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THESIS

**BY, WITH, AND THROUGH: THE THEORY AND
PRACTICE OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPACITY-
BUILDING**

by

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December 2014

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**BY, WITH, AND THROUGH: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SPECIAL
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a theory of how U.S. special operations forces (USSOF) build partner capacity. Building partner capacity (BPC) is a cornerstone of America's post-9/11 security strategy and a signature mission of USSOF. However, USSOF lacks a theory that articulates how capacity is built or the keys to its success.

This thesis explores BPC from the top down, through national security documents, doctrine, and case studies. It identifies that BPC is not a single act, but rather a series of tactical, operational, and strategic engagements carried out over an extended period of time in a dynamic and unpredictable partnership environment. The partnership environment is the aggregate of factors and conditions that influence the partnership and ultimately bound capacity-building potential.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AECA	Arms Export Control Act of 1976
AOR	area of responsibility
AR	Andean Ridge
ARSOF	U.S. Army special operations forces
AUC	United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (<i>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia</i>)
BCFE	Paraguayan Joint Special Forces Battalion (<i>Batallon Conjunto de Fuerzas Especiales</i>)
BPC	building partner capacity
BRCNA	Conternarcotics Brigade (<i>Brigade Contra el Narcotrafica</i>)
CAO	civil affairs operations
CCOPE	Colombian Joint Special Operations Command (<i>Comando Conjunto de Operaciones Especiales</i>)
CERTE	Colombian Army Tactical Retraining Center
CF	Conventional forces
CMO	civil-military operations
CMSE	civil-military support element
CNP	Colombian National Police
CNT	counter-narcoterrorism
COCOM	Combatant command
COCOM	combatant command
COESE	Colombian Army Special Operations Command (<i>Comando de Operaciones Especiales-Ejercito</i>)
COIN	counterinsurgency
CRS	Congressional Research Service
CSOTF-10	Combined Special Operations Task Force-10
CT	counterterrorism
CWMD	countering weapons of mass destructions

DA	direct action
DAO	Defense Attaché Officer
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
ELN	National Liberation Army (<i>Ejército de Liberación</i>)
EPP	Paraguayan People's Army (<i>Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo</i>)
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act of 1961
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</i>)
FHA	foreign humanitarian assistance
FID	foreign internal defense
FSF	foreign security forces
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GCC	geographic combatant command
HN	host nation
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISAF SOF	International Security Assistance Force Special Operations Forces
JCET	joint combined exchange training
JCISFA	Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance
KLE	key leader engagement
MERCOSUR	The Southern Common Market
MISO	military information support operations

NDA	National Defense Authorization Act
NSWG	naval special warfare group
OPE	Operational preparation of the environment
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
OTERA	organize, train, educate, rebuild (build), advise
OWS	Operation Willing Spirit
PDP	partnership development program
PEP	Personnel Exchange Program
PN	partner nation
PSYOP	psychological operations
RWOT	Regional war on terror
S/FOAA	State/Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act
SA	security assistance
SC	security cooperation
SC	Southern Cone
SCO	Security Cooperation Officer
SFA	security force assistance
SOCEUR	Special Operations Command Europe
SOCFWD	special operations command-forward
SOC PAC	Special Operations Command Pacific
SOC SOUTH	Special Operations Command South
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SOF	special operations forces
SOFREP	special operations forces representative
SR	special reconnaissance
TBA	Tri-border Area

U.S.C.	United States Code
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USG	United States Government
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
USSOF	United States special operations forces
USSOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
UW	unconventional warfare

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. LOOKING FORWARD FROM AFGHANISTAN

The close of major American involvement in the war in Afghanistan leaves the United States in a precarious situation but also with some unique opportunities. Looking forward, it is important to take stock of the threats and challenges the United States faces today, the method it has chosen to address them, and the potential points of failure.

1. The Challenge: The Threat and the Operating Environment

The United States faces a wide array of threats that are geographically and ideologically dispersed. A majority of these threats are from non-state actors that capitalize on ungoverned or under-governed spaces to establish safe havens from which they can launch terrorist attacks aimed at weak states, U.S. interests, or potentially the U.S. homeland. Civil strife can also exacerbate fragile stability, resulting in a number of second- and third-order effects that pose a threat to security interests. A dramatic example would be the rise of the Islamic State group that seized on the chaos of Syrian civil war and the deep societal rifts in a fragile Iraq to capture large swaths of land that straddles both countries in 2014. Similar turmoil with the very real potential to cause the same hazardous results is present elsewhere in the world—most notably in Africa. Take, for example, ongoing coalition operations in the Horn of Africa, and France’s 2013 intervention in Mali to beat back the expansion of Islamist fundamentalists that were threatening to capture the entirety of the country.¹

Despite all the public attention on non-state actors and terrorists since 9/11, the United States still has to concern itself with traditional threats from state actors. Although, these threats may not pose a clear and present or existential threat to the U.S. homeland, they certainly pose a very real threat to U.S. national security interests abroad,

¹ Special Warfare, “Q&A Colonel John Deedrick, Commander, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)” *Special Warfare* 26, no. 1 (2013): 22. <http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/11420>; Hugh Schofield, “France Confirms Mali Intervention.” *BBC News*. January 11, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20991719>.

and to the partners and allies who share those interests. Russia's 2014 incursion and subsequent annexation of Crimea clearly illustrates the state threats the United States must still address as a global superpower. Although not directly affecting the United States, this action certainly gave visible credence to the concerns of the Baltic States, and put NATO and the defense of its members back on the security agenda. Russia is only one state actor on the radar, Iran, North Korea, and China all present their own unique challenges that require their due diligence of thought, resources, and decisions.

Compounding these physical threats are the realities of the modern age. Conflict in the information age is defined by the Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) Revolution. Affordable and commercially available technologies, social media and instantaneous communication have not only diffused a noticeable degree of power from the state to the individual, but these advancements have also increased the number and nature of threats that states must face.² Additionally, as the ICT Revolution shrinks aspects of space and time, nefarious interests have become more intertwined. For example, the lines between narco-trafficking, human trafficking, and terrorism have become more and more blurred in recent years.³

Some scholars and analysts suggest the most dangerous potential threat the United States, its allies, and partners may have to face is one that coalesces asymmetric tactics and actors, organized crime, and state sponsorship into a coherent functioning threat, a hybrid threat.⁴ These threats would be able to leverage the elements of national power that a state can bring to bear in conjunction with the asymmetric advantage that is the strength of a non-state actor. Such a threat would pose a significant challenge to any state, requiring the country or coalition to counter simultaneous assaults across the spectrum of conflict and along all elements of national power.⁵

² Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Future of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), 113–122.

³ Angel Rabasa et al., *Beyond Al-Qaeda: Part 2, The Outer Rings of the Terrorist Universe* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2006) 101–160, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG430.pdf.

⁴ Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid Warfare and Challenges." *Joint Forces Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2009): 34–39. <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-52.pdf>.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 36–39.

Finally, after over more than a decade of combat, the United States and many of its allies and partners are faced with substantial economic challenges and war-weary populations. As a result, the United States and many of its staunchest military allies are drastically reducing their defense budgets, while others like Russia and China increase theirs.⁶ The most sobering fact, however, is that even though major U.S. and allied involvement in Afghanistan is ending, the long war against Al Qaida and its affiliates is far from over. Global and transnational threats still remain—still threatening the United States, its interests, allies, and partners.⁷

2. The Strategy: Building Partner Capacity

Combined, these challenges will inform the United States' security concerns in the coming decade and shape how the military is able to address them. These challenges are broad, complex, and exceed the ability of the United States to solve alone. To meet these challenges and their global scope, the United States has made it clear that it will have to rely on partners, and on building capacity in those partners.⁸

Building partner capacity (BPC) as a term is relatively new in the U.S. military lexicon, although the concept is anything but new.⁹ A remarkable example of U.S. led BPC is the Marshall Plan implemented by the United States in Europe after World War II. The effects of the war left Europe devastated and in great need of assistance. As a

⁶ Angelo Young, "Which Countries Are Spending More On Defense?," *International Business Times*, February 6, 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.com/global-defense-budget-seen-climbing-2014-first-total-increase-2009-russia-surpasses-britain-saudi>; Leon E. Panetta, "Building Partnership in the 21st Century" (speech, Dean Acheson Lecture, U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, DC, June 28, 2012), <http://www.defense.gov/utility/printitem.aspx?print=http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1691>.

⁷ Rabasa et al., *Beyond Al-Qaeda*, 164; National Intelligence Council. *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds* (Washington, DC: National Intelligence Council, 2012), viii–ix. <http://www.dni.gov/index.php/about/organization/national-intelligence-council-global-trends>; Panetta, "Building Partnership in the 21st Century."

⁸ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2010); Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014; Rabasa et al., *Beyond Al-Qaeda*, xxix.

⁹ Catherine Dale, *In Brief: Clarifying the Concept of "Partnership" in National Security* (CRS Report No. R42516) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 4, 2012), 1, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42516.pdf> 1.

result of the Marshall Plan “from 1948 through 1952 European economies grew at an unprecedented rate. Trade relations led to the formation of the North Atlantic alliance. Economic prosperity led by coal and steel industries helped to shape what we know now as the European Union.”¹⁰ This whole-of-government approach helped to rebuild Europe and was, in a very real sense, a capacity-building effort, although the term BPC was not used in Marshall’s day.

In the wake of 9/11, BPC has become a buzzword to define the broad, and sometimes vague, American enterprise to build stronger partners with the ultimate objective of achieving shared and U.S. national security interests. The effort has run continuously in the background of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan receiving much funding, but little public attention.¹¹ United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has played a major role in this effort; which is not surprising given the command’s charter.

As then-USSOCOM commander, Admiral William H. McRaven, highlighted to the House Armed Services Committee in 2013: “SOF focuses intently on building partner capacity and security force assistance so that local and regional threats do not become global and thus more costly—both in blood and treasure.”¹² U.S. special operations forces’ (USSOF) connection with BPC is not a post-9/11 development; USSOF has a long history of building partner capacity. Over the past seven decades, by design and by chance, USSOF has found itself building partner capacity all over the world and across the range of military operations. As a result, they have become the American capacity-building force of choice. The results of some of USSOF’s more recent capacity-building efforts can be easily seen in Afghanistan.

¹⁰ “The Marshall Plan,” The George C. Marshall Foundation, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/history-marshall-plan/>.

¹¹ Catherine Dale, *In Brief: Clarifying the Concept of “Partnership” in National Security*, 1..

¹² *Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, United States Special Operations Command: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*. 113th Cong. 4 (2013) (statement of William H. McRaven, Commander of United States Special Operations Command), <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20130306/100394/HHRG-113-AS00-Wstate-McRavenUSNA-20130306.pdf>.

As of 2013, 17 NATO nations contributed special operations forces (SOF) to train and advise a high-end Afghan police force as part of International Security Assistance Force Special Operations Forces (ISAF SOF).¹³ Additionally, United Arab Emirate and Jordanian SOF have trained other Afghan forces alongside American and allied partners.¹⁴ These countries' participation in this conflict not only demonstrate a willingness to work with the United States on operational missions, but also reflect the amount of capacity USSOCOM was able to build in some of these partners over the years.

Afghanistan provides a tangible output of SOF BPC, but it only illuminates one aspect of the USSOF capacity building enterprise. On any given day, USSOF elements are working in approximately 75 countries around the world.¹⁵ This trend is expected to continue as USSOCOM has made it clear that it will conduct and resource long-term persistent engagement with its partners around the globe in support of the Global SOF Network.¹⁶ Most of these missions, if not all of them, have a capacity-building component. Examples include persistent engagements in Columbia, El Salvador, Estonia, the Philippines, Uganda, and Romania, just to name a few.

Every one of these missions presents a unique set of challenges. Such endeavors are normally characterized as having numerous stakeholders, extremely long time horizons, and are easily frustrated by personalities and organizational differences—in short, they are not easy. But the fact remains; the capacities these engagements build represent a capacity in being—a capacity to achieve both partner nation and U.S. national security objectives. Therefore, the degree to which USSOF is able to build capacity efficiently and comprehensively directly impacts the United States' national defense.

¹³ Brigadier Mark Smethurst, "ISAF SOF" (briefing, Special Operations Low Intensity Conflict Symposium, Washington, DC, January 29, 2013), <http://www.dtic.mil/ndia/2013SOLIC/Smethurst.pdf>.

¹⁴ Logan Tuttle, "Commandos Train for Afghanistan's Future" (ISAF Joint Command Public Affairs, January, 2010), <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/commandos-train-for-afghanistans-future.html>.

¹⁵ U.S. Special Operations Command, "SOCOM 2020: Forging the Tip of the Spear." (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: U. S. Special Operations Command, May 2013), 5. http://insidedefense.com/iwfile.html?file=pdf13%2F05302013_socom.pdf.

¹⁶ Ibid.

3. The Void: Theory and Doctrine

Despite the United States' strategic focus on building partner capacity, USSOF's long history with the task, and the fact that BPC is something that SOCOM "focuses very intently on," no theory or doctrine exists that examines or explains how USSOF actually builds partner capacity. USSOCOM has been criticized lately, most notably by long-time SOF chronicler, Linda Robinson, for USSOCOM's lack of articulation when it comes to explaining and educating outsiders on how USSOF carries-out, manages, and gauges its non-kinetic, indirect approaches, to include building partner capacity.¹⁷

Other literature, both doctrinal and professional, seems to indicate that USSOF insiders—commanders, planners, and operators—may not have the full picture either. Doctrine approaches different aspects of capacity building in various volumes, but does not address the topic in its entirety; *JP 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* does not even define the term "building partner capacity." Contemporary professional works like *Going Big By Getting Small* by career Special Forces officer Colonel Brian S. Petit indicate that undertakings such as BPC "requires competencies that are beyond standard professional military education and training...a challenge that requires tremendous knowledge outside of one's professional domain knowledge."¹⁸ Discussions with other senior USSOF leaders echo the sentiment that there is a lot of on the job training at the operational level when it comes to capacity building in environments short of war.¹⁹ As the United States' reliance on this indirect approach increases and available resources to conduct them decreases, USSOF will not only need to better articulate how it carries out these missions, but also better prepare and resource its formations to conduct them more efficiently and effectively.

¹⁷ Linda Robinson, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Special Report (Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations, April 2013), 13–15.

¹⁸ Brian S. Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero* (Denver, CO: Outskirts Press, 2013), 108–109.

¹⁹ Colonel (retired) Greg Wilson, interview with the author, Monterey, CA, October 29, 2014.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to help fill this gap, and advance a more comprehensive understanding of how USSOF actually builds partner capacity, and how USSOF's BPC efforts fit into the larger U.S. national security strategy. Given the observations above, BPC will remain a critical component of U.S. national defense for the foreseeable future, and USSOF will likely remain the force of choice to achieve those ends. Therefore, it stands that a greater, more holistic understanding of SOF capacity building is necessary to ensure that USSOCOM and its formations are meeting the nation's defense needs as effectively and efficiently as possible, especially in an increasingly resource constrained environment. To extend the usefulness of this research, this work will also advance an adaptive planning model that will assist Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) commanders and staffs when considering and designing a BPC enterprise in order to best apply scarce BPC resources within their areas of reasonability (AOR).

C. SCOPE

This thesis will focus on the challenges and tensions of building partner capacity as they apply to special operations forces in environments short of war; a domain increasingly referred to as *Phase Zero*.²⁰ It will analyze two case studies from Special Operations Command South's (SOCSOUTH) AOR: Colombia, and Paraguay. These two cases were selected because they both represent a classic bilateral partnership between USSOF and a partner nation (PN) over an extended period of time, and because the same operational headquarters managed them. Despite these similar characteristics, these two cases produced very different results. Subsequently, they provide an opportunity to determine what makes this type of partnership tick, and to identify the potential pitfalls and operational opportunities of such partnerships. This thesis will also draw on doctrinal, historical, and contemporary sources to develop a comprehensive picture of

²⁰ "Phase Zero" is a non-doctrinal term advanced by Colonel Brian S. Petit in *Going Big By Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero*. The term defines, "both the actions taken and the environment involved in maintaining US access and influence through foreign engagements with means and methods below the threshold of war." (p. 53)

capacity building writ-large as a tool of U.S. national security, and how SOF fits into the picture. This analysis will identify key trends and components of capacity building as they pertain to USSOF, and provide a roadmap for a more comprehensive approach to its application. This work will be primarily directed at the operational level, but any discussion of capacity building would be incomplete without also mentioning certain policy and tactical level aspects of the topic.

D. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research will seek to answer the question: *how does USSOF build partner capacity?* In support of that question, three additional supporting research questions are:

1. What is building partner capacity, and how is it intended to achieve U.S. national security objectives?
2. What are the guiding principles and governing factors of capacity building?
3. How does USSOF fit into the larger U.S. BPC context, and what differentiates USSOF BPC efforts from other Department of Defense efforts to build partner capacity?

E. APPROACH

USSOF BPC will be explored through an examination of existing national strategic guidance and doctrine, historical and contemporary literature, and through the analysis of two case studies. The examination will begin by establishing what exactly BPC is and how it fits into the larger national security framework. The intent is to provide meaning, context and identify the principles of U.S. BPC and the factors that influence these efforts. The focus will then turn to USSOF's role in capacity building. This examination will include USSOF's history with capacity building, and the unique skills, qualities, and tools that inform USSOF's approach to BPC. Analysis of the two USSOF capacity building case studies of will illuminate how these factors coalesce to create a partnership environment, and how USSOF operates within these environments to actually build partner capacity.

F. AUDIENCE

This work was written with several audiences in mind. First and foremost, this thesis was written for planners and principals at the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC), particularly those that have just transitioned from the tactical to the operational level. The TSOCs are the action arms of USSCOCOM, and are truly where the rubber meets the road when it comes to initiating, synchronizing, and sustaining USSOF capacity-building efforts. To that end, if such an endeavor is to be successful, it has to be successful there first. The BPC planning model presented at the end of this document is specifically intended to assist TSOC planners in identifying the most suitable partners, approaches, and methods to best apply the TSOC's limited capacity building resources.

This work is also intended for international SOF partners. As our world grows smaller, our national interests more closely aligned, and common threats more widely dispersed, we will all find ourselves working together to solve increasingly complicated and urgent challenges. These challenges are, and will continue to be, too large and too costly for anyone one nation to adequately address alone. We are each other's best options. This thesis identifies that frank and candid discussion and communication between partners increases the effectiveness of a partnership. Transparency and understanding decreases frustration and distrust—the cancers of partnership—while simultaneously increasing potential and efficiency. To that end, this thesis is intended as a step towards a more open and frank discussion. The rules and policies that govern U.S. military partnerships and capacity building are complex and confusing, but they are, nevertheless, the rules the U.S. military and USSOF are required to abide. Identifying and recognizing these factors, both on the part of USSOF and our partners, will go a long way to better understanding each other, where we are coming from, and how we can best achieve our common goals.

Finally, this work may be of use to those interested in wading through the muddied waters of U.S. BPC efforts. Given the vast literature, disparate components, and somewhat intangible nature of BPC, developing a comprehensive understanding of what BPC is and how it works. This thesis was also written with these readers in mind, and in a

manner that attempts to provide a comprehensive, yet still navigable, picture of capacity building and its components as they apply to U.S. national security. This research may also be of interest to those seeking to gain a better understanding of the unique challenges that beset USSOF in capacity building endeavors and how they go about handling them.

G. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Building partner capacity is a complete government approach employed by the United States to achieve national security objectives. At the macro level of policy and strategy BPC is a concept; it refers to and describes the act of helping others—partners—to get better at something. Who the partners are, and what they are getting better at vary greatly, but they are all linked by the common theme of using one partner’s strengths to compensate for the other’s weakness in an effort to achieve a mutual security benefit. BPC requires a complete government approach because the challenge that contemporary threats pose requires solutions that are beyond the ability of any one U.S. agency or department.

While a neat and tidy concept at the macro level, BPC is anything but neat and tidy at the micro level. The military does not build partner capacity as a singular act; it actually builds partner capacity through various disaggregated operational tasks, programs, and activities. The military carries these tasks out under various national authorities and with the approval of various, and often numerous, decision makers. As a result military capacity-building efforts are complicated to resource, plan, and execute.

Further complicating matters is the nature of a partnerships itself. An international partnership is dynamic. Primarily, the partner states’ national interests drive these partnerships, but they are greatly influenced by world events and other phenomena that may cause those interests to change instantly, and without warning. The aggregate of factors and conditions that influence the partnership comprise the partnership environment. Ultimately, any BPC endeavor is bound by the limits of the partnership environment.

USSOF has built partner capacity since the inception of its oldest formations, and capacity building remains an integral component of the majority of USSOF’s core

activities today. USSOF's unique capabilities allow them to employ specialized tactics and techniques to achieve their capacity building ends. Additionally, USSOF's nimble force structure allows them to create a noticeable degree of resiliency to better operate in the fluid and unpredictable partnership environment. Collectively, these factors allow USSOF to achieve capacity building success in situations where conventional DOD formations cannot; making USSOF the United States' capacity building force of choice.

To overcome the points of friction induced by legal and programmatic hurdles, the dynamics of the partnership environment, and the challenges imposed by the long time horizons of BPC, USSOF requires the use of an entire enterprise to build partner capacity. The SOF BPC Enterprise is a system of actors, activities, and programs that capitalizes on the unique techniques and procedures of USSOF to achieve BPC objectives under conditions that conventional BPC efforts would find untenable. The enterprise serves to provide the continuous synchronization vertically from the policy level to the tactical level, and horizontally with the partner nation necessary to ensure the right skills and equipment arrive in the right place at the right time for the duration necessary to build the requisite capacity.

Despite SOF's inherent, almost subconscious, ability to build partner capacity at the tactical and personal level, there are significant institutional shortfalls with regards to SOF BPC. These theoretical, doctrinal, and educational gaps pertain to the dynamics of partnerships and capacity building at the operational, strategic, and policy levels. This lack of common understanding has left TSOCs reliant on creativity and adaptable actors to find capacity-building solutions on the fly. It has also left USSOF and USSOCOM flatfooted when it comes to articulating, justifying, and resourcing their BPC efforts and approach. As the demands on TSOCs increase and available resources decrease, developing a coherent understanding of how capacity is built, and imparting their formations with that understanding will become of increasing importance in order to best meet the security requirements of the nation.

H. THESIS ORGANIZATION

The subsequent chapters are organized as follows:

- Chapter II presents a comprehensive picture of U.S. capacity building and the factors that influence the Department of Defense's efforts to build capacity. This chapter examines the dynamics of international partnerships, defines BPC as a term, reviews the lexicon of terms associated with capacity building, and introduces the concept of the BPC enterprise.
- Chapter III is focused solely on USSOF and its relationship to BPC. An overview of USSOF's capacity building history is provided before identifying where capacity building can be found in present-day USSOF core activities and operational approaches. This chapter also offers some of the most common authorities and resources USSOF applies in support of capacity building, and introduces the chain of actors that bring USSOF BPC enterprises to life.
- Chapter IV presents two case studies of SOCSOUTH's BPC efforts in Colombia and Paraguay from 2001 through 2010.
- Chapter V analyzes these two cases studies to identify key factors and trends about USSOF BPC enterprises and USSOF's operational approaches to BPC.
- Finally, Chapter VI concludes the work by presenting findings, to include seven principles of capacity building that are requisite components of any successful capacity-building endeavor. This chapter also presents an adaptive planning model for designing BPC enterprises, identifies the implication of these findings, and offers recommendations and potential areas for further research.

II. BACKGROUND: U.S. CAPACITY BUILDING

A. INTRODUCTION

The 2010 National Security Strategy clearly states the reason and purpose the United States builds partner capacity:

Where governments are incapable of meeting their citizens' basic needs and fulfilling their responsibilities to provide security within their borders, the consequences are often global and may directly threaten the American people. To advance our common security, we must address the underlying political and economic deficits that foster instability, enable radicalization and extremism, and ultimately undermine the ability of governments to manage threats within their borders and to be our partners in addressing common challenges.²¹

The document, however, offers little guidance or explanation as to how the United States goes about building partner capacity or the dynamics at play; this chapter is dedicated to exploring just that topic.

The United States' capacity-building efforts could easily be characterized as nebulous, unwieldy, and largely un- or under-defined—and often are by policymakers and even by some in the military.²² Without question these efforts are confusing, complicated, and complex in nature, but it must also be understood that they are also directly reflective of the confusing, complicated, and complex security challenges facing the United States today. Deeper analysis of how and why the United States employs capacity building as a means of achieving security objectives provides some understanding why the United States' BPC is so intricate.

This chapter is devoted to analyzing the nature and key components of U.S. capacity building with a particular focus on the Department of Defense. This examination will begin with an exploration of international partnerships as they pertain to the military

²¹ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (2010) 26.

²² Dale, *In Brief: Clarifying the Concept of "Partnership" in National Security*; Sharon, Pickup, *Security Force Assistance: Additional Actions Needed to Guide Geographic Combatant Command and Service Efforts*. (GAO-12-556) (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012). <http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/590768.pdf>.

before turning to an analysis of BPC as both a concept and as a term, in addition to a review of key terms that are relevant to capacity building. The chapter will conclude by defining the concept of a BPC enterprise.

B. SECTION I—PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are tricky. They are intangible, constantly evolving, and dangerously susceptible to any number of internal and external factors. At the international level tensions can escalate quickly as issues regarding national sovereignty, national pride, and domestic political approval tend to raise the stakes for the heads of state and their subordinates charged with managing these relationships. The focus of this section is on how these tensions manifest themselves and impact military partnerships, ultimately bounding any capacity-building effort.

1. National Interests

In 1948, then-Chief of Staff of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, delivered a lecture to the Army War College on the “Problems of Combined Command.” The first “problem” the former Supreme Allied Commander chose to address was the fact that there is “no charter that can be written for an allied commander and made to stick. As long as nations are sovereign they always have the right to reverse a prior decision, get out of any situation they think they can when they can cut their losses.”²³ This clearly presents a significant challenge to anyone charged with working in or with a military partnership, but clearly, given the outcome of World War II, Eisenhower figured something out. So the question then becomes, what drives a partner nation to implore their sovereign right to change course, and what is there to do about it?

The answer to the first part of that question is national interests. Joseph Nye, the noted scholar of international relations, has referred to national interests as “a slippery

²³ Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Problems of Combined Command” (lecture, National War College, Washington, DC, June 18, 1948), 5.

concept, used to describe as well as prescribe foreign policy.”²⁴ Sometimes referred to as *raison d'état*, national interests represent what national leaders put forward as being in the state’s best interests.²⁵ “In a democracy,” noted Nye, “the national interest is simply the set of shared priorities regarding relations with the rest of the world. It is broader than strategic interests, though they are part of it.”²⁶ As the “fundamental building blocks in any discussion of foreign policy,” national interests play a critical role in understanding how international partnerships form and function.²⁷

States form partnerships for different reasons and in the pursuit of different interests. Ultimately, argues Larry M. Wortzel of The Heritage Foundation, “We form partnerships to combine our strength with the strength of like-minded nations in the preservation and advancement of core values.”²⁸ By matching strengths with like-minded partners, states gain the advantage of numbers and size; increasing their potential for success beyond what they would have been able to accomplish alone.

There are also different types of partnerships; for example, the United States pursues relationships to further security, economic, and diplomatic interests.²⁹ This does not imply, however, that all of these interests reside in the same partner. Take for example England, Wortzel observes the United States “may have no closer ally than England in political and security relationships, but when it comes to agricultural policy or arms sales, there may be stiff competition between the two nations over economic issues.”³⁰ Likewise, security and diplomacy competitors may make for good bedfellows

²⁴ Joseph S. Nye, “Redefining the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 4 (1999): 22, doi:10.2307/20049361.

²⁵ Kevin Dooley, *Why Politics Matters: An Introduction to Political Science* (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2014), 288.

²⁶ Nye, “Redefining the National Interest,” 23.

²⁷ The Commission on America’s National Interests, *America’s National Interests* (Cambridge, MA, July 2000), 13.

²⁸ Larry M. Wortzel, “Change Partners: Who Are America’s Military and Economic Allies in the 21st Century?,” *The Heritage Foundation*, June 6, 2005, <http://www.heritage.org/research/lecture/change-partners-who-are-americas-military-and-economic-allies-in-the-21st-century>.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

in other areas. China, for example, is clearly a security competitor and often at odds diplomatically with the United States. Yet China was the United States' number two trading partner in 2013 indicating the strong economic interests the two states share.³¹

As these examples suggest, the alignment of national interests along one line of national power may inhibit the alignment of interests along another. It is a rare occurrence, if ever, that states' national interests along any line would overlap one hundred percent. As a result, friction is going to occur. But as historian Forrest Pogue notes, this type of friction is okay, reminding readers, "It is important to remember that different nations, although Allies, have divergent interests, and that they are not being unfriendly if they pursue those interest."³² Pogue's statement indicates that these points of friction between partners are just hurdles that need to be overcome in order to attain the true pay-off potential of the partnership.

2. "The Sweet Spot"

The *Security Force Assistance Handbook* uses the illustration in Figure 1 to depict the area where two partners' security interests overlap. It is within this area of overlap that partners work best; this area is sometimes referred to as "the sweet spot."³³ With the emergence and growth of NATO and the increasing overlap of the national interests of states around the world, the number of members in coalitions has grown significantly since Eisenhower's time.

³¹ U. S. Census Bureau, "U.S. Top Trading Partners-November 2013." *Foreign Trade*, accessed August 13, 2014, <http://www.census.gov/foreigntrade/statistics/highlights/top/top1311yr.html>.

³² Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command: The European Theater of Operations; United States Army in World War II*. (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1954), xii.

³³ Ed McFarland, "Security Cooperation Planning: Are You a Planner?," *DISAM Online Journal and News Source*, July 17, 2013, <http://www.disamjournal.org/articles/security-cooperation-planning-are-you-a-planner-997>.

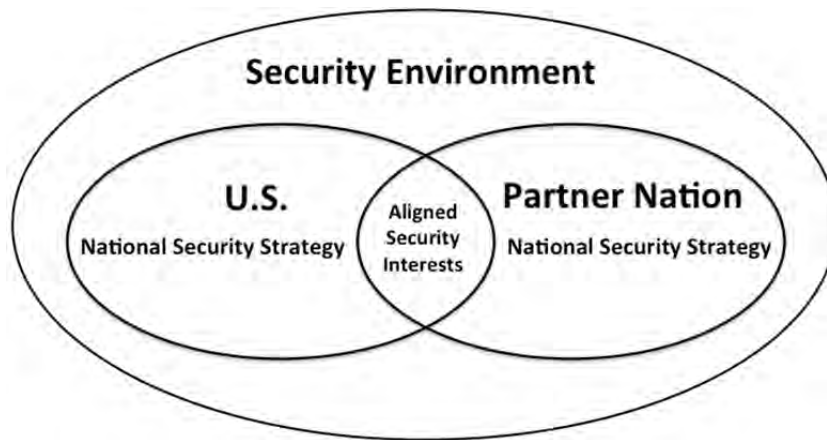


Figure 1. Aligning Common Interests³⁴

Since the end of the Cold War, multinational operations have gradually become the norm over bilateral and unilateral operations. For example, the multinational headquarters in Iraq and Afghanistan saw troops from 37 and 48 countries respectively, each one with their own national interests and reasons for being there.³⁵ Collectively these interests dictate how much risk the nations, and their troops on the ground, are willing to assume. This issue inherently increases the tensions of military leaders caught between the mission at hand and the politics at play. As Figure 2 suggests, as the number of stakeholders increase, the size of the “sweet spot” tends to decrease, as divergent interest, however slight, decrease the common ground between partners. As the coalition becomes larger it is also increasingly more difficult to attain the level of political unity necessary for effective military cooperation.

