidance "is an extreme case of micromanagement."²³ This study team's judgment is that nothing could be further from the truth. OSD is the overseer of the RC enterprise, and it must ensure that each entity's responsibilities are clearly defined and that information is appropriately shared.

9. Regional Centers Should Continue Their Efforts to Deconflict Their Programs with Those of Other DoD DIB Initiatives, Aided by More Focused OSD Guidance on Defense Reform Writ Large

As discussed, for the most part, RC programs and initiatives undertaken by the WIF, DIRI, DIILS, and other DIB programs complement, rather than duplicate, each other. Indeed, in many cases, RCs can set the stage for other programs to engage successfully in their own arenas by, for example, facilitating the adoption of a broad strategic vision that the other DIB

²⁰ Interview with senior OSD official, December 13, 2012.

²¹ Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013.

²² OSD, "Concept Paper for PDASD Board," approved December 2011b.

²³ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

programs can then implement.²⁴ As just two examples of such a building block approach, APCSS events helped Bangladesh and Maldives begin strategizing about national security reforms, after which DIRI helped both countries implement some elements of what they had envisioned.²⁵

Given that the centers and other programs pursue defense reform, the potential for duplication of effort certainly exists. However, the RCs fill a different niche than other DIB programs. The centers emphasize broad, strategic analysis of regional security challenges with an emphasis on whole-of-government policy solutions. Other DIB programs like DIRI and DIILS focus on examining narrow subject areas in a country-specific context with an emphasis on implementing concrete solutions in collaboration with partners in the defense sector. Also, whereas the RCs interact extensively with alumni in partner nations over time, other DIB programs engage periodically with a small group of officials and undertake few, if any, outreach efforts to program alumni. A summary of the differences between RCs and other DIB programs is in Table 8.1.

Furthermore, as described in Chapter Five, the centers do communicate with other DIB initiatives to coordinate their annual program plans, both directly and through annual planning efforts led by the COCOMs.²⁶ The centers should continue these deconfliction efforts.

According to the leadership of all five RCs, the Global Center for Security Cooperation, which is charged with compiling information on DIB activities to promote situational awareness and eliminate duplication, adds little to the coordinated planning and ongoing communication already undertaken by the centers and their counterpart DIB organizations. As discussed earlier, GCSC's field of view excludes many defense reform initiatives from across the U.S. government, it has no authority to make centers change their program plans to avoid duplication of efforts, and OSD officials and center directors report that they make little or no use of its monthly report on DIB activities. The Global Center argues that it tracks DIB and

Table 8.1
Comparison of Regional Centers and Other DIB Initiatives

Regional Centers	Other DIB Programs
Emphasis on policy	Emphasis on implementation
Multidisciplinary analysis	Deep dive on specific topic
Regionally focused	Global scope, country-specific application
Interagency participation	MOD/military participation
Whole-of-government solutions	Defense-focused solutions
Build regional relationships	Build bilateral relationships
Continuous engagement throughout AOR	Periodic extended engagement with individual countries
Frequent alumni outreach	Limited/no alumni outreach

²⁴ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

²⁵ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

²⁶ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

training/education initiatives across DoD, if not the entire U.S. government, and provides visibility into activities at 24 DoD organizations in addition to the RCs.²⁷

While deconfliction at the program level is required to avoid redundancy, OSD/PSO can help ensure that the centers and other DIB efforts complement each other by issuing strategic guidance on defense reform that can guide all DoD entities that are working to promote defense institution-building. Such guidance could ensure that all DIB programs work toward the same overarching objectives while also defining and differentiating each program's specific missions and priorities.

The DoD Inspector General (IG) issued a similar recommendation for a broader policy on DIB initiatives in a report on the DIRI program. "Without DIB policy that distinguished the DIB roles of the DIRI Program and the Regional Centers or any other office or command conducting DIB-related efforts," the IG wrote, "a potential for duplication and inefficiency existed."²⁸

10. Regional Centers Should Embark Upon an Effort to Identify Best Practices and Apply Them (as Appropriate) Across the Enterprise

As has been discussed, each of the centers takes a slightly different approach to managing such activities as assessments, alumni outreach, and academic research. Some of the centers have adopted particularly constructive approaches to these tasks; APCSS, for example, has undertaken a far more comprehensive and in-depth approach to program assessment than the other centers, and CHDS has established a clear set of criteria for evaluating academic research proposals. Some of the centers have embarked upon initiatives that have significant potential to extend their reach and advance DoD regional objectives. For example, NESA, CHDS, and the Marshall Center (the latter acting primarily through PfP-C's Defense Education Enhancement Program) have helped regional educational institutions develop their curricula and train faculty, thereby creating new opportunities to promote democratic values in partner nations' own PME. ACSS works with the State Department to implement its African Military Education program.²⁹ Certainly, each center manages IT and social media outreach differently depending on resources, unique regional/cultural influences, and the technological proficiency of center staff.