³⁴ Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Handbook* (Washington, DC: Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, 2012.), II-2, <https://jcisfa.jcs.mil>.

³⁵ Stephen A. Carney, *Allied Participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2011), 1, http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/059/59-3-1/CMH_59-3-1.pdf; “Troop Numbers and Contributions,” International Security Assistance Force Afghanistan, accessed September 27, 2014. <http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/index.php..>

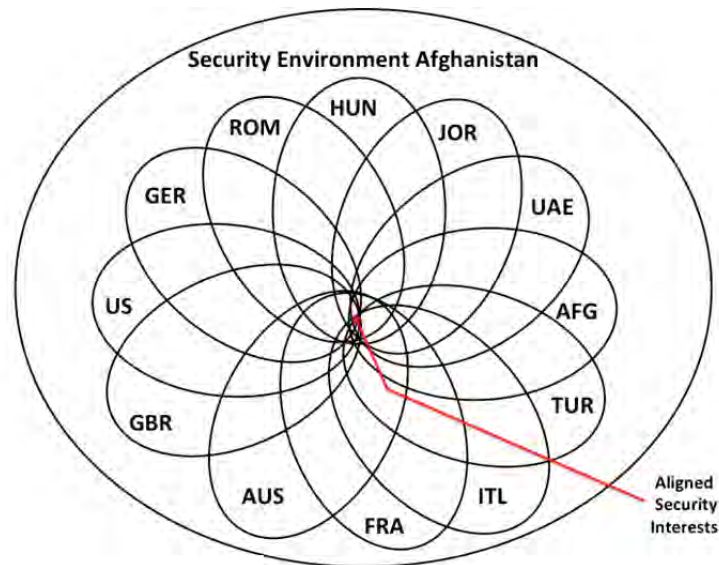


Figure 2. National Interests of ISAF-A Partners³⁶

3. The Dynamics of National Interests

National interests are influenced by an innumerable list of tangible and intangible factors—even the weather. For example, as Scott Borgerson observes, “Global warming has given birth to a new scramble for territory and resources among the five Arctic powers.”³⁷ The Arctic was not really on the American security agenda during the 1990s and certainly not after 9/11, but this change in climate prompted the White House to publish a *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* in 2013, and a subsequent implementation plan for that strategy in January 2014.

These observations indicate that national interests are dynamic, not static. They are constantly in motion influenced heavily by world events and natural phenomena. Therefore, as these interests shift over time, facts change and occasionally may cause a partner to “reverse a prior decision” as Eisenhower observed. As a result, the “sweet spot” of national interest is actually a moving target. As far as the military planner is

³⁶ Note: this is a random sampling of the 37 members of ISAF-Afghanistan and the relation of national interests depicted here are purely notional for illustrative purposes.

³⁷ Scott G. Borgerson, “Arctic Meltdown: The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 2 (March 1, 2008): 63.

concerned these factors greatly increase the complexity of long-range planning and resource forecasting for military partnerships.

The dynamism of national interests can wreak havoc on military planning. For example, the United States planned on basing 62,000 troops in Turkey as a temporary staging base for the ground invasion of northern Iraq in March 2003.³⁸ However, after war plans were already drawn, and just days before the invasion, the government of Turkey changed its mind. As a result the northern invasion of Iraq was scrapped, setting-off a subsequent chain of events both militarily and politically. There are several reasons why Turkey reversed their decision, all of which Turkey assessed as being better options than allowing the United States—a partner and fellow member of NATO—to stage part of their attack from Turkish soil.³⁹ For planners and commanders, however, the reason why Turkey changed its mind was a moot point. The only thing that mattered at that point was that the truth had changed; what was a *yes* yesterday, had become a *no* overnight, and now it was on them to come up with a new plan. The level of flux induced by the legitimate right of a state to change its mind is a constant source of frustration—a frustration that must be overcome. Because it is on these shifting sands that all military partnerships must build their foundations.

4. Politics: Always in Play

Any student of conflict is familiar with Carl von Clausewitz's axiom that war is "the continuation of policy by other means," but applying this notion to military partnerships goes a long way to understanding how and why these partnerships function the way they do.⁴⁰ "We see, therefore," Clausewitz said, "that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."⁴¹ It is essential to understand that as a military activity conducted

³⁸ Sharon Otterman, "Iraq: U.S.-Turkey Relations," *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 2003, <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/iraq-us-turkey-relations/p7795>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

⁴¹ Ibid.

across the range of military operations, BPC abides by the same aphorism. Therefore, it follows that partnerships required by the military to fight wars or build capacity are subject to politics and policy. This point is implied in a number of DOD publications, such as this excerpt from the *Security Force Assistance Handbook*, which informs readers: “Planners must remember that the decisive effect of security force activities is political and linked to U.S. national security objectives.”⁴²

Ultimately, all military actions are subordinate to political decisions. As Clausewitz instructs his readers “war should never be thought of as something autonomous but always as an instrument of policy; otherwise the entire history of war would contradict us.”⁴³ As a result, military partnerships are bound by the political relationship that joins the two nations. It follows, therefore, that a military relationship may fall short of, but cannot exceed the level of cooperation reached at the political level.

As noted above, states form partnerships along various lines of national power in order to achieve diplomatic, economic, and security objectives; cumulatively the overall product of these efforts result in political cooperation. Expressed as a function, this relationship can be understood as follows:

$$P_C = DC + M_C + E_C + X_C$$

where the overall level of political cooperation is expressed as P_C . D_C, M_C, E_C , which represents the levels of diplomatic, military and economic cooperation, respectively, and X_C serves as a catch-all, for the sake of this argument, to represent the various other types of cooperation that states pursue.

This expression denotes that military cooperation may be equal to, but never exceed the level of political cooperation, because M_C cannot be greater than P_C . It also indicates the stronger the political relationship, the greater potential for the military relationship. Equally, it holds that the lower the political relationship, the lesser the potential for the military relationship.

⁴² Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Handbook*, II-6.

⁴³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 88.

As a result, it is true that a positive military relationship can serve as a catalyst to increase the overall level of political cooperation between two states, but it is equally true that it can serve as a detractor to political cooperation. Such an occurrence would impinge on the levels of cooperation along diplomatic (D_C), economic (E_C) and other lines of cooperation (X_C). This is a point that the U.S. Department of State is very sensitive to, as will be addressed in the following section, and causes some of the friction between the Departments of State and Defense over cooperative military efforts such as BPC.

C. SECTION II—BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY

1. A Whole-of-Government Approach

Although this work focuses on SOF capacity building, it is important to note that BPC is not singularly a DOD task. It is a “whole of government approach and a central tenet of national policy and strategic guidance.”⁴⁴ To that end, the United States Government primarily leverages the Department of State, Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to promote and protect U.S. interests abroad and to build partner capacity.⁴⁵ It is important to note DOD has clearly staked its claim as the U.S. lead on BPC. In 2008, Secretary Gates stated to Congress, “In my view, building partner capacity is a vital and enduring military requirement, irrespective of the capacity of other departments, and its authorities and funding mechanisms should reflect that reality.”⁴⁶

Despite DOD’s clear claim on BPC, Gates recognized that BPC efforts “must be implemented in close coordination and partnership with the Department of State.” Although this statement is in line with the whole-of-government approach, it is particularly true because “most [threats] will emerge from within countries with which we are not at war;” in other words, in environments where the State Department will be the lead agency for day-to-day activities and operations in a particular country—not the

⁴⁴ Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Handbook*, II-1.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, 110th Cong., 6 (2008), 6.

Department of Defense.⁴⁷ This reality presents its own set of challenges for the military and USSOF that will be addressed later.

For now, recognizing that BPC is a complete government approach is sufficient to highlight that DOD's efforts are only a part of a much larger endeavor by the United States. This broad approach allows the United States to address a wider range of interconnected challenges, but it is not without its tradeoffs. The broad approach requires the coordination of various U.S. BPC efforts in time and space, a task that requires constant attention. It also creates confusion for policymakers and planners, as all agencies involved are using similar, but different terminology to describe their BPC efforts, often within the same country. As the following section will highlight, the DOD has enough trouble keeping its own BPC terms straight. Moving forward this work will focus solely on DOD BPC efforts, terminology, and approaches.

2. DOD's Definition of Building Partner Capacity

In its simplest form, former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates stated in 2010 that building partner capacity means "helping other countries defend themselves or, if necessary, fight alongside U.S. forces by providing them with equipment, training, or other forms of security assistance."⁴⁸ Although the premise is simple enough, government authorities, appropriations, and politics all play a part in accomplishing this seemingly simple notion. This point lends validity to the adage "words matter." This section will focus on analyzing those words, how they came to be, and what they mean.

BPC is neither a doctrinal term nor a task within the military. Although military leaders regularly refer to BPC as a goal, a mission, and a task it is not officially codified in U.S. military canon.⁴⁹ The Department of Defense first printed a definition for Building Partnership Capacity in the 2006 *QDR Execution Roadmap Building Partnership Capacity*. The document states building partnership capacity consists of

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Robert M. Gates, "Helping Others Defend Themselves: The Future of U.S. Security Assistance," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (May 1, 2010): 2.

⁴⁹ Charles W. Hooper, "Going Farther by Going Together: Building Partner Capacity in Africa" *Joint Forces Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (2012): 8–9, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jfq/jfq-67.pdf>.

“targeted efforts to improve the collective capabilities and performance of the Department of Defense and its partners.”⁵⁰

The same document defines a DOD *partner* as “all those with whom it cooperates to achieve the national goals.”⁵¹ This is an extremely broad definition that incorporates a large number of actors. The list of partners the publication offered included other U.S. departments and agencies, as well as state and local governments, allies, coalition members, host nations, and other nations, international and non-governmental organizations, and even the private sector.⁵² Equally broad, *capacity* is defined in a separate publication as “the measurement of an organization to employ a capability.”⁵³ A *capability* is defined as “the ability to execute a specified course of action.”⁵⁴ These broad definitions illustrate the large nature of the enterprise at the macro level, but are so broad that they offer poor resolution and little detail at the micro level; detail and resolution that are important to tactical and operational level planners and commanders.

DOD has narrowed its definition of BPC over time. It also dropped the –ship and began using the term *partner* instead. In 2011, the DOD published the *Security Force Assistance Lexicon Framework* in an effort to clarify some of the confusion surrounding its BPC efforts and its supporting terminology.⁵⁵ Based on the guidance and direction given in that document, the Joint Chiefs of Staff’s Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) published the *Security Force Assistance Handbook* the following year in 2012. This publication dedicates an entire chapter to “Building Partner Capacity”⁵⁶ and offers the following definition of BPC:

⁵⁰ Department of Defense, *QDR Execution Roadmap Building Partnership Capacity*. (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, May 22, 2006), 4.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Handbook*, I-5.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Pickup, *Security Force Assistance: Additional Actions Needed to Guide Geographic Combatant Command and Service Efforts*, 7.

⁵⁶ Note this term reads “Building *Partner* Capacity,” not “Building *Partnership* Capacity” as previously written in the 2006 QDR publication. *JP 1–02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (amended June 15, 2014) still defines the acronym “BPC” as “Building Partnership Capacity.” This research did not discover the apparent cause for the omission of *Partnership* from the new definition as presented in the *Security Force Assistance Handbook* published in 2012.

Assisting domestic and/or foreign partners and institutions with the development of their capabilities and capacities—for mutual benefit—to address U.S. national or shared global security interests. Also called BPC. (*Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Policy Memorandum, Joint Capability Areas*). An outcome of SFA⁵⁷ activities, it is the development of capabilities and capacities among foreign partners for the mutual benefit of the partner and U.S. national or shared global security interests. (*Security Force Assistance Lexicon Framework*)⁵⁸

This definition focuses DOD efforts more tightly than the 2006 definition, but it still indicates that BPC can be used to aid both domestic and foreign partners. Another aspect of this definition that stands out is the fact there are two different definitions taken from two different sources that are combined to comprise this single glossary entry. This difference may indicate an ongoing debate within the Pentagon about what the definition or purpose of BPC should be. While the validity of that observation remains unclear, the split definition is certainly reflective of the dual nature of capacity building—the fact that it is simultaneously used as both a noun and a verb.

As strange as it may seem, the English language is partly to blame for the dual usage that afflicts BPC. Building partner capacity as a singular term is a gerund—a verb that turns into a noun by adding an -ing.⁵⁹ A gerund “has the function of a substantive and at the same time shows the verbal features of tense, voice, and capacity to take adverbial qualifiers and to govern objects.”⁶⁰ Gerunds are rooted in Latin, and are fairly common in English. For example, one could say, “We are building a new Empire State Building.” Likewise, one can say, “The United States is building partner capacity in Uganda as part of its larger Building Partner Capacity efforts in Africa.”

The first definition taken from the policy memorandum describes BPC as an activity or process—a verb, *with a lower case b, p, and c*—that can be directed internally or externally to the United States. Whereas the definition taken from the *Security Force*

⁵⁷ Security Force Assistance

⁵⁸ Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Handbook*, I-5.

⁵⁹ “Gerund - Definition and More,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, accessed September 9, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gerund>.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Assistance Lexicon Framework clearly states that BPC is an outcome of Security Force Assistance—a noun, *with a capital B, P, and C*—that can only be directed at foreign partners. This in part explains what it is so difficult to neatly categorize BPC. The term BPC simultaneously encapsulates the act of assisting partners, both domestic and international, and the outcome of a military task. It seems grammar is also lending to the confusion and in part explains how the terms BPC and partnership have “spread like wildfire through official U.S. national security guidance documents and rhetoric.”⁶¹ These attributes make BPC the perfect and handy catchall term.

3. DOD’s Approach to BPC

To address the broad nature and requirements of capacity building, the DOD has taken an equally broad approach. A 2013 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that DOD’s efforts intended to build the capacity of foreign partners include “military-to-military training, military exercises in cooperation with partner nations, knowledge sharing from subject matter experts, visits between senior military leaders, providing military equipment and supplies, and counter-narcotics activities.”⁶² A Congressional Research Service (CRS) report found that what the military considers a partnership or a partnership activity is equally expansive. These activities have included schooling foreign military officers at U.S. military schools; sending U.S. military officers for foreign military schools; working toward major platform interoperability with equipment such as the F-16; training security forces to participate in multilateral operations, and efforts to enhance governance, the rule of law, and development at the provincial and district level as is the case in Afghanistan.⁶³ Such a broad categorization of what constitutes a partnership further explains how the term has significantly increased in usage.

⁶¹ Dale, *In Brief: Clarifying the Concept of “Partnership” in National Security*, 1.

⁶² Janet A. St. Laurent, *Building Partner Capacity: Key Practices to Effectively Manage Department of Defense Efforts to Promote Security Cooperation*. (GAO-13-335T) (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013), 2. <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/652159.pdf>.

⁶³ Dale, *In Brief: Clarifying the Concept of “Partnership” in National Security*, 2.

4. DOD's BPC Objective

Although defining exactly what building partner capacity is and what is required to accomplish it is a difficult task, the desired end state is fairly clear. Functionally, the DOD BPC efforts pursue one of two objectives: to “help our allies and partners to confront extremists and other potential sources of global instability within their borders;” or to “assist [a host nation] defend against external threats or help contribute to multinational operations; and help develop or reform another country’s security forces or supporting institutions.”⁶⁴ The objective of the United States’ capacity building approach is to “stop festering problems and threats” at the local level before they grow into regional and global crises. Ultimately, these efforts are intended to address these issues early and indirectly in order to prevent “U.S. military intervention at substantial financial, political, and human cost.”⁶⁵

5. History to Date

Although many contemporary American military professionals view capacity building as a one-way street—efforts managed and provided by the United States to someone else—it is important to remember that the United States has been the recipient of such efforts in the past, and may be again in the future.⁶⁶ It is often forgotten that, while the United States was able to bring its economic and industrial capacity to bear to provide Great Britain with much needed capabilities in the form of ships, vehicles and armaments through the Lend Lease Act during World War II, the British were able to provide much needed assistance to help enhance the capacity of the operationally inexperienced American forces. Specifically, the British provided operationally seasoned trainers from the Special Operations Executive (SOE) to help establish the

⁶⁴ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*. (JDN 1–13) (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013), I-1, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/notes/jdn1_13.pdf; *Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, 7.