RC directors should establish a series of working groups in areas in which best practices can be identified, assessed, and shared throughout the enterprise, such as assessments, alumni outreach, IT, and academic research.

11. Regional Centers Should Focus Academic Research on Stakeholder Priorities

Though stakeholders and regional partners generally appreciate—and often value—the centers' publications, academic research is generally a higher priority for the centers than for their customers. One of the most significant reasons for this is that RC faculty typically have limited-term appointments (generally three years), meaning that many will return to academia (or at least consider doing so) when their tenure expires. To remain competitive in their academic

²⁷ James J. Wirtz, GCSC Director, letter to RAND, July 23, 2013.

²⁸ Department of Defense Inspector General, "Defense Institution Reform Initiative Program Elements Need to Be Defined," Report No. DODIG-2013-019, November 9, 2012, p. 13.

²⁹ Correspondence with ACSS, July 22, 2013.

fields, they must publish. Continued support for research could thus be justified as a critical element of the centers' faculty recruitment and professional development plans.

Academic research does not appear to consume a significant amount of human or financial resources. The Africa Center, for example, issued only 31 research publications between its establishment in 1999 and 2011 (not including any articles published in outside journals),³⁰ although the establishment of a formal research department in 2009 may lead it to increase the rate at which it publishes academic research. Asia-Pacific Center staff asserted that though the center has helped its faculty carve out time for research that is not specifically related to course development, they generally do such work on publications on their own time.³¹

Nevertheless, to ensure that faculty research initiatives generate added value, the centers should take additional steps to ensure that their research and publications focus on topics that are of the greatest interest to their stakeholders and partner nations. Only CHDS has a formal process for evaluating the relevance of research proposals to interested parties. Other centers could undertake similar efforts to align faculty research activities with stakeholders' and partners' priorities.

Future Considerations for the RC Enterprise

RC stakeholders in OSD and at the COCOMs have considered a number of ways to reorient, refocus, and restructure the enterprise, both to generate better results from the centers and to respond to a more austere budgetary environment. Below is a discussion of the key changes being considered and an evaluation founded on discussions with the more than 100 people interviewed for this study.

1. Options to Consider for Greater Impact

a. Decide Whether to Rebalance the Regional Center Enterprise Toward Asia to Support the "Pivot" or Toward Other Regions to Complement It

The decision to shift the emphasis of U.S. security policy toward Asia, as outlined in the January 2012 *Defense Strategic Guidance*, has had a wide range of resource implications. In a November 2011 *Foreign Policy* article arguing that America's most critical strategic interests lie in Asia, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made the case for a comprehensive "pivot" toward Asia that would involve "a substantially increased investment" of diplomatic, economic, strategic, and military resources in the region. "In a time of scarce resources," she wrote, "there's no question that we need to invest them wisely where they will yield the biggest returns, which is why the Asia-Pacific represents such a real 21st-century opportunity for us."³²

As the Pentagon has begun to "rebalance" the U.S. force presence to Asia in support of this policy, it has reallocated troops, aircraft, materiel, training, and security cooperation resources to the PACOM AOR—including to the Asia-Pacific Center. To support the rebalance, in late 2012 the Deputy Secretary of Defense approved an annual increase of \$6.2 million for five years (FY2014–FY2018) to APCSS's budget so it could enhance its activities in

³⁰ DSCA, *Regional Centers for Security Studies FY2011 Annual Report*, undated(c), p. 5.

³¹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

³² Hillary Clinton, "America's Pacific Century," *Foreign Policy*, November 2011.

the region.³³ If more robust engagement of Asian partner nations is to be a cornerstone of U.S. security strategy, it is certainly logical that the Asia-Pacific Center receives additional resources so it can play a part in the new approach.

However, officials focused on other regions make the opposite argument. They note that as military engagement resources shift toward Asia, the United States will have more occasions to work with Asian partners yet fewer opportunities to collaborate with partners in Africa, Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East. Such officials argue that the RCs and other “soft power” tools will become even more important as OSD and the COCOMs lose access to military engagement resources and that ACSS, CHDS, NESA, and the Marshall Center thus merit budget increases more than APCSS does.³⁴

Both approaches make sense. However, it appears as if the decision to augment APCSS’s budget was made as part of a sweeping approach to expanding overall DoD engagement in the Asia-Pacific region rather than through a careful assessment of whether other RCs in the enterprise might generate greater marginal value from additional funds. The 2013 Strategic Choices Management Review (SCMR), led by Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, seemed to follow a similar path of recommending that the RCs mirror the rebalance rather than offset it; charged with producing a menu of options for dealing with expected fiscal constraints,³⁵ the SCMR recommended that all of the RCs except for the Asia-Pacific Center be completely eliminated.³⁶

The rebalance will create many more opportunities for military-to-military engagement while reducing such opportunities in other parts of the world. Given that the RCs generate long-term strategic impacts on U.S. interests in these regions for relatively little cost, OSD should carefully weigh the future roles of each of the RCs and allocate resources accordingly rather than sweep the centers up in a broader redirection toward Asia.

b. Evaluate the Balance Between Core Residential Courses and In-Region Workshops

Officials in OSD/PSO and OSD’s Office of Western Hemisphere Affairs (OSD/WHA) expressed concern that the RCs had strayed from their original missions. Initially, the centers’ flagship initiatives were lengthy, residential foundation courses, which were augmented by a small number of tailored, specialized programs. Now, these officials asserted, the core programs have become like “electives,” and the “electives”—the in-region specialized seminars—have become the core of the centers’ curricula.³⁷

A numerical analysis of RC programs indicates that such a shift has, indeed, taken place. A senior NESA Center official said that while 70 percent of NESA’s overall activities in FY2007 were residential courses in Washington, in FY2013 only 25 percent of center programs are

³³ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013. Also DSCA, “FY12–18 RC funding,” spreadsheet, February 12, 2013.

³⁴ Interview with senior OSD official, December 14, 2012; interview with senior Marshall Center officials, January 14, 2013. Email from senior NESA Center official, July 13, 2013.

³⁵ Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense, “Statement on Strategic Choices and Management Review,” remarks to the press, July 31, 2013.

³⁶ Email from OSD official, August 27, 2013.

³⁷ Interview with senior OSD official, December 19, 2012; interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012.

in Washington, with the rest conducted in the region.³⁸ Similarly, an Africa Center official asserted that 85 percent of the center's programs are conducted in the region.³⁹

The centers themselves, however, do not hold consistent views on the relative merits of foundational and specialized programs. Senior CHDS and APCSS officials, for example, stated that their core residential programs generate the greatest value because they enable partner officials to experience American values and culture, provide sufficient time to build lasting professional relationships, and explain U.S. policies in the context of regional challenges.⁴⁰ While CHDS has added more specialized in-region programs over the years, a senior CHDS official said, it did so to sustain the accomplishments of the foundational programs over time, as well as to extend its reach to partner nation officials who could not take the time for extended residential courses.⁴¹

The Marshall Center, in contrast, has decided that shorter, tailored, country-specific programs will be more relevant to future Euro-Atlantic security challenges and thus have greater impacts on U.S. interests and DoD objectives.⁴² Similarly, a senior NESAC Center official stated that alumni programs (both courses and relationship-building efforts) are the center's "highest priority." "Investing in alumni," the senior official said, "is our longest-lasting benefit."⁴³

There is no ideal ratio of foundational to specialized programs and no one-size-fits-all solution that can be applied to all five RCs. Each of the centers may decide that a different mix best advances DoD objectives, given the broader security cooperation context in its region, cultural differences, logistical challenges, and other factors. To date, programs have been allocated based on a combination of subjective analysis and requests from stakeholders and partner nation officials. Here is another case where better performance metrics and more targeted collection and analysis of data regarding program impacts will help each of the centers determine what the ideal mix would be for its own regions.

c. Determine, as a Policy Matter, Whether and to What Extent the Centers Should Pursue Outside Funding

As discussed, several of the centers have decided to seek funds from new sources. Such an entrepreneurial approach could apply RC expertise to a new set of challenges while also bringing funds into the RC enterprise, thereby compensating for budget cuts. However, it is also possible that in attempting to appeal to new customers, the centers will dilute their core missions and competencies. For example, though the Counterterrorism Fellowship Program concluded that the Marshall Center was an excellent venue for its courses, a former senior OSD official expressed a concern that the CT funding led the center to drift away from its core mission of promoting Euro-Atlantic values.⁴⁴

³⁸ Interview with senior NESAC Center officials, January 17, 2013.

³⁹ Interview with APCSS officials, February 19, 2013.