⁶⁵ *Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, 7.

⁶⁶ Personal observations of the author during ten years of service in both conventional and special operations forces.

training program for the original classes of the U.S. Office of Strategic Service (OSS), the precursor organization to the Central Intelligence Agency and U.S. Army Special Forces.⁶⁷

Following World War II, the United States employed a strategy of containment against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. This strategy saw the dispatch of “conventional and special operating force advisors to assist Greece, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, El Salvador, and other partner nations to improve security forces” in an effort to counter Soviet supported insurgencies seeking to destabilize the governments of these countries.⁶⁸ Following the Cold War these efforts continued with similar capacity-building efforts in Bosnia, Kosovo, Georgia, and the Philippines.⁶⁹ Despite the number of capacity building examples, this assistance generally ran quietly in the background of other DOD efforts garnering little public attention.

a. A Shift over Time

What is new with regard to BPC is the breadth and nature of the security problems facing the United States. Concerns over global and regional problems are surpassing those of conflict with single actors inside of defined borders; although recent challenges by Russia to the status quo in Europe serve as a vivid reminder that rebuffing state sponsored challenges are still critical. Concurrently, the threat has changed; today the United States is presented with an increasing number of asymmetric threats nested in the challenging gray area of conflict known as irregular warfare.⁷⁰ During testimony to Congress, then-Secretary of Defense Gates observed that in the years to come “America

⁶⁷ John W. Chambers II, “Office of Strategic Services Training During World War II,” *Studies in Intelligence* 54, no. 2 (June 2010): 1–5.

⁶⁸ “Historical Context and Contemporary Understanding of SFA,” Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, Accessed September 4, 2014. <https://jcisfa.jcs.mil/Public/jointtext.aspx>.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ There are numerous definitions of irregular warfare, but official U.S. joint doctrine defines the term as “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Also called IW.” (Source: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (JP 1–02) (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, as amended through 2014), 136. http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf.)

will be grappling with a range of challenges to the international system and our own security from global terrorism to ethnic conflicts to rogue nations and rising powers.”⁷¹

Under the old defense construct based on the idea of state on state, high-intensity conflict, capacity building was as straightforward as the tasks the military was asked—and constructed—to conduct. For example, “U.S. strategy during the Cold War called for working with formal allies, through combined planning and the development of interoperable capabilities, in order to deter and if necessary defeat a Soviet threat.”⁷² Today, however, capacity building has become as complicated and complex as the nature of the problems themselves. These threats include terrorism, nuclear weapons proliferation, and drug and human trafficking just to name a few. As Gates remarked most of today’s emerging threats “cannot be overcome by military means alone and they extend well beyond the traditional domain of any single government agency or department.”⁷³ They are complicated; countering instability requires the ability to promote the rule of law, supporting good governance, and training and employing local law enforcement. These tasks are far removed from defeating the Soviets on the fields of Europe; unfortunately most of the mechanisms that enable U.S. capacity-building efforts have not kept pace with current events.

b. The Impact of Iraq and Afghanistan

After a decade of sustained operations globally, the military has made it clear that it needs to evolve in order to address the security concerns of the future.⁷⁴ In Iraq and Afghanistan, the military established entire commands dedicated to facilitate that capacity building of host nation security forces.⁷⁵ In his 2012 Capstone Concept for the

⁷¹ *Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, 5–6.

⁷² Dale, *In Brief: Clarifying the Concept of “Partnership” in National Security*, 2.

⁷³ *Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, 6.

⁷⁴ Martin E. Dempsey, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012).

⁷⁵ “Historical Context and Contemporary Understanding of SFA,” Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance.

Joint Force, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Martin Dempsey, recognized that it will take more than structural and organizational change to succeed in these complicated capacity building endeavors. He observed that these challenges will require a fundamental change in how the Joint Force thinks and operates. Such a fundamental shift, he stated, “must pervade the force and drive leader development, organizational design and inform material acquisitions.”⁷⁶ General Dempsey’s observations are reflective of how deeply different the tasks the military is expected to accomplish today and will be in the future from what they were expected to do in the past.

Equally clear is the need to advance the mechanisms necessary to build capacity in this new security environment. To meet these challenges, colossal efforts were made from the tactical level to the policy level to modify what existed in military doctrine and authorities to address immediate problems in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.⁷⁷ They were also made to address long term capacity building shortfalls and institutional incorporation of these tasks within the military.⁷⁸ As the military gets more efficient operating in this evolving security environment, it is fair to assume that its ability to build capacity in these areas will also improve. However, the military’s ability to carry out these tasks is only part of the equation; the military cannot act without the authority or appropriations to do so. Many of the laws and authorities that govern such activities are outdated, and have proven slow to change.

c. BPC Policy: Slow to Change

As then-Secretary Gates testified to Congress, despite the need for change at the policy-level “the U.S. Government has tried to meet post-Cold War challenges and pursue 21st century objectives with processes and organizations designed in the wake of a Second World War.”⁷⁹ To further his point, Gates later noted, “the last major legislation

⁷⁶ Martin E. Dempsey, “Mission Command White Paper” (Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 3, 2012), 6.

⁷⁷ Christopher Paul et al., *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and under What Circumstances?*, 2013, 9.

⁷⁸ Gates, “Helping Others Defend Themselves,” 4.

⁷⁹ *Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, 7.

structuring how Washington dispenses foreign assistance was signed by President John F. Kennedy, and the law governing U.S. exports of military equipment was passed in 1976.”⁸⁰ On top of the complicated and thorny nature of stability and capacity building operations in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, and other areas around the world, these outdated authorities have resulted in additional, self-inflicted, points of friction that have to be overcome.

For all of the challenges and setbacks, there have been some successes the most noteworthy being the establishment of Section 1206, the so called “Global Train and Equip Program” of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2005. Successfully lobbied under Gates’ tenure as the Secretary of Defense, Section 1206 “provides the Secretary of Defense with authority to train and equip foreign military forces for two specified purposes—counterterrorism and stability operations—and foreign security forces for counterterrorism operations.”⁸¹ The passage of this act, initially as a temporary provision, marks a major shift away from the old way of doing business at the policy level. As reported by the Congressional Research Service, “For nearly 50 years, since the enactment of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA⁸²), the Secretary of State has exercised the leadership role for foreign assistance, including military assistance, specifically military education and training.”⁸³ Section 1206 enables the Secretary of Defense “a means to fill long-standing gaps in the effort to help other nations build and sustain capable military forces.”⁸⁴

Global Train and Equip authorities authorize the Department of Defense to “organize, train, equip, rebuild/build, and advise foreign security forces and their

⁸⁰ Gates, “Helping Others Defend Themselves,” 4.

⁸¹ Nina M. Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress* (CRS Report No. RS22855) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 4, 2014), i. <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22855.pdf>.

⁸² Foreign Assistance Act of 1961

⁸³ Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress*, 2.

⁸⁴ *Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, 6.

supporting institutions from the tactical to the ministerial level.”⁸⁵ These tasks are referred to as OTERA and they are at the very heart of how the DOD actually builds capacity on the ground. As Gates informed Congress in 2008, this authority “allows Defense and State to act in months rather than in years. The program focuses on places where we are not at war, but where there are both emerging threats and opportunities.”⁸⁶ Just shy of a decade old, this authority has expanded incrementally over time and resulted in substantial security engagements not previously seen before the 2006 NDAA was passed. From 2006 through 2014, “Section 1206 funding supported bilateral programs in over 40 countries, several multilateral programs, and an associated global human rights program.”⁸⁷ The preponderance of 1206 resources went solely to counterterrorism during the early years, but since 2010 there has been an increase in training and equipping forces, namely from Central and Eastern Europe, to deploy to Afghanistan in support of the International Security Assistance Force.⁸⁸ There has also been a sharp increase in funding and resources to support capacity building in Africa.⁸⁹ In total, there are currently 18 Building Partner Capacity Programs⁹⁰ funded by the NDAA and the Department of State/Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act (S/FOAA). A list of the programs and their purposes can be found in the Appendix.

⁸⁵ Pickup, *Security Force Assistance: Additional Actions Needed to Guide Geographic Combatant Command and Service Efforts*, 9.

⁸⁶ *Building Partnership Capacity and Development of the Interagency Process: Hearing Before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, 6.

⁸⁷ Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress*, 6.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Building Partner Capacity (BPC) programs refer to SC [Security Cooperation] and SA [Security Assistance] activities funded with U.S. Government (USG) appropriations and administered as cases within the FMS [Foreign Military Sales] infrastructure. When executing BPC programs authorized by law, DoD may enter into agreements for provision of defense articles and/or services to other USG departments and agencies under the authority of the Economy Act or other transfer authorities for the purpose of: a. Building the capacity of partner nation security forces and enhancing their capability to conduct counterterrorism, counter drug, and counterinsurgency operations; or b. Supporting U.S. military and stability operations, multilateral peace operations, and other programs. See SAMM, Chapter 15, Building Partner Capacity Programs, for a detailed discussion of BPC programs. (Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller). *Financial Management Regulation Volume 15: “Security Cooperation Policy.”* DoD Regulation. Financial Management Regulation. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, August 2013.)

Despite the advances there is still work to be done, as Gates reflected towards the end of his tenure as Secretary of Defense, “for all the improvements of recent years, the United States’ interagency tool kit is still a hodgepodge of jury-rigged arrangements constrained by a dated and complex patchwork of authorities, persistent shortfalls in resources, and unwieldy processes.”⁹¹ To date, building partner capacity remains a key tenant of the U.S. national security strategy, and one of the three pillars of national defense as outlined in the *2014 Quadrennial Defense Review*.⁹² It also remains a challenging endeavor, with broad objectives arrayed against diverse threats.

6. Key Components and Terminology

There are several key components and terms that both drive and limit U.S. BPC efforts. The terms themselves have caused a tremendous amount of confusion. In 2012, the Government Accountability Office found that the U.S. military Global Combatant Commands “continue to lack a common understanding of the term [Security Force Assistance] and therefore some were unclear as to what additional actions were needed to meet DOD’s intent.”⁹³ Agencies within the DOD themselves admitted that the terms were not only confusing, but also commonly misused within the department perpetuating further confusion and operational inefficiency.⁹⁴

Although challenging, understanding these terms and how they relate to one another is essential in understanding U.S. BPC efforts and how and why they function the way they do. This chapter has already addressed several of these key terms to include BPC itself, partner, capacity, and capability, but this section will turn to a new set of terms. The terms are organized in groups based on the first letter of the terms, because these words tend to be the closest in relation to each other and are also the most commonly misused in common usage.

⁹¹ Gates, “Helping Others Defend Themselves,” 4.

⁹² Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 12.

⁹³ Pickup, *Security Force Assistance: Additional Actions Needed to Guide Geographic Combatant Command and Service Efforts*, 8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14–15.

a. The “A” Words: Authorities, Approvals, and Appropriations

These terms are used often within the USSOF operational community. Unfortunately, however, a sufficient degree of understanding of these terms, and how they relate to each is not always realized at the tactical level and among those who have recently transitioned from the tactical level to the operational level.⁹⁵ This section is intended to provide a working understanding of these terms, particularly to those who are preparing to, or have recently transitioned into an operational level position.

(1) Authorities

Authorities delegate legal authority to entities within the United States Government to carry out certain activities; these powers ultimately originate from the U.S. Constitution. As a term, *authority* is “commonly used by government lawyers and military personnel to describe statutory and delegated powers.”⁹⁶ As stated frankly by Colonel Brian Petit, “Authorities determine whether one has the statutory or delegated authority to conduct the activity in question.”⁹⁷ For example, the U.S. Constitution vests the president with authority as the Commander in Chief to “direct military operations and intelligence activities against external threats.”⁹⁸ National level authorities are codified in the U.S. Code (U.S.C.)—the

⁹⁵ Author’s personal experience while serving with 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) from 2009–2013

⁹⁶ Andru E. Wall, “Demystifying the Title 10-Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities & Covert Action,” *Harvard National Security Journal* 3 (2011): 87. <http://www.soc.mil/528th/PDFs/Title10Title50.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 108.

⁹⁸ Wall, “Demystifying the Title 10-Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities & Covert Action,” 94.

aggregate of the general and permanent laws of the United States. The U.S.C. is divided into 50 general subject areas⁹⁹ referred to as “titles.”¹⁰⁰

The two titles that most directly impact BPC are Title 10 and Title 22. Title 10, *Armed Forces*, established the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and “assigned the Secretary of Defense all ‘authority, direction and control’ over DOD, including all subordinate agencies and commands.”¹⁰¹ Title 22, *Foreign Relations and Intercourse*, directly refers to all matters pertaining to U.S. foreign relations, to include security assistance as prescribed by the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) of 1976.¹⁰²

As mentioned previously, authorities can be statutory, or they can be delegated from a higher authority. For example the “President, in his role as Commander in Chief, may delegate through the Secretary of Defense additional responsibilities or “authorities” to USSOCOM, just as the Secretary of Defense may delegate certain statutory authorities vested in him to USSOCOM.”¹⁰³ Authorities, legally permitting, can potentially be further subdivided, delegated, and controlled by policy directives and other means by the entities in which the authority is vested.¹⁰⁴ This point indicates that authorities for different activities and programs can reside at different levels within an organization.

⁹⁹ It is important to underscore that the U.S. Code is divided by topic, not by department or agency. Therefore, the Department of Defense has authorities under other U.S.C. titles such as Title 22 and Title 50 even though in common usage those titles are understood to refer exclusively to the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency respectively. (For more information see: Wall, “Demystifying the Title 10-Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities & Covert Action,” and Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Cooperation*. 33rd ed. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, 2014. <http://www.disam.dsca.mil>. [Chapter 1].

¹⁰⁰ Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Cooperation*, 33rd ed. (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, 2014), 2–4, <http://www.disam.dsca.mil>.

¹⁰¹ Wall, “Demystifying the Title 10-Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities & Covert Action,” 87.

¹⁰² Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Cooperation*, 1–7.

¹⁰³ Wall, “Demystifying the Title 10-Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities & Covert Action,” 87.

¹⁰⁴ Paul et al., *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and under What Circumstances?*, 11–12.

This factor makes it incumbent on planners and commanders to know where these authorities reside when seeking authorization or approval to conduct an activity.

(2) Approvals

Just because an entity has the authority to conduct an activity does not implicitly mean it has approval to conduct that activity. With regards to the military, Petit states, “‘approval’ connotes concurrence of said activity from the requisite military or civilian leaders overseeing military activities.”¹⁰⁵ Elements within the military need approval of higher headquarters to conduct activities, programs, or missions prior to conducting them. With regard to military internal decisions and activities, such as training, doctrine, etc., the approval authority for those actions will reside at some level within the military. In times of war, the Department of Defense is also the lead agency within the particular theater of conflict. However, short of war, diplomacy, not military action, “is the lead discipline for the attainment of U.S. foreign policy interests.”¹⁰⁶ Statutorily, the Department of State is the lead agency for all foreign affairs, and as such “coordinates, represents, and implements U.S. foreign policy,” abroad.¹⁰⁷ Within each country the chief of mission, typically the ambassador, is the approval authority for any U.S. activity that will take place in that country.¹⁰⁸ Through the whole of the U.S. embassy country team, the Department of State oversees and approves all “commercial, resource, and financial issues; defense issues; agricultural matters; legal and immigration matters; and, developmental and humanitarian aid matters.”¹⁰⁹

Ultimately, short of war, the Department of State is the approval authority for all military activities within any given country. This often requires seeking approval at both the country team level and also from the larger regional desks at the State Department

¹⁰⁵ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 108 ff.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰⁷ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*, ix.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

proper in Washington, DC.¹¹⁰ However, prior to seeking the State Department’s approval the military unit or command in question needs to secure approval to conduct the desired mission or activity from its own chain of command. How high the approval has to go will be determined where the authority to make that decision resides.