⁴⁰ Interview with senior Asia-Pacific Center official, Washington, D.C., February 1, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁴¹ Interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁴² Interview with senior Marshall Center official, January 14, 2013.

⁴³ Interview with senior NESAC Center officials, January 17, 2013.

⁴⁴ Telephone interview with former senior OSD official, January 21, 2013.

Though NESAC Center officials claimed that they could eliminate discrete Track II programs if smaller budgets no longer supported them, they also asserted that the center was looking into running a program for Fulbright scholars as a way of bringing in new funds.⁴⁵ It seems clear that if NESAC cancelled regional confidence-building measures while creating a separate program for State Department–sponsored academics, it would be moving away from the reasons why DoD established the center.

Prioritizing “business development” at a military educational institution led to severe management failures and mission creep at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), according to an October 2012 Naval Inspector General Report. Pressure from the school’s deans to bring in outside funds, the IG reported, created a mindset “that sponsored research, which brings in reimbursable funds to help make payroll and other educational costs, is more important than creating meaningful student research opportunities.” This emphasis on reimbursable programs contributed to a dynamic in which “NPS is not appropriately focused on educating (didactic teaching of) naval officers”—its core mission.⁴⁶

Promoting entrepreneurship also creates the possibility that the RCs and other DIB programs will compete for market share when they attend “horse blanket conferences” and other strategic planning sessions designed to identify the ideal allocation of security cooperation resources. Such plans should be based on which institutions are best positioned to advance DoD objectives—not on which ones are marketing themselves most effectively.

The RCs should not necessarily avoid developing new programs that can be funded with outside resources. However, to avoid such pitfalls, OSD should provide direction to the centers regarding whether and to what extent they should pursue supplemental funding. The RCs’ budgets are set by DoD, with the approval of Congress, based on assessments of what these higher authorities believe the centers should undertake. By trying to attract outside funding, the RCs are, in effect, saying that DoD and Congress have put forth inaccurate assessments of their value and that they can prove their value with market economy–based mechanisms.

Such an approach may indeed be an efficient use of education and training resources; however, OSD should indicate whether providing customized instruction to paying customers is a *desirable* use of RC resources or whether the centers should focus on their core activities. (OSD may reach different conclusions for different centers.) The centers should ensure that any initiatives they undertake with outside funding can be executed without undue impact on their primary missions, and they should take steps to measure the impacts of new initiatives as robustly as they do their other programs.

d. Assess the Benefit of Expanding IO/NGO Participation in Regional Center Programs

As noted, the RC enterprise has failed to make full use of the funding authority available to facilitate IO and NGO participation in RC programs. Although DoD can waive reimbursement from IOs and NGOs of up to \$1 million each year, it came nowhere close to this amount between FY2009 and FY2012, waiving as little as \$405,000 in FY2012. Four out of the five centers used no waiver authorities in at least one of these four FYs.

Multiple center officials highlighted the value of incorporating IO and NGO representatives into their programs, noting the benefits of engaging civil society in regional security dis-

⁴⁵ Interview with NESAC Center official, February 12, 2013.

⁴⁶ Naval Inspector General, “Command Inspection of Naval Postgraduate School,” memo to the Secretary of the Navy, Ser N00/1015, October 22, 2012, pp. 2, 12–14.

cussions and of fostering relationships between civil society leaders and government officials. OSD, the COCOMs, and the RCs themselves should evaluate whether additional participation would advance U.S. interests and, if so, make full use of the waiver authorities available.

2. Options to Consider for Cost Savings

As DoD adjusts to sequestration and to the near certainty of further resource reductions in FY2014 and beyond, it seems clear that the RCs will have to cut costs along with virtually all other elements of DoD. Even if OSD does not implement the SCMR's recommendation to eliminate all of the centers except for the Asia-Pacific Center, Congress has indicated that it plans to reduce the RCs' budgets; in the Senate Armed Services Committee's markup of the FY2014 National Defense Authorization Act, the committee directed a decrease of \$12 million from the administration's \$85.9 million request.⁴⁷ While these cuts may or may not be included in whatever legislation is ultimately passed and signed into law, DoD's Senate authorizers have made clear that they do not wish to see the RCs' budgets continue to grow.