(3) Appropriations

The third component of BPC that needs to be attained is funding. An entity may have the authority and approval to conduct an activity, but they are moot points in the absence of the appropriations from Congress to pay for it. There are two key bills passed annually with regards to defense appropriations: the Department of Defense Appropriations Act (DODAA), and the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The appropriations bill provides defense funding, whereas the NDAA sets policies and informs Congress how exactly the money will be spent.¹¹¹ It was through the 2006 NDAA that the Department of Defense secured appropriations for the Section 1206 “Global Train and Equip Programs” mentioned previously. Likewise, the Department of State has to manage its appropriations and authorizations through Congress. The State Department’s equivalent of the NDAA is the Department of State/Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act (S/FOAA).¹¹² Appropriations from this act fund Title 22 Security Assistance programs and activities.

Appropriations are the manifestation of Congress’ “power of the purse”—the vested authority to tax and spend money on behalf of the federal government.¹¹³ As one article addressing the 2015 NDAA stated, the NDAA “remains key congressional legislation through which Members of Congress can influence U.S. defense and foreign policy. Congressional oversight is an essential element of the constitutional responsibility

¹¹⁰ Personally observed during the author’s assignment as Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General of Special Operations Command-Europe from 2011–12.

¹¹¹ Michaela Dodge and Steven P. Bucci, “12 Issues for Congress in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act,” *Backgrounder*, no. 2893 (March 19, 2014): 1, http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2014/pdf/BG2893.pdf.

¹¹² Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Cooperation*, 2–3.

¹¹³ “Power of the Purse,” History, Art, and Archives, U.S. House of Representatives. Accessed August 28, 2014, <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Origins-Development/Power-of-the-Purse/>.

to provide for the common defense.”¹¹⁴ The ability to appropriate funds is often considered the most significant check and balance vested in the Congress, and another substantial gate that must be crossed in U.S. BPC efforts.

In his commencement address at the United States Military Academy in May 2014, President Obama stated that he called “on Congress to support a new Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund of up to \$5 billion, which will allow us to train, build capacity, and facilitate partner countries on the front lines.”¹¹⁵ The President asserted that these resources would provide the flexibility necessary to more efficiently accomplish the breadth of capacity building tasks facing the United States, such as “training security forces in Yemen... supporting a multinational force to keep the peace in Somalia; working with European allies to train a functioning security force and border patrol in Libya; and facilitating French operations in Mali.”¹¹⁶ Such a move is in-line with what Gates had called for years earlier with regard to streamlining the “hodgepodge of jury-rigged arrangements” that currently exist. Such a fund is also clearly in-line with the National Security Strategy and all of the policy and strategic guidance that cascade from it. However, calls for programs and nested guidance mean little in the absence of the appropriations from Congress to fund them. It is at exactly this point where the American system of checks and balances very directly impacts the United States ability to build partner capacity.

It is important to note that there are some programs and activities conducted within Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) areas of responsibility (AORs)¹¹⁷ that are not explicitly appropriated by Congress. Such activities are generally carried under

¹¹⁴ Dodge and Bucci, “12 Issues for Congress in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act,” 1.

¹¹⁵ The White House. “Remarks by the President at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony.” (speech, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, May 28, 2014). <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/28/remarks-president-united-states-military-academy-commencement-ceremony>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ GCC AORs represent the entirety of the Earth’s surface area divided into six Combatant Commands. GCC commanders are ultimately responsible for all DOD operations within those areas. These divisions and the duties and responsibilities of the GCC are outlined in the Unified Command Plan. (For more information see, Andrew Feickert, *The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress* (CRS Report No. R42077) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 3, 2013), <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R42077.pdf>.)

authorities that are “less directive, giving the COCOM [Combatant Commander] or service the flexibility to design programs under broad authority that permits engagement with foreign partners.”¹¹⁸ These particular programs are “typically the result of commanders’ projects that leverage existing authorities to work with partner nations (PNs). Such non-programmed programs are usually implemented through an ad hoc collection of funding sources (for example, operations and maintenance budgets).”¹¹⁹

These points indicate that there are multiple levels of ad hoc solutions. At the tactical and operational level, these types of solutions can produce rapid results compared to the alternative of seeking programmed programs through the NDAA. However, they make it challenging at the strategic and policy level when trying to capture, standardize, and synchronize these efforts.¹²⁰

b. The “S” Words: Security Assistance, Security Cooperation, and Security Force Assistance

These terms focus on activities, programs, and tasks carried out by the DOD and DOS that serve as the ways and means through which the Department of Defense enables and conducts capacity building. All three of these terms begin with the word *security*; in addition to sounding very similar they are often used incorrectly and interchangeably. The first two terms, Security Assistance and Security Cooperation, are the two sets of activities and programs that promote security relationships between foreign governments and the United States. *Activities* are defined as the “methods used by a particular program that are directed, funded, or supervised by program managers, such as training courses, workshops, exercises, and transfers of equipment or supplies to PNs.”¹²¹ *Programs* are understood as a “set of activities coordinated to achieve a certain set of objectives. Programs have the following defining characteristics, at a minimum: specific objectives

¹¹⁸ Paul et al., *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and under What Circumstances?*, 8.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹²⁰ Pickup, *Security Force Assistance: Additional Actions Needed to Guide Geographic Combatant Command and Service Efforts*.

¹²¹ Paul et al., *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and under What Circumstances?*, 11.

or purposes; activities; authorities; funding sources and other resources.”¹²² Combined, they represent tools of both foreign policy and national defense. The third term, Security Force Assistance (SFA), is a military task that “equates to those activities (organize, train, equip, rebuild/build and advise –OTERA) that support the development of [Foreign Security Force] capability and capacity.”¹²³

(1) Security Assistance

As defined in the 2014 *JP 1–02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Security Assistance is used to refer to a group of programs “by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives.”¹²⁴ These programs are authorized under FAA and AECA, and codified in Title 22 U.S.C.¹²⁵ Security Assistance is only one subset of foreign assistance administered by the Department of State. *ForeignAssistance.gov* organizes DOS foreign assistance into five broad categories as depicted in Figure 3. Although, the Department of State categorizes how they administer foreign aid a little differently, these categories serve the function of more clearly illustrating where Security Assistance resides in the larger DOS foreign assistance picture.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²³ “Historical Context and Contemporary Understanding of SFA,” Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance.

¹²⁴ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. (JP 1–02). (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, as amended through June 15, 2014), 228. http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf 228.

¹²⁵ Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Cooperation*, 1–7.

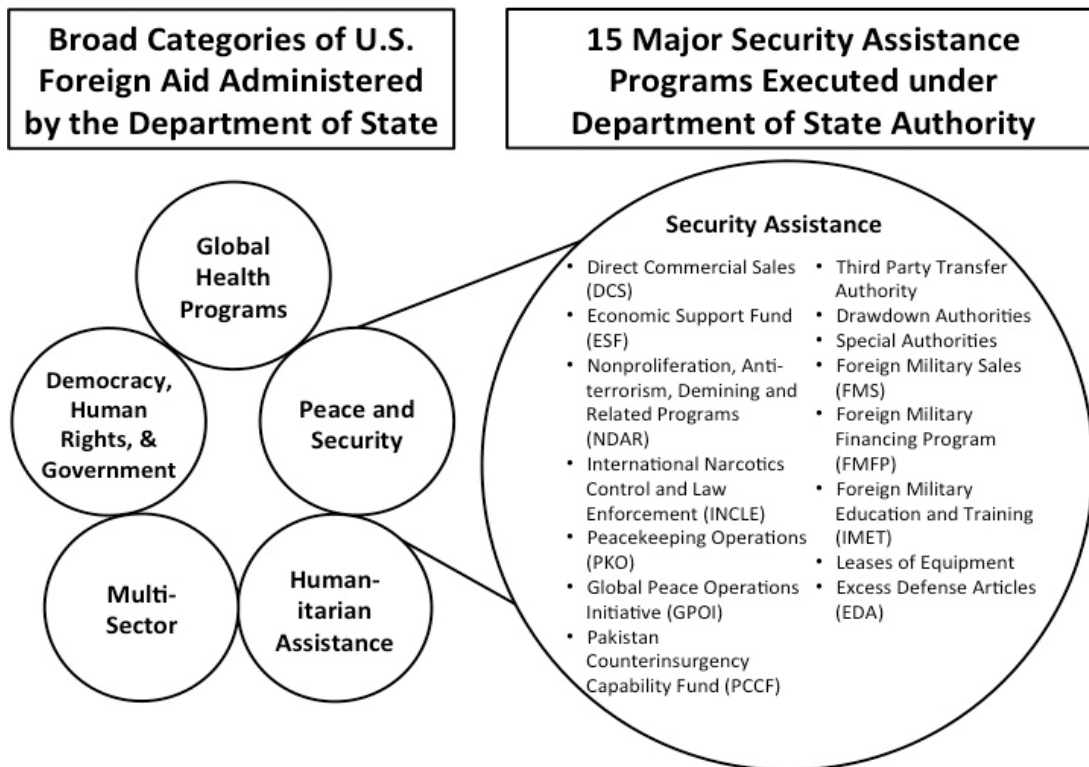


Figure 3. U.S. Foreign Aid and the Major Security Assistance Programs through Fiscal Year 2014¹²⁶

Of the 15 major SA programs, five are administered by the Department of Defense through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). They are:

- Foreign Military Sales (FMS);
- Foreign Military Financing Program (FMFP);
- International Military Education and Training (IMET)¹²⁷;

¹²⁶ “Frequently Asked Questions” *ForeignAssistance.gov*, accessed September 8, 2014. http://www.foreignassistance.gov/web/Agency_DOS.aspx?budTab=tab_Bud_Impl; Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, “Security Cooperation Programs Through Fiscal Year 2014 (Revision 14.5),” May 2, 2014, http://www.disam.dsca.mil/documents/pubs/security_cooperation_programs_20140806.pdf.

¹²⁷ For the purposes of this work IMET refers to both the original IMET program and the Expanded IMET program; both programs serve the same purpose and are paid for through the same funding source. (See: Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, “Security Cooperation Programs Through Fiscal Year 2014” updated regularly at: http://www.disam.dsca.mil/documents/pubs/security_cooperation_programs_20140806.pdf.)

- Lease of Defense Articles;
- Excess Defense Articles (EDA).

Although DOD administers these programs on the behalf of DOS, the DOS remains the ultimate approval authority. These programs are commonly referred in the DOD as Title 22 Programs, and constitute part of the Department of Defense’s Security Cooperation activities. This relationship is depicted in Figure 4.

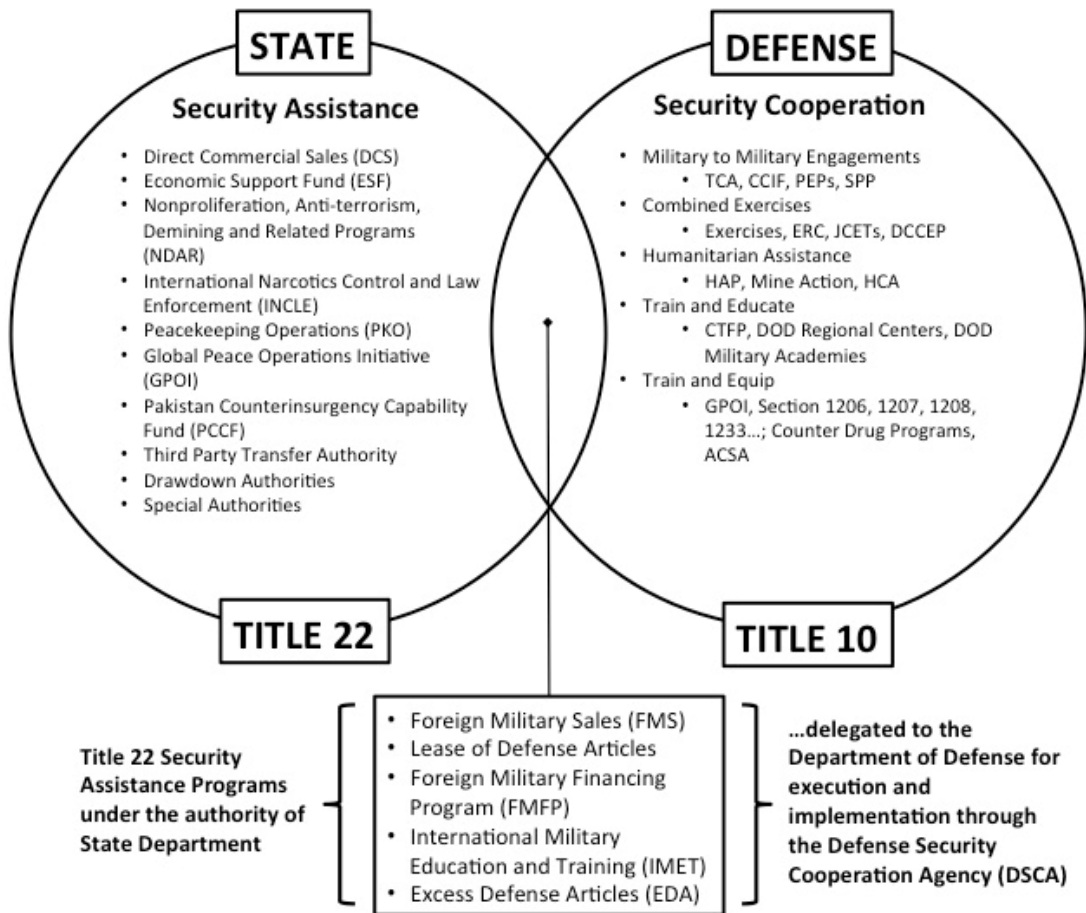


Figure 4. The Relationship between Security Assistance and Security Cooperation¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, “Security Cooperation Programs Through Fiscal Year 2014”; Doug Jordan, “Funding Authorities and Security Cooperation” (video teleconference, Monterey, California, September 4, 2014).

(2) Security Cooperation

Security Cooperation is another umbrella term that encompasses all “activities undertaken by the DOD to encourage and enable international partners to work with the United States to achieve strategic objectives.”¹²⁹ The DOD carries out the majority of these activities under its own Title 10 authorities; however, the five Title 22 programs depicted above are also critical components of DOD’s Security Cooperation efforts. As an umbrella term, the number and types of activities categorized under security cooperation are large and broad. These activities include:

All DOD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments, including all DOD-administered security assistance programs, that: build defense and security relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, including all international armaments cooperation activities and security assistance activities; develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operation; and provide U.S. Forces with peacetime and contingency access to host nations.¹³⁰

The amalgamation of activities and programs that comprise SC are the means through which the Geographic Combatant Commander can shape and influence their AORs.¹³¹ These tools allow the GCC to employ military forces and material to support and advance the other instruments of national power.¹³² The collective of programs and activities that comprise SC are depicted in Figure 5.

¹²⁹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*, vii.

¹³⁰ Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance, *Security Force Assistance Handbook*, 1–7.

¹³¹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*, I-2.

¹³² *Ibid.*



Figure 5. The Collective of Programs and Activities that Comprise Security Cooperation¹³³

It is important to note that SA and SC are not solely purposed to build partner capacity. As stated above, some of these programs are designed to provide U.S. access to host nations; others merely provide a capability to a partner nation such as the Excess Defense Articles (EDA) and Global Lift and Sustain programs.¹³⁴ At their core, SA and SC are tools to apply the elements of national power to achieve U.S. national interests.

¹³³ Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, “Security Cooperation Programs Through Fiscal Year 2014”; Doug Jordan, “Funding Authorities and Security Cooperation” (video teleconference, Monterey, California, September 4, 2014).

¹³⁴ Excess Defense Articles (EDA): 22 U.S.C. § 2321j. Purpose: to offer, at reduced or no cost, lethal and non-lethal defense articles declared as excess by the military departments to foreign governments or international organizations in support of U. S. national security and foreign policy objectives.

Global Lift and Sustain: 10 U.S.C. § 127d. Purpose: (a) To provide LSSS, including air-lift and sea-lift, to partner nation forces worldwide in support of the combined operations world-wide (defined below) with U.S. armed forces. (b) To provide LSSS to allied forces solely for enhancing interoperability of logistics support systems of those military forces participating in combined operations with the U.S. Logistical supplies, support and services may also be provided to nonmilitary logistics, security, or similar agency of an allied government if such provision would benefit the U.S. Armed Forces.

(3) Security Force Assistance

SFA is the newest of the three terms and came into being at the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a recent Rand report observed, SFA emerged “out of the morass of military assistance efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan,” recognizing that, “those charged with conducting such activities no doubt saw the need to account for the fact that the U.S. military in these countries was ‘building the capacity’ of not just military forces but also national police and other nonmilitary security forces.”¹³⁵

How SFA came into being is a prime example of operational needs and tactical solutions post-9/11 developing faster than policy and doctrine could keep pace. As the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance bluntly stated, “in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. military found itself doing something where it had no existing terms that described what they were doing or doctrine on how to do it.”¹³⁶ The lack of doctrine problem still exists. Although the term SFA has been in use since at least 2006 when JCISFA was established and three years after the *Security Force Assistance Lexicon Framework* was published in 2011, there is still no joint publication¹³⁷ that governs SFA.¹³⁸

There are several key differences that separate SFA from SA and SC. First, SFA is specifically and solely directed at building the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and the institutions that support and enable them. The pre-doctrinal SFA publication, *JDN 1–13* refers to SFA as “the set of Department of Defense (DOD) activities that contribute to unified action by the United States Government (USG) to support the development of capability and capacity of foreign security forces (FSF) and

¹³⁵ Paul et al., *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and under What Circumstances?*, 9.

¹³⁶ “Historical Context and Contemporary Understanding of SFA,” Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance.

¹³⁷ Although the Joint Publication has yet to be approved and published, there are several documents that provide ample insight and background on SFA, they include: *The Security Force Assistance Lexicon Framework (2011)*, *The Security Assistance Handbook (2012)*, and *JDN 1–13 Security Force Assistance (2013)*, there is also the JCISFA website at www.jcisfa.jcs.mil.

¹³⁸ Donald Rumsfeld, *Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance (JCISFA) Charter*, [Memorandum] (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2006), https://jcisfa.jcs.mil/JCISFA/Documents/Public/JCISFA_Charter.pdf.

supporting institutions.”¹³⁹ As discussed above, SA and SC can be wielded to build capacity and capability within a host nation, but they also serve other functions that have little or nothing to do with capacity building.

SFA efforts revolve around OTERA tasks—organizing, training, equipping, rebuilding/building, and advising FSFs.¹⁴⁰ These tasks serve as the engine that drives the SFA activities conducted by U.S. forces “with, through, and by the FSF to improve their capacity and capabilities.”¹⁴¹ In many ways, SFA serves as the connection that links the programs and activities authorized under SA and SC to the end user—the recipient FSF.

Another significant difference is that SA and SC are umbrella terms used to categorize a set of programs and activities; whereas SFA is actually a military task, “a clearly defined action or activity specifically assigned to an individual or organization that must be done as it is imposed by an appropriate authority.”¹⁴² With regard to building a partner’s capacity, SA and SC are a set of tools that can be applied, but SFA represents the coherent application of those tools—among other tools, resources, and forces—specifically to the end of capacity building. In other words, SA and SC programs and activities represent potential energy to build capacity—tools at rest. Conversely, SFA is representative of the transfer of that potential energy into kinetic activity—the application of the potential energy resident in those tools in a logical and synchronized manner to build partner capacity “on the ground.”

A third difference is that historically SA and SC have been oriented at military-to-military efforts. The nature of the post-9/11 challenges have made it clear to the United States and its partners that the military will be required to work with and enhance the capacity of non-military organizations and elements. SFA broadens the types of partners the U.S. military can work with. *JDN 1–13* defines foreign security forces (FSF) as:

¹³⁹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*, I-1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, x.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, I-1.

¹⁴² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 253.

All organizations and personnel under host nation (HN) control that have a mission of protecting the HN's sovereignty from internal as well as external threats. Elements of FSF normally include full-time, reserve, or auxiliary military forces, police, corrections personnel, border guards (to include the Coast Guard) or other similar capabilities.¹⁴³

SFA does not just stop at building the capacity at the unit level; building an exceptional capacity at the tactical level is a futile effort if the capacities to manage, apply, and sustain that force are absent at the institutional level. To that end, SFA also incorporates working with "institutions that support FSF [which] include government ministries or departments, academies, training centers, logistics centers, and other similar activities from the local through national levels."¹⁴⁴ Working with these elements is critical as "they provide the supporting doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, education, personnel, facilities, and policy for the FSF."¹⁴⁵

The final aspect of SFA that is important to highlight is that it also includes training and preparing foreign military forces to "defend against external threats or help contribute to multinational operations; and help develop or reform another country's security forces or supporting institutions."¹⁴⁶ In this regard, SFA goes beyond the auspices of Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Counterinsurgency (COIN), and stability operations all three of which are oriented at maintaining stability and governance within a host nation's borders.¹⁴⁷ This aspect of SFA provides the military with the doctrinal grounding to build capacity intended for application beyond the host nation's borders.

(4) Common to All

The previous section focused primarily on the differences between SA, SC, and SFA, but there are two important common traits among all three that need to be

¹⁴³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*, I-1.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

mentioned. First, these terms are best understood as relational not hierarchical.¹⁴⁸ This section only introduced the three major “S” words that relate to DOD capacity building, but there are other terms that will be introduced later, such as Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and Counterinsurgency (COIN) that highlight the relational nature between the aggregate of these terms. This point also goes a long way to understanding why elements within the Department of Defense have had such a difficult time comprehending how all of these pieces fit together, as the tendency is to want to nest these terms neatly.¹⁴⁹

Figure 6 depicts the relational nature between the “S” Words. As a starting point, SA, SC, and SFA are all different forms of U.S. Foreign Assistance. Outlined the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 as amended, foreign assistance is described on *ForeignAssistance.gov* as:

The unilateral transfers of U.S. resources (funds, goods, and services) by the U.S. Government to or for the benefit of foreign entities (including international and regional organizations) without any reciprocal payment or transfer of resources from the foreign entities. Foreign assistance is not just confined to funds or commodities, it also includes the provision of technical assistance, capacity building, training, education, and other services, as well as the direct costs required to implement foreign assistance.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., I-2-1-3.

¹⁴⁹ Pickup, *Security Force Assistance: Additional Actions Needed to Guide Geographic Combatant Command and Service Efforts*, 8.

¹⁵⁰ “Frequently Asked Questions,” *ForeignAssistance.gov*, accessed September 8, 2014, http://www.foreignassistance.gov/web/Agency_DOS.aspx?budTab=tab_Bud_Impl.

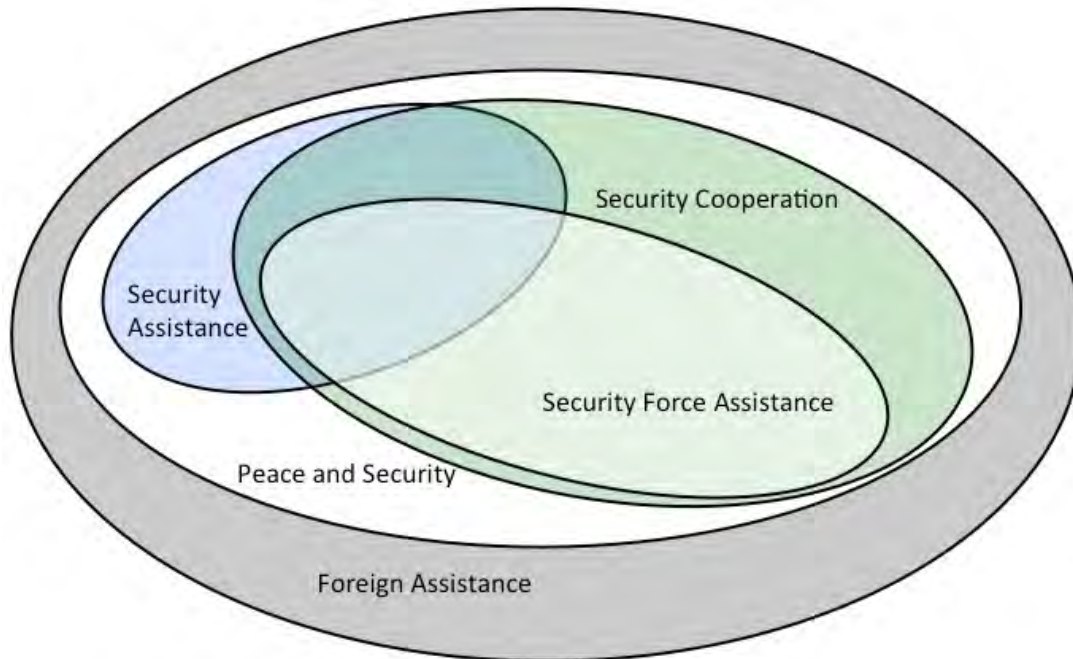


Figure 6. The Relationships between the “S” Words¹⁵¹

A component of Foreign Assistance is Peace and Security Assistance.¹⁵² It is within this category that SA, SC and SFA reside. Security Assistance currently includes fifteen programs and activities authorized under Title 22. Some of these activities are executed solely by the Department of State, but five of them are administered by the Department of Defense and comprise part of the DOD’s Security Cooperation. Security Cooperation “includes all DOD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments, including all DOD-administered security,” therefore the entirety of Security Force Assistance, since SFA inherently requires DOD interaction with FSF, resides within Security Cooperation.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Taylor P. White, “Security Cooperation: How It All Fits” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2014): 107, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jfq/jfq-72.pdf>.

¹⁵² Peace and Security Assistance is a general category used by *ForeignAssistance.org* to capture all foreign aid given for the purposes of peace and security across the whole-of-government. Each Agency and Department uses different names to classify this type of assistance; by categorizing all forms of assistance used to this end one is able to more accurately aggregate and disaggregate data.

¹⁵³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*, I-2.

The second commonality between the three “S” Words is that they can be conducted across the range of military operations; making them threat/challenge independent as they can occur anywhere along the continuum of conflict, from peace to war.¹⁵⁴ Other military tasks such as COIN and FID employ aspects and elements of SA, SC, and SFA, but COIN and FID can only be conducted under very specific circumstances. For example, COIN can only be conducted if there is an insurgency to counter, whereas SFA can be conducted in the absence *or* presence of an insurgency.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, FID can only be conducted to counter internal threats to a host nation, whereas SFA can be employed to train host nation security forces to conduct operations beyond their own borders.¹⁵⁶

D. THE CAPACITY-BUILDING ENTERPRISE

All too often capacity building is portrayed and referred to at the macro-level as a singular task. This misrepresentation leads only to an increased misunderstanding on the part of policymakers, planners, and tactical level units. The reality of the matter is DOD requires the employment of an entire enterprise to build a partner’s capacity. To further complicate things the nature, form, and function of that enterprise is entirely dependent upon the partner, the capacity being built, the force doing the building, and the political dynamics involved.

As the preceding pages have shown, achieving BPC objectives requires assembling and managing a system of authorities, approvals, funding, activities, programs, and people to get the necessary skills and equipment in the right place at the right time, and to sustain the undertaking until the desired objective is achieved. It also requires balancing the programmatic nature of a bureaucratic government with the unpredictability of an international partnership. The sentiment expressed by former Secretary Gates brings attention to how complicated and frustrating these tasks can be. This chapter has also illustrated the BPC enterprise requires action and coordination

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., I-1-1-2, I-6.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., I-3.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., I-4.

vertically from the policy-level down to the tactical level and horizontally with the partner nation. Recognizing that a single BPC endeavor requires an entire system of disparate yet interdependent sub-systems and components—an enterprise—goes a long way to understanding “the nature of the beast,” reducing frustrations, and increasing the overall efficiency of the undertaking.

E. SUMMARY

Very simply, building partner capacity is a whole-of-government approach that refers to any activity to enhance a partner’s ability to provide security within or outside of their borders. To be blunt, there has to be some sort of mutual security benefit for the United States to partake in such an activity. Ultimately these efforts are intended to prevent or minimize U.S. military intervention and the associated costs by deterring or degrading threats to stability at a local level before they “fester” into regional and global problems. Although U.S. BPC requires a whole-of-government approach, the Department of Defense has clearly made the argument that it should be the lead agency for BPC within the United States Government.

The term *BPC* is a new buzzword born out of the security challenges post-9/11, but the idea of strengthening your partners is logical, rational, and timeless. The problem however, is that every BPC endeavor is different, and they all present unique challenges are requirements that often require new, adaptive solutions. There are three major factors that contribute to the uniqueness of any capacity building endeavor: the nature of international partnerships, they nature of the capacity being built, the ability of the authorities, policies, and laws to keep pace with capacity building emerging requirements.

First, governments form partnerships for different reasons and to achieve different ends. Ultimately, the purpose of these partnerships is to achieve political results, results that are in line with a state’s national interests. National interests are dynamic, not static. They are in constant motion, affected by domestic politics, international events, geopolitics, social and environmental changes, religious ideologies and cultural identities—and any other number of factors. Because a nation is sovereign, as

Eisenhower observed, it has the right to change course and reserve decisions as it sees fit in order to best act within its constantly evolving national interests. This is the volatile and unpredictable storm that the military planner and leader must weather in order to keep a military partnership afloat.

Second, BPC endeavors usually require different capacities to be built, and not all capacities are equal. With regard to DOD capacity building, there appears to be a one-to-one relationship between the how well the military is prepared to meet a given security challenge and how well it is able to build capacity to counter that challenge. During the Cold War, the military was designed to counter the conventional threat posed by the Soviet Union and during that period building partner capacity was rather straightforward. Today, U.S. BPC efforts are difficult to understand in part because of the wide array of threats facing the United States and its interests. These are threats that the military is, as was the case in Iraq and Afghanistan, learning how to deal with while on the job and literally “fighting through it.”¹⁵⁷

Third, law, policies, and strategies govern any and all military activities, and they are slow to change. This chapter has highlighted several instances where policies have yet to be developed and doctrine yet to be written. All the while commanders and planners continue to meet challenges head-on on a daily basis. A decade of developing workarounds to solve these immediate problems has created a self-reinforcing cycle of ad hoc solutions that further perpetuates confusion and inhibits streamlining the DOD’s overall approach to BPC. In short, BPC efforts since 9/11 could very accurately be likened to building a plane in flight.

Confusing legal authorities and a mindboggling list of terms that undergirds the entire system further complicates BPC efforts in the United States. To understand the legal restraints that govern U.S. BPC efforts, one must keep in mind that the ultimate goal of these laws and authorities is not to make BPC more efficient—although that is certainly an intended outcome, it is most definitely a secondary one. These laws,

¹⁵⁷ “Historical Context and Contemporary Understanding of SFA,” Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance.

particularly the Foreign Assistance Act and Arms Export Control Act, are ultimately intended to protect the United States and the ideals upheld in the Constitution. Change, as former Secretary Gates called for time and again, is possible, but slow and will remain that way for the foreseeable future. The quagmire of terminology is reflective of the first two problems. A number of these terms, like Security Assistance and Security Cooperation, were designed for a different time and a different threat. However, like the laws that ushered them in, these terms are so engrained that they are not going anywhere forcing new terms to grow out of and somehow relate to them. Many of these new terms emerged out of the height of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan where solutions were needed immediately; they sparked quickly and “spread like wildfire” before documents could be published to standardize them—furthering the plane in flight dilemma.¹⁵⁸

For these reasons, building partner capacity requires an entire enterprise of people, systems, authorities, resources, and skillsets—an enterprise that not only includes the American side of a BPC endeavor, but the partner nation’s side as well. Understanding BPC as an enterprise aids in accounting for the numerous joints and points of friction that exists in such an endeavor, and also helps to illuminate stakeholders and areas where external influences can have significant impacts on the entire undertaking. The following chapter will examine SOF’s history and role in capacity building, as well as investigate what makes the SOF BPC Enterprise unique.