There is little overhead left to cut from the enterprise, as most RCs have already found savings from operating efficiencies in previous years. Centers have cut staff travel, refrained from replacing departing staff, negotiated discounted lodging rates, hired less expensive contract interpreters, cut research, reduced computer support, and taken other steps to reduce overhead costs.⁴⁸ APCSS, for example, cut its budget by 22 percent between FY2011 and FY2013,⁴⁹ and ACSS reduced its spending by 9 percent in each of FY2011 and FY2012.⁵⁰ As a result of these previous efficiencies, further cuts will almost certainly affect programs.⁵¹ Four of the centers—CHDS, ACSS, APCSS, and the Marshall Center—have already shortened the duration of core programs and/or reduced the number of participants attending some courses in order to reduce costs.⁵²

a. Share Costs with Partners

Another principal option for reducing costs is to find ways to leverage allies and RCs with the capacity to provide education and training. Germany already contributes substantially to the Marshall Center's operations, for example, and could be asked to take on additional responsibilities. PfP-C, which is managed by the Marshall Center, conducts military education and training in conjunction with defense academies and research institutions in 59 PfP countries. Policy guidance, expertise, and resources are provided by NATO and multiple NATO/PfP countries, thereby spreading the costs of PME programs across multiple contributing nations.⁵³ Austrian support for Marshall Center publications and for a Marshall Center event in south-

⁴⁷ U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Report to Accompany S. 1197, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014*, S. Rpt. 113-44, June 20, 2013, pp. 81–82.

⁴⁸ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013; interview with NESAC Center officials, February 20, 2013.

⁴⁹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁵⁰ ACSS, 2013a, slide 13.

⁵¹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁵² ACSS, 2013a, slide 13. See also GCMC, "GCMC FY12 Update," briefing to the PDASD Board, January 30, 2013, slide 6. Also APCSS, 2013c, slides 19–20, and CHDS, 2013, slide 3.

⁵³ See PfP-C, website, undated.

eastern Europe could also be a model for other partner nations to provide resources needed for specific initiatives.⁵⁴

Developed partner nations might also be asked to contribute faculty or liaison officers who can also contribute to program content. France and Portugal, for example, have both sent senior representatives to the Africa Center, primarily to demonstrate support for the center's efforts.⁵⁵ These two allies, as well as others that have institutionalized the United States' commitment to civilian democratic control of professional military institutions—such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Singapore, and Japan—might also be asked to provide experts who could serve as instructors and program managers.

Some partner nations appear eager to provide PME programs similar to those operated by the RCs. Thailand, for example, asked APCSS for help in setting up similar center of its own; the Thai government might be able to complement APCSS programming by addressing different subject areas or by inviting participants who would or could not travel to the United States.⁵⁶

To ensure that funding is available to subsidize the participation of the countries with the most significant financial need, additional countries might be asked to cover the costs of their own participation in RC programs. However, given that many of the developed countries in Western Europe and the Middle East that must pay their own way fail to use all of the seats allotted to them, it is unlikely that countries of even lesser means will allocate their scarce national funds for RC programs.

b. Identify Programs to Scale Back or Eliminate

The most likely way for the RC enterprise to economize will be to scale back or cut programs seen as adding only modest value. Ideally, as discussed in Chapter Six, the centers would have access to information on the impact of their programs to enable them to focus cuts on initiatives that generate the least benefit. Since the centers have not yet collected or analyzed the kinds of data that are required, however, they will have to use other criteria to determine which programs least merit continued funding.

Overhead Programs

Certain elements of the RC enterprise provide only modest benefits and could be cut with limited impact to the RCs themselves. First is the Global Center for Security Cooperation. There was overwhelming consensus among officials from OSD, the COCOMs, and the RCs that GCSC adds little or no value to their efforts. Furthermore, OSD, the COCOMs, the RCs, and others in the DIB community already undertake some of GCSC's core functions, such as deconflicting DIB efforts, and the GCSC has no unique expertise in conducting its other core missions, such as undertaking curriculum reviews. GCSC's \$522,000 annual budget represents only three-quarters of one percent of the RC enterprise budget, though eliminating it would generate savings with very limited negative impact on the RC enterprise.

GCSC argues that if it were to close, its mission would fall to OSD or DSCA, which might have to hire additional staff to replicate its activities, thereby negating the cost savings

⁵⁴ Interview with PfP-C officials, January 14, 2013.

⁵⁵ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

⁵⁶ Interview with PACOM officials, February 5, 2013.

of shuttering the center.⁵⁷ While this is possible, given that multiple OSD officials expressed a view that GCSC adds limited value, OSD is more likely to refrain from replicating GCSC's functions at all or to assign existing staff the responsibility to share information on DIB and training activities as an ancillary responsibility.

RC programs would also be made more efficient if the centers were able to disconnect from the GlobalNet system, which the RC enterprise uses to remain in touch with its alumni. Four out of the five RCs (all except the Marshall Center) report that GlobalNet is too difficult to use.⁵⁸ Because DSCA maintains the system, the RCs do not bear direct costs for the network; however, they must devote scarce course time to train students on the unique system. ACSS reported that it devotes as much as 4 hours of a 40-hour course to GlobalNet training—time that it calculates is worth approximately \$142,000 per year.⁵⁹ Moreover, because GlobalNet is far less user-friendly than other publicly available social media tools, many alumni do not even use it, preferring to engage via Facebook, Twitter, and other online services that do not require training.⁶⁰

It should be noted that both the Global Center and GlobalNet serve customers beyond the RC enterprise. Other DOD DIB programs draw on GlobalNet, and GCSC provides a common operating picture of DIB activities undertaken by 28 organizations (including the five RCs) that participate in the Global Center Consortium. RAND did not interview officials from the other 24 consortium members. OSD may wish to solicit these organizations' views regarding GlobalNet and GCSC before eliminating them. If consortium members find value in GCSC's deconfliction efforts, OSD may wish to evaluate whether such functions could be undertaken by another entity (such as DSCA) at lower cost. Similarly, if these organizations see value in continuing to maintain GlobalNet, the RCs could be permitted to “unplug” from the network and use other tools that are less burdensome.

Core Functions—Academic Programs, Alumni Outreach, and Track II Initiatives

If budget cuts must be accommodated, the centers should first focus on preserving the initiatives that they believe have the greatest impact—a list that will differ from center to center. NESAs and CHDS, for example, have both emphasized the need to protect their core, foundational programs.⁶¹ Moreover, though NESAs have explained that it would be simple to cut Track II programs because they are generally self-contained and are distinct from the center's PME programs, but such efforts are highly valued by OSD and the COCOMs.⁶² That said, senior NESAs officials thought that other allies, such as Turkey or the Persian Gulf states, might be willing to provide funding for some Middle East Track II events, which could free up DoD funds for traditional PME programs.⁶³

⁵⁷ James J. Wirtz, GCSC Director, letter to RAND, July 23, 2013.

⁵⁸ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

⁵⁹ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

⁶⁰ Regional Center Directors Roundtable, Washington, D.C., January 31, 2013.

⁶¹ Interview with senior NESAs Center officials, January 17, 2013; telephone interview with CHDS official, March 8, 2013.

⁶² Interview with OSD official, January 29, 2013; interview with senior CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with senior NESAs Center officials, January 17, 2013.

⁶³ Interview with senior NESAs Center officials, January 17, 2013.

All of the centers asserted that alumni engagement is a top priority that adds great value, which suggests that they will want to preserve resources for this key function. Indeed, the RCs have a strong comparative advantage in creating and nurturing “communities of interest,” a core U.S. government objective that takes years of investment to achieve. Cutting resources to alumni outreach would therefore likely undermine the centers’ impact for years to come.

A second approach is to maintain most programs at a lesser scale—in other words, to reduce participant throughput numbers and/or the number of events. Doing so would enable the centers to continue having an influence in all of the areas in which they currently engage, just to a lesser degree. For much of the past decade, the RCs’ budgets and programs expanded, and the numbers of participants who took part in RC programs grew accordingly. For the past two to three years, as budgetary pressures necessitated cost-cutting measures, the centers identified operating efficiencies that enabled them to maintain, for the most part, the same output with fewer resources. To adjust to additional fiscal constraints, however, the centers may simply have to do less.

Management and Administrative Savings

The centers have already found modest savings through small steps intended to make operations more efficient, such as renegotiating contracts, leaving vacated positions empty, and reducing computer support. A limited number of additional small-scale efficiencies may also be possible:

- **Further staff cuts:** Eliminating professional staff positions may be unavoidable. The impact could be mitigated by expanding the use of adjunct subject-matter experts to teach instead of full-time professors. Adjunct faculty cost much less than full-time employees, although a sizable core of full-time faculty are necessary to maintain coherence in a center’s programs. Both ACSS and the Marshall Center already use a mix of full-time and adjunct faculty.⁶⁴

One senior OSD official suggested cutting translators, stating, “English-speaking officials are the ones we want to reach anyway.”⁶⁵ Others asserted that if the centers were to require fluency in English, they would fail to attract the most qualified participants and even risk losing access to some countries in which English fluency is not widespread (particularly in the age groups prevalent at mid- to senior-levels in militaries and government establishments). An Africa Center official argued, for example, that the center must continue providing translation into Portuguese if it wants to continue shaping strategic thinking and building relationships in Angola, one of the fastest-growing economies on the continent⁶⁶ and the source of roughly 2 percent of U.S. oil imports.⁶⁷ Though the centers have to date made clear philosophical commitments to maintaining translation services, there may be ways to reduce the costs of language services. If multiple iterations of a course are offered each year, for example, it might be possible to hold only one session

⁶⁴ Interview with senior NESAC Center officials, January 17, 2013; interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

⁶⁵ Interview with senior OSD official, January 2, 2013.