¹⁵⁸ Dale, *In Brief: Clarifying the Concept of “Partnership” in National Security*.

III. THE SOF BPC ENTERPRISE

A. INTRODUCTION

As Admiral McRaven, the former commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) testified to Congress, “SOF focuses intently on building partner capacity and security force assistance so that local and regional threats do not become global and thus more costly—both in blood and treasure.”¹⁵⁹ USSOF has a storied history of capacity building. SOF’s unique capabilities, missions, and operators not only make them the United States’ capacity-building force of choice, but also facilitate the creation of unique and dense BPC enterprises. This chapter is dedicated to examining SOF’s relationship with capacity building, the nature of the SOF BPC enterprise, and the actors and tools SOF employs to achieve their capacity building objectives. The focus will now shift from DOD BPC efforts writ-large to the peculiarities of SOF capacity building and the uniqueness of the SOF BPC Enterprise.

B. SOF AND BPC: A DENSE HISTORY

United States special operations forces have a long history with capacity building. The largest and oldest formation of SOF in the USSOCOM arsenal is U.S. Army Special Forces.¹⁶⁰ The Green Berets, as Special Forces soldiers are commonly called, were born out of the remnants of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the 1st Special Service Force following World War II.¹⁶¹ Established in 1952, the Green Berets were created specifically to conduct unconventional and partisan warfare.¹⁶² As *JP 3–05 Special Operations* states, “UW [Unconventional Warfare] consists of operations and activities that are conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or

¹⁵⁹ McRaven, *USSOCOM 2013 Posture Statement to the House Armed Services Committee*, 4.

¹⁶⁰ Robinson, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 5.

¹⁶¹ Francis Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces 1961–1971* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1985), 3; Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 36–38.

¹⁶² “10th SFG (A) History,” U.S. Army Special Operations Command, accessed October 27, 2014, <http://www.soc.mil/USASFC/Groups/10th/history.html>.

overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area.”¹⁶³ At the core of this mission is the requirement to build the capacity of partners—in this case resistance members and insurgents. As early as the mid-1950s, USSOF operators found themselves in Korea training partisans during the Korean War, and in Germany preparing to conduct similar sabotage and subversion missions with resistance movements behind Soviet lines should the USSR advance on Western Europe.¹⁶⁴

While Green Berets continued to prepare for unconventional warfare in Europe, some were diverted to a growing conflict in Southeast Asia. Special Forces first put boots on the ground in Vietnam in 1957. Their initial mission: train the men that would serve as the nucleus of the first Vietnamese Special Forces units—a BPC mission in the truest sense.¹⁶⁵ By the war’s end, Special Forces’ mission grew in size and scope. Increasing the number of Green Berets on the ground to four battalions worth, a total strength just shy of 1300 personnel, training and equipping local village defense and strike forces to turn back the tide of Communist advances in the highlands and rural lowlands of South Vietnam.¹⁶⁶

After Vietnam, SOF found plenty of work building capacity elsewhere around the globe. Notable examples include El Salvador in the 1980s¹⁶⁷ where a group of 55 advisors partnered very successfully with the El Salvadorian Armed Forces (ESAF) during nation’s struggle with the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). This undertaking not only increased ESAF’s operational capacity in counterinsurgency, but it also included a concerted effort to professionalize the El Salvadorian military,

¹⁶³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*, Joint Publication 3–05 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), II-8,
<http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA327558>.

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Army Special Operations Command, “10th SFG (A) History.”

¹⁶⁵ Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces 1961–1971*, 4.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19–26, 74.

¹⁶⁷ This operation continued until February 1992. (See: U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command History*, 6th ed., 2008, 58.)

which was subject to “repeated accusations of human rights abuses throughout the 1980s.”¹⁶⁸

The effort to professionalize the ESAF, indirectly, yet very purposefully, achieved significant results that were not directly in support of the military training objective, but absolutely essential to the overall capacity building enterprise in El Salvador. Counterinsurgency is population-centric; while the tactical capacity building objective was to increase ESAF capacity as a counterinsurgency force, that effort would have been pointless without garnering the support of the El Salvadorian people.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, had human rights accusations continued it is entirely possible that the United States may have found itself, from a partnership perspective, in an compromising position given the political risk of been seen as sponsor of human rights violations.

The El Salvador example highlights the multiple requirements that a BPC enterprise has to achieve in support of its primary objective. Although headed up primarily by U.S. Army Special Forces “there were also trainers for intelligence, ground, naval, and air operations, logistics, civil affairs, civil defense and psychological operations (PSYOP),” in order to meet the multiple requirements necessary to professionalize and enhance the ESAF to achieve their objectives.¹⁷⁰ With regards to the professionalization component of the operation, PSYOP and civil affairs elements were critical to the BPC Enterprise as they worked to change the perception of ESAF in the minds of the El Salvadorian population.¹⁷¹ Ultimately assisting in garnering increased support for the ESAF from El Salvadorian population and the international community as well—indirectly increasing the ESAF’s and the government’s capacity to operate and bring the FMLN to the peace table in 1992.¹⁷² These observations indicate that building

¹⁶⁸ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*, II-13.

¹⁶⁹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Counterinsurgency*, Joint Publication 3–24 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013), I-3 – I-4, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA327558>.

¹⁷⁰ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*, II-15.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

partner capacity requires tactical, operational, and strategic capacity building objectives to work in harmony for the enterprise to be successful; this often requires a number of different USSOF components and activities.

USSOF BPC efforts continued during the 1990s, but they were reflective of the turbulent nature of global instability and a transforming American foreign policy in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. During this period "operations other than war became then norm."¹⁷³ Although, as Susan L. Marquis observes, in *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, there was turmoil at the policy and strategy level as to how SOF should be employed in the new post-Cold War era of peacetime engagement.¹⁷⁴ As a result, SOF found itself growing—sometimes falling into—new and expanded operational roles.

As world dynamics changed in the 1990s, so too did the types and nature of capacity building that SOF was called on to perform. The flexibility and ingenuity of USSOF formations allowed them "to respond in ways that conventional forces cannot because of their size, doctrine, and political implications," and as a result USSOF found itself filling capacity building gaps in a wide array of scenarios.¹⁷⁵ For example, within hours of the conclusion of hostilities during Operation Just Cause in Panama, Civil Affairs teams were training "a new police force and a reconstituted military."¹⁷⁶ Other examples of capacity building missions during this period included training and equipping CT security forces in the Republic of Georgia in 1993; establishing a long-standing training program for game wardens in East Africa to protect from poachers; and Army Special Forces assisting in the creation of a military policing force to enforce a truce sanctions between Ecuador and Peru in 1996.¹⁷⁷ The 1990s also provided an

¹⁷³ U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command History*, 6th ed., 2008, 74.

¹⁷⁴ Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 1997), 184–187.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 288.

opportunity for USSOF to demonstrate its ability as a coalition warfare enabler, training just shy of “30,000 coalition troops in 44 subject areas,” and reconstituting “a number of Kuwaiti military forces, both conventional and unconventional,” during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.”¹⁷⁸ This brief list of examples illustrates the breadth and global scope of these various USSOF capacity building missions, and how USSOF managed to transform and keep pace with strategic needs, even in the absence of “a coherent post-cold war policy for low-intensity conflict and peacetime engagement.”¹⁷⁹

After 9/11 the focus for USSOF and its capacity-building efforts shifted again, this time to countering terrorism, violent extremism, and towards maintaining stability in un- or under-governed spaces around the world.¹⁸⁰ These efforts were, and are still, most visibly seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, but these efforts also include USSOF capacity building in Colombia, the Philippines, Africa, and the Middle East.¹⁸¹ They also include building capacity with partners that share similar security interests with the United States, and are willing to deploy beyond their borders, like several NATO SOF partners in Eastern Europe.¹⁸²

This brief synopsis has shown that USSOF capacity-building efforts over the years have grown and evolved along with the missions that USSOF elements have been handed. Although the locales and missions have changed over the past seventy years, building partner capacity has remained a constant, integral component of special operations. The following section will examine the core activities of USSOF as joint doctrine prescribes them today, and the approaches USSOF uses to achieve their diverse portfolio of objectives.

¹⁷⁸ U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command History*, 50.

¹⁷⁹ Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 187.

¹⁸⁰ United States Special Operations Command, “SOCOM 2020,” 5.

¹⁸¹ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 120–136; David P. Fridovich and Fred T. Krawchuck, “The Special Operations Forces Indirect Approach,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 44, 1st Quarter (2007): 24–27; “Q&A Colonel John Deedrick, Commander, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne)”;

Lucas Overstreet, Wesley Strong, and Arnel David, “Building the Special Operations Force Enterprise Through Partnerships,” February 1, 2012, <http://www.army.mil/article/74620/>.

¹⁸² Buck Dellinger, “Special Operations Command Europe: Strengthening Partnerships for Global Security,” *Special Warfare* 25, no. 2 (June 2012): 12–15.

C. SOF MISSIONS WITH BPC COMPONENTS

JP 3-05 Special Operations states that USSOF conducts twelve core activities; these activities are the aggregate of all activities conducted by joint USSOF, not of just any one particular Service or formation.¹⁸³ These activities are:

1. Direct action (DA),
2. Special reconnaissance (SR),
3. Countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD),
4. Counterterrorism (CT),
5. Unconventional warfare (UW),
6. Foreign internal defense (FID),
7. Security force assistance (SFA),
8. Hostage rescue and recovery,
9. Counterinsurgency (COIN),
10. Foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA),
11. Military information support operations (MISO),
12. Civil affairs operations (CAO).¹⁸⁴

The descriptions of these twelve core activities in *JP 3-05* indicate that eight of them—CWMD, CT, UW, FID, SFA, COIN, MISO, and CAO—all have inherent BPC requirements or directly enable BPC efforts.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, it is important to note that although conventional military forces can also be tasked with the same missions, like FID or COIN, joint doctrine states that USSOF conducts all of these activities with

¹⁸³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*, II-2.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, II-3.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, II-2 – II-18.

“specialized tactics, techniques, and procedures, and in unique conditions and to different standards, but in a manner that complements CF¹⁸⁶ capabilities.”¹⁸⁷

Although it is helpful that doctrine offers this list of missions, the list alone is insufficient to explain the true nature and methodology of special operations with regard to building partner capacity. As noted USSOF chronicler Linda Robinson observes, doctrine’s list of core USSOF activities includes “disparate and overlapping elements,” which make it difficult to clearly articulate what USSOF actually does.¹⁸⁸ In a special report published by the Council on Foreign Relations, Robinson went on to call this lack of articulation a “conceptual shortfall” of USSOF that has, at least in part, kept them limited primarily to tactical and episodic uses.¹⁸⁹

In an effort to better explain itself, USSOCOM has taken to describing what it does in terms of a direct approach and an indirect approach. According to former USSOCOM commander Admiral William H. McRaven, the *direct approach* is “characterized by technologically enabled small-unit precision lethality, focused intelligence, and interagency cooperation integrated on a digitally networked battlefield.”¹⁹⁰ These direct actions are most easily characterized as similar to the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. Whereas, explains McRaven, the *indirect approach* includes “empowering host nation forces, providing appropriate assistance to humanitarian agencies, and engaging key populations. These long-term efforts increase partner capabilities to generate sufficient security and rule of law, address local needs, and advance ideas that discredit and defeat the appeal of violent extremism.”¹⁹¹ McRaven identifies the long-term, far less kinetic, indirect approach as USSOCOM’s

¹⁸⁶ Conventional forces

¹⁸⁷ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Special Operations*, II-2.

¹⁸⁸ Robinson, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 10.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁹⁰ William H. McRaven, *Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN Commander, United States Special Operations Command Before the 112th Congress House Armed Services Committee* (Washington, DC, 2012), 5, http://www.socom.mil/Documents/2012_SOCOM_POSTURE_STATEMENT.pdf.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

decisive effort, while the headline-grabbing direct approach is actually the supporting effort, which “only buys time and space for the indirect approach and broader governmental elements to take effect.”¹⁹²

To provide some additional clarification that the broad terms direct and indirect approach leave wanting, United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) began using the terms surgical strike and special warfare.¹⁹³ In 2013, USASOC published *ARSOF 2022* its campaign plan for the coming decade, which is constructed around the surgical strike/special warfare model. Although an Army-specific model, the concepts are general enough to apply to all of USSOF. *ARSOF 2022* defines *surgical strike* as “the execution of activities in a precise manner that employ SOF in hostile, denied or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover or damage designated targets, or influence threats.”¹⁹⁴ It also defines *special warfare* as

the execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and non-lethal actions taken by specially trained and educated forces that have a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, subversion, sabotage and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain or hostile environment.¹⁹⁵

USASOC’s model is illustrated in Figure 7 below. It should be reiterated that this is an Army-specific model, and therefore does not capture all twelve of the joint SOF core activities.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Robinson, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 11.

¹⁹⁴ U.S. Army Special Operations Command, “ARSOF 2022,” *Special Warfare* 26, no. 2 (June 2013): 10, <http://militarydispatch.com/publications/specialwarfaresummer2013.pdf>.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

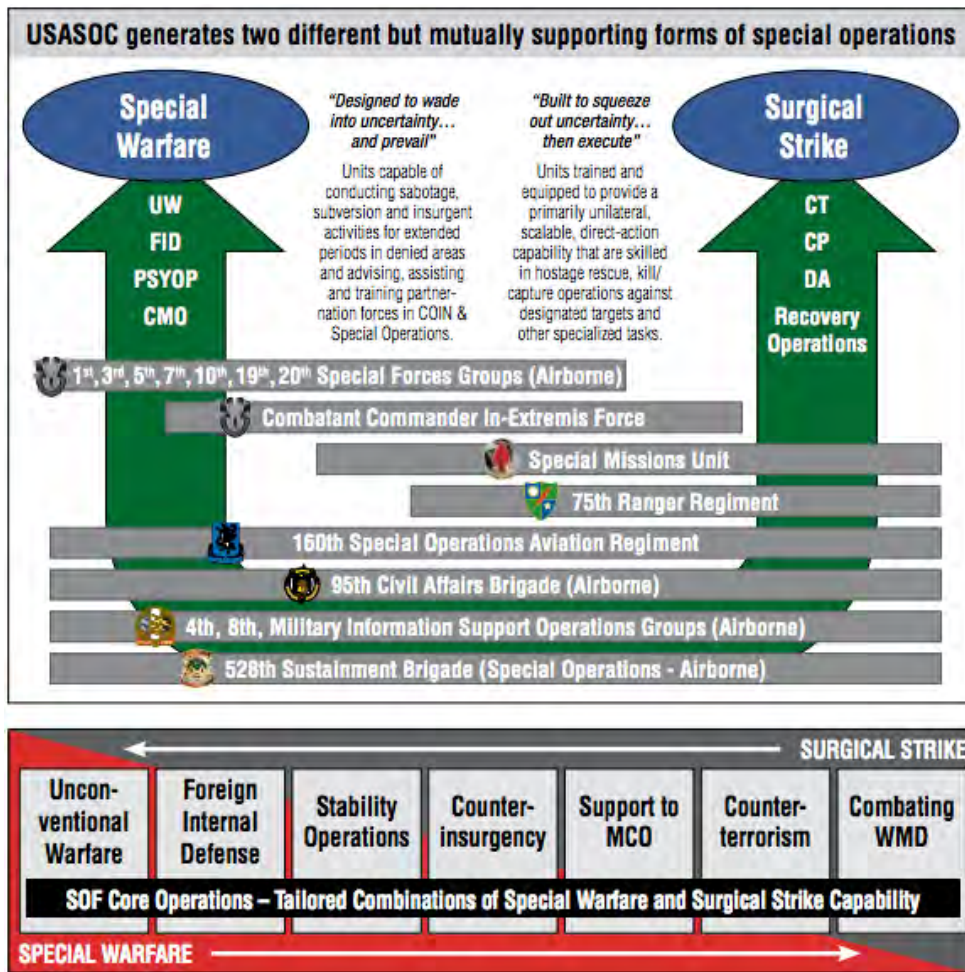


Figure 7. “Foundation Concepts for ARSOF 2022”¹⁹⁶

Although the direct/indirect, surgical strike/special warfare explanations have still received some criticism for not adequately articulating how exactly USSOF goes about achieving objectives using the special warfare approach; they do serve to illustrate how BPC tasks permeate the range of special operations.¹⁹⁷ Additionally, as noted in the El Salvador case, the observation that BPC enterprises often require supporting efforts to ensure their lasting success is further illuminated here.