⁶⁶ Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013.

⁶⁷ U.S. Energy Information Administration, “Net Imports of Crude Oil and Petroleum Products into the United States by Country, April 2013,” undated.

in English, thereby reducing the number of programs requiring interpretation while still enabling non-English speakers to participate in center events.

Two centers could also consider eliminating the full-time LNOs they have assigned to work at the COCOMs. NESA has a full-time LNO at CENTCOM headquarters, and CHDS has LNOs assigned to both SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM. These centers and COCOMs assert that LNOs play a valuable role by communicating stakeholder priorities to the centers and by giving the centers visibility into the COCOMs' classified planning processes.⁶⁸ Other officials expressed doubt that these positions are worth the investment, given the relative ease of domestic travel and communications.⁶⁹

- **Greater use of technology:** Centers could increase their reliance on technology (e.g., though videoconferencing, webcasts, and online instruction) to engage participants—particularly alumni—without incurring travel expenses. CHDS reported substantial successes and cost-savings by delivering content in these ways, primarily with the assistance of universities and other partners in the host nations.⁷⁰ However, electronic program delivery represents only a partial solution, as many partner nations lack adequate technology, bandwidth, or capabilities to participate in “virtual” RC programming.
- **Generate savings for others:** APCSS and GCMC cannot recoup sunk infrastructure costs by “renting out” their facilities between programs, as they can legally seek reimbursement only for the marginal costs of operating the site (e.g., added electricity costs incurred by an event), which are likely to be miniscule, not to mention very difficult to calculate.⁷¹ However, to the extent that these centers have excess physical plant capacity, they could generate savings for the U.S. government, if not for the centers themselves, by offering use of their facilities to other official entities. Indeed, EUCOM, CENTCOM, and AFRICOM have all held conferences at the Marshall Center, which prevented them from having to rent meeting spaces elsewhere.⁷²

Reorganizations and Reorientations

To cut overhead expenses further, the centers may need to make more dramatic management and administrative changes.

One way to improve efficiency may be to merge several centers' support functions—such as travel, accounting, contracting, and personnel—to eliminate redundancy. NESA developed a proposal to consolidate these “back office” functions from the three Washington-based centers and NDU's Institute of National Strategic Studies (INSS) into a single support center, claiming that such a move would save 25 percent of expenditures on these tasks without impacting cutting academic programs. The proposal, however, was rejected.⁷³ If there is an interest in considering this option, a detailed cost study should be conducted to identify the actual savings, if any, that such a consolidation would generate.

⁶⁸ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

⁶⁹ Interview with senior OSD official, December 20, 2012.

⁷⁰ Interviews with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013.

⁷¹ Interview with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013.

⁷² Interview with EUCOM officials, January 9, 2013.

⁷³ Interview with senior NESA Center officials, January 17, 2013.

In July 2011, DSCA undertook a study of the cost-effectiveness of consolidating the three Washington-based centers at a single location. It examined the feasibility of relocating ACSS and CHDS to the commercially owned U.S. Coast Guard headquarters building, where the NESACenter is already located, after the Coast Guard moves its staff to a new federal complex in Washington. Such a move would enable the centers to share resources, including faculty members with specialized expertise (in areas like space policy and cyber security); it would also provide ACSS with classroom space, which it currently lacks, thereby eliminating the need to rent costly conference facilities for its events. Ultimately, however, DSCA concluded that “this move could result in decreased mission accomplishment at higher costs.”⁷⁴ It is possible that a move to a different facility with different associated costs could be more cost-effective, and DSCA should continue to consider whether future consolidation opportunities present a more compelling business case. In a similar effort, AFRICOM asked the Marshall Center and the Africa Center in the fall of 2011 to assess the cost-effectiveness of moving ACSS to Garmisch. It was determined that such a consolidation would generate a small savings (\$66,000), which was deemed insufficient to justify the loss of Africa-specific programming.⁷⁵

A more dramatic reorganization, suggested by a small number of interviewees, would be to combine all five RCs at two facilities—the Marshall Center and the Asia-Pacific Center—in order to take advantage of their dedicated facilities (which the U.S. government has already paid a significant amount of money to construct).⁷⁶ Such an approach, one senior OSD official stated, would enable the RC enterprise to eliminate redundant management and administrative functions while focusing programs on trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific relations.⁷⁷ Few officials, however, thought that such a large-scale consolidation would be a positive step on the whole. A senior CENTCOM officer pointed out that if centers were locked into more standardized, long-term residential programs, they would be less flexible and thus less able to meet U.S. policymakers’ or partners’ emerging needs.⁷⁸ In addition, other officials noted, the elimination of region-specific programs would make it harder to engage partners in ways that address regional dynamics and cultural nuances and would hinder the development of strong regional communities of interest by “diluting” the number of participants from a given region in each course.⁷⁹ Furthermore, U.S. policy does not break neatly into “trans-Atlantic” and “trans-Pacific” interests, making it unclear how two centers with such orientations would engage partner nations in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East.

⁷⁴ DSCA Centers Management Office, “Business Case Study on Relocating Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) & the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS) to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Headquarters Building,” July 2011, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Correspondence with ACSS, July 17, 2013.

⁷⁶ Interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013.

⁷⁷ Interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

⁷⁸ Interview with senior CENTCOM official, January 25, 2013.

⁷⁹ Interview with senior OSD official, December 19, 2012; interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, January 24, 2013; interview with senior NESACenter officials, January 17, 2013.

Generally speaking, the regional DASDs and the COCOMs—the RC enterprise’s primary stakeholders—oppose any move to consolidate the centers because such a step would detract from regionally focused security engagement.⁸⁰

Concluding Thoughts

The RC enterprise is widely praised by its stakeholders and its partners for operating innovative programs that build partner capacity, promote professionalism in partner nation security establishments, develop cadres of partner nation officials who are familiar with U.S. policies and values, and advance both long-term U.S. interests and DoD security cooperation objectives—all with relatively small staffs and modest budgets.

It is likely that the centers have opportunities to enhance their effectiveness and cut operating costs. While all of them are already pursuing such improvements to some degree, spurred on by OSD’s direction, internal management initiatives, and the likelihood of budget cuts, improvements in center measurements would enable identification and prioritization of these opportunities. Similarly, OSD and the COCOMs—the centers’ primary stakeholders—can take steps to provide clearer guidance and to exercise more proactive stewardship. Doing so will almost certainly make the RCs more effective tools for advancing U.S. policy and promoting military-to-military engagement.

One of the most widely repeated criticisms of the RCs is that they are unable to measure their accomplishments. Indeed, with the exception of APCSS, the centers have generally not made a concerted effort to measure their impacts. One of this report’s primary objectives is to identify ways in which the centers can better define their goals, develop benchmarks, measure accomplishments, and track trends in their performance.

While there is room for improvement, virtually every official connected to the RC enterprise agreed that the centers do, in fact, add great value to U.S. interests. They cannot quantify the impacts that they have had, but the centers have undoubtedly had great success at the missions they have undertaken.

⁸⁰ Interview with senior OSD official, Washington, December 14, 2012; interview with AFRICOM officials, Stuttgart, Germany, January 8, 2013; interview with senior SOUTHCOM official, Miami, Fla., January 24, 2013; interview with senior CENTCOM official, Tampa, Fla., January 25, 2013. Not surprisingly, four out of the five centers either opposed a merger directly or emphasized the need to maintain region-specific engagement; the one exception was the Marshall Center, whose large facility would presumably enable it to survive such a consolidation by absorbing one or more other RCs. Interview with ACSS officials, February 19, 2013; interviews with Asia-Pacific Center officials, February 6, 2013; interview with senior NESAC officials, January 17, 2013; interview with CHDS officials, February 21, 2013; interview with senior EUCOM official, January 9, 2013; and interview with OSD official, February 20, 2013.

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The five U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Regional Centers for Security Studies have been helping partner nations build strategic capacity for almost 20 years. They are high-impact components of U.S. security cooperation and engagement efforts, despite their relatively small budgets. However, recent DoD budget constraints have put pressure on the regional centers (RCs) to increase efficiency. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) asked RAND to conduct a study on the overall impact of the RCs, their effectiveness in advancing DoD policy priorities, and the ways in which they assess their programs and the resulting outcomes. This report is based on an extensive review of documents related to the RC enterprise, as well as 68 interviews involving 135 officials at the centers, their primary stakeholder organizations (OSD and the geographic combatant commands), and a small number of other interested entities.



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