¹⁹⁶ U.S. Army Special Operations Command, “ARSOF 2022” *Special Warfare* 26, no. 2 (June 2013): 16, <http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/11815>

¹⁹⁷ Robinson, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, 11, 13–14.

This section has indicated that BPC components pervade the majority of USSOF core activities. It has also emphasized that USSOF BPC enterprises rarely consist of a single USSOF core activity. Success in BPC enterprises often require additional supporting efforts when building partner capacity either to cull out the time and space for the BPC efforts to establish themselves, or to garner support for the capacity built in order to sustain it into the future. Another point that this section highlights is that USSOF conducts these tasks in different environments, using different tactics, and to different standards than conventional forces. The following sections will examine the tools and actors that USSOF employs in its BPC Enterprises.

D. THE TOOLS OF SOF CAPACITY BUILDING

Chapter II introduced the wide range of authorized programs and activities that enable DOD capacity building. In addition to some “SOF peculiar” authorities and funding, USSOF has access to all the same programs and activities offered under the umbrellas of Security Cooperation and Security Assistance as any other DOD entity would. However, what distinguishes USSOF BPC enterprises from other DOD BPC enterprises are the nature and method in which USSOF puts these tools to use.

The full list of programs and activities is far too expansive to be captured here. Therefore, this section will focus on the primary tools that SOF employs in capacity building enterprises. For ease of understanding, these tools will be divided and examined in two categories: activities and programs.

1. Key SOF BPC Activities

An *activity* is defined as “a function, mission, action, or collection of actions;” it is something USSOF elements actually do.¹⁹⁸ There are four primary activities that USSOF conducts in support of capacity building missions. They are: Joint Combined Training Exercises, Combined Exercises, Operations, and Key Leader Engagements.

¹⁹⁸ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 2.

a. Joint Combined Training Exercises (JCET)

The JCET has long been the workhorse of USSOF engagement. According to joint doctrine, a JCET is “conducted overseas to fulfill United States forces training requirements and at the same time exchange the sharing of skills between United States forces and host nation counterparts.”¹⁹⁹ As Petit describes, “JCETs are usually four to six weeks in duration with intimate tactical interactions between USSOF and host nation partners.”²⁰⁰ TSOCs have also repurposed other funds to conduct exchanges and exercises that look and feel identical to JCETs, but are called different names since they are funded and governed by different authorities. An example would be Special Operations Command Europe’s (SOCEUR) Partnership Development Program (PDP).²⁰¹ Dedicated to the same purposes of capacity building, these pseudo-JCETs increase the TSOCs tactical engagement bandwidth, and can be more easily programmed since they are resourced directly out of TSOC funding.

JCETs are not without their limitations. First, they are holdovers from the Cold War era and their primary purpose remains the training of U.S. personnel—not building partner nation capacity.²⁰² JCETs are bound to what is referred to in the SOF vernacular as the “51/49% Rule,” because, according to U.S. Code, USSOF are required to receive the majority, at least 51%, of the training benefit.²⁰³ Second, they take a long time to program, sometimes up to two years prior to execution, presenting yet another bureaucratic hurdle for planners that are trying to meet the dynamic needs of partnerships.²⁰⁴ Third, they are episodic and subject to “wide variations in host nation hosting units, regions, and desired capabilities.”²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 136.

²⁰⁰ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 111.

²⁰¹ Donald Sparks, “Building the Special Operations Force Enterprise Through Partnerships,” August 18, 2010, <http://www.army.mil/article/43877/>.

²⁰² Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 111.

²⁰³ *Special Operations Forces: Training with Friendly Foreign Forces*, U.S. Code 10, 2011, 971.

²⁰⁴ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 112.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 111.

Despite these limitations, JCETs retain value in the USSOF toolbox for the following reasons: they are established, both in U.S. Code and in the minds of policymakers, country teams, and USSOF operators; they provide excellent access, placement, and resources to engage with partners at an “intimate tactical” level; and they can be planned and programmed in a coordinated manner—transforming single episodic engagements into multiple persistent engagements.²⁰⁶

b. Combined Exercises

Combined Exercises are authorized under Title 10 of the U.S. Code and provide a venue to “promote influence, readiness, and interoperability.”²⁰⁷ Every TSOC conducts at least one major combined exercise a year, in addition to a number of smaller exercises that vary by TSOC.²⁰⁸ SOCOM also hosts its own combined exercise named Emerald Warrior that provides “a unique opportunity for components of U.S. Special Operations Command, conventional, interagency, partner nation and non-governmental agencies to train in a joint, realistic environment.”²⁰⁹ This observation is characteristic of other major TSOC exercises.²¹⁰ As a Canadian Special Operations officer who participated in Emerald Warrior noted, such exercises provide “an outstanding operational framework to train within a realistic coalition construct which deepens interoperability between SOF elements,” adding that, “the scale and scope of the exercise also allows us to leverage and work with assets not normally available to us at home.”²¹¹

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 110–112; Author’s personal operational experience; Donna Miles, “Officials Work on Plan for Global Network,” *U.S. Department of Defense News*, June 3, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=120193>.

²⁰⁷ Doug Jordan, “Funding Authorities and Security Cooperation” (Video Teleconference, Monterey, California, September 4, 2014).

²⁰⁸ U. S. Special Operations Command, *U.S. Special Operations Command Fact Book 2014* (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, 2014).

²⁰⁹ Raquel Sanchez, “Premium DOD Exercise Hones SOF Skills,” May 9, 2014, <http://www.24sow.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/136/Article/495069/premium-dod-exercise-hones-sof-skills.aspx>.

²¹⁰ Author’s conversations and personal experience with SOCEUR’s Jackal Stone and Cold Response exercises participants while serving with 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) from 2009–2013.

²¹¹ Sanchez, “Premium DOD Exercise Hones SOF Skills.”

Combined Exercises provide USSOF the conditions to focus very intensely on the capacity building objectives at hand. They also provide the opportunity to effectively replicate the environment of stress and friction that define real-world operational conditions. The scale and scope of these exercises also allows USSOF to engage larger formations, more partners, and execute more tasks than JCETs allow. However, these exercises are very costly in time and resources; months of preparation, staffing, and coordination result in events that normally only last one to two weeks. These factors serve to limit the duration and frequency of these events.

c. Operations

Operationalizing a partnership is another tool at USSOF's disposal for use in a capacity building enterprise. Partnership *operationalization* refers to the transition of passive capacity-building efforts, such as JCETs or exercises, to active real-world operations such as combat advising or combined tactical operations.²¹² Because capacity building occurs across the range of military operations, the operationalization of a partnership can take several different forms. For example, *JP 3-05* states, "when authorized, SOF may also support HN combat operations" while conducting a FID mission. Sometimes the operationalization of a partnership may occur outside of the partner nation's borders. As noted in Chapter II, SFA has several purposes, one of which is to build capacity in partner security forces that can "help contribute to multinational operations" beyond their borders.²¹³ SOCEUR used this approach quite effectively by deploying USSOF to Afghanistan with partner nation SOF formations from Eastern Europe and conducting combined missions together under combat conditions as part of their capacity building enterprise.²¹⁴

Whereas an exercise attempts to replicate real-world operational conditions, the operationalization of partnerships is the real deal. Additionally, the singular focus and

²¹² Author's definition.

²¹³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Security Force Assistance*, I-1.

²¹⁴ Author's personal experiences with Combined Special Operations Task Force-10 (CSOTF-10) in Afghanistan from 2009–2011, and with SOCEUR from 2012–2013.

pressing nature of an operation distills a number of personal and administrative distractions allowing partners to hone-in on critical skills and tasks with a heightened sense of urgency and attention on the part of all participants involved. Additionally, if approved, such approaches often come with additional authorities and resources, all of which coalesce to achieve a greater capacity building potential in a shorter period of time. Major General Michael S. Repass, the former Commanding General of SOCEUR, refers to this time reducing phenomenon as “the rapid transformational effect of combat.”²¹⁵

Like any investment, high-payoff potential is accompanied with a greater degree of risk. The operationalization of a partnership increases the political risk of both partner nations, as they are knowingly placing their forces in harm’s way. As a result, as the SOCSOUTH case study will illuminate, this level of commitment usually requires a high level of confidence between the military forces and an equally high level of political cooperation between the two partner nations.

d. Key Leader Engagements

Key leader engagements, or KLEs as they are more commonly referred to, increased markedly in usage during the counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, in practice, this form of engagement precedes those two conflicts, is considered a form of Security Cooperation, and is another useful tool that USSOF employs in BPC enterprises. Simply put, a KLE is an engagement—a meeting—between two influential actors. KLEs provide a venue to communicate on a personal-level, face-to-face. These types of engagements are more diplomatic in nature than the tactically or operationally oriented JCETs, exercises, or operations.

In Iraq and Afghanistan KLEs gained notoriety primarily at the tactical level, where platoon leaders through brigade commanders would meet regularly with influential police chiefs and village or tribal elders.²¹⁶ The same was true for USSOF tactical units

²¹⁵ Michael S. Repass, email message to author, February 12, 2014..

²¹⁶ Richard C. Nash and Eric P. Magistad, *Disarming the Key Leader Engagement* (DTIC Document, 2010), <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA536549>; The Center of Excellence for Visual Information and Public Affairs, “Key Leader Engagement,” n.d.

working throughout the two countries. Less observed by the majority of USSOF personnel who serve below the TSOC-level are the strategic level KLEs that occur globally on a near-daily basis.²¹⁷ These high-level engagements occur between high-ranking officers from the GCC and TSOCs with partner nation heads of state, ministers of defense, chiefs of defense, and U.S. ambassadors and their country teams throughout the commands' respective areas of responsibilities.

Extremely low in cost and short in duration, in comparison to JCETs and exercises, KLEs serve to further relationships, signal American commitment, expedite resolution on issues that might normally languish in the staffing process, and, as the SOCSOUTH case study will illustrate, sometimes provide the opportunity to seize incredible—and fleeting—opportunities. These interactions are generally closed-door events, and therefore do not receive a lot of visibility from those not in the room, however, the outcomes of these meetings can be felt by everyone involved in the enterprise. As one former TSOC operations officer remarked, “KLEs are huge, and have a tremendous impact” when it comes to capacity building.²¹⁸ Although, KLEs do not directly build capacity themselves, they very much enable capacity building, and, as the following case studies will come to show, they have been used with great success by senior USSOF leaders.

e. Single SOF Advisors

Single SOF advisors are not “activities” per se, but they comprise a critical tool employed by SOF to enhance partnerships and build capacity. The most prominent example of a single SOF advisor is USSOCOM’s Special Operations Liaison Officer (SOLOs). SOLOs are career special operations officers who serve as “in-country SOF advisors to the U.S. country team.”²¹⁹ They provide excellent vertical and horizontal

²¹⁷ Author’s personal experience at Special Operations Command Europe from 2011–2012.

²¹⁸ Wilson, interview.

²¹⁹ “Q&A: Col. Stuart W. Bradin,” *Special Operations Technology* 11, no. 2 (March 2013), <http://www.kmimediagroup.com/special-operations-technology/articles/1480-special-operations-technology/sotech-2013-volume-11-issue-2-march/6754-qa-col-stuart-w-bradin>.

communication between the SOF elements and commands, the U.S. country teams, and the partner nation. They are assigned to live in their partner nation full-time, which allows them to not only to advise and assist the development of partner nation SOF, but by virtue of their persistent presence they serve as an on-the-ground synchronizer for all USSOF activities within that country. As of 2013, there were SOLOs in: Australia, Brazil, Canada, United Kingdom, Jordan, Poland, Colombia, France, Turkey, Kenya and Italy.²²⁰ TSOCs have established their own similar programs in smaller scale and scope; SOCEUR is one example. The command established a *SOF Representative* (SOFREP) position in Romania to assist the TSOC's capacity-building efforts in that country.²²¹

2. Key SOF BPC Programs

The following programs highlight some of the major programs that SOF uses to either build capacity directly, enable it indirectly, or resource the SOF BPC enterprise with funding and authorities. These programs include both DOD Security Cooperation (USC Title 10) programs and DOS Security Assistance (USC Title 22) programs. Given the broad nature and multitude of these programs, this section looks at these programs thematically in four categories: education, equipment, funding, and Global Train and Equip.

a. Education

As mentioned earlier, special operations forces employ specialized tactics and techniques, under unique and dynamic conditions, in situations where doctrine and policy are struggling to keep pace. As a result, those serving in SOF require unique training and education. To that end, educating individual officers, and increasingly non-commissioned officers, in specific techniques, or introducing them to broader theories and concepts relevant to political-military warfare is a powerful tool in the SOF capacity building arsenal. As a recent article in *Joint Forces Quarterly* observes, “the education offered to

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Dellinger, “Special Operations Command Europe: Strengthening Partnerships for Global Security.”

students at PME [Professional Military Education] schools aims to bolster the leadership and strategic thinking capabilities of future leaders of partner nations.”²²²

The majority of these opportunities are fielded and funded through the Title 22 International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, and Title 10 programs such as the Combatting Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) and the various DOD Regional Centers for Security Studies (RCSS), such as the George C. Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany.²²³ These education opportunities provide several benefits to a USSOF BPC enterprise: they educate partner nation officers in special operations theory and concepts which have the potential to pay dividends for the rest of that officer’s career; they demonstrate commitment to the partner nation; and they allow USSOF officers to connect with partner nation officers in low-stress environments, allowing them to hone their own understanding of various partner nations points of view, approaches, and experiences.

b. Equipment

An increase in capacity often requires an increase in capability. Some of the *Global Train and Equip* programs, addressed below, offer other authorities and appropriations to equip partner nation forces, but generally speaking equipment is fielded through Title 22 programs administered on behalf of the State Department by the Defense Security Cooperation Office. These programs are Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Financing, Emergency Drawdown, Leases of Equipment, and the Excess Defense Article programs.²²⁴ These programs can be cumbersome to manage, as they require a fair amount of administrative work and long lead times.

²²² Russell S. Thacker and Paul W. Lambert, “Low Cost, High Returns: Getting More from International Partnerships,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 75, no. 4th Quarter (2014): 71.

²²³ Jordan, “Funding Authorities and Security Cooperation.”

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

c. Funding Programs

As mentioned in Chapter II, funding is an essential component of any capacity-building effort.²²⁵ There are usually several programs that are used to fund a single BPC enterprise. Common programs include, Developing Country Combined Exercise Program (DCCEP), which provides funds to defray the costs of certain expenses incurred by qualifying countries to enable them to participate in combined exercises.²²⁶ The Combatant Commanders Initiative Fund (CCIF) that is a fund held at the GCC level that can be used for various operational, training, and military-to-military activities.²²⁷ There are also several counter drug programs executed under various U.S.C. authorities. These programs “provide unreimbursed support to selected PNs [partner nations] to stop the flow of illegal drugs.”²²⁸

d. Global Train and Equip

The 1200 Series of authorities are commonly referred to as the *Global Train and Equip Authorities*. Chapter II has already addressed how and why these authorities came into being, but it is relevant to note that these authorities are still relatively new, and are being watched very closely by Members of Congress, which means they have not been institutionalized to the degree of JCETs or combined exercises and are susceptible to significant change in the near future.²²⁹ Generally, these authorities allow the Departments of State and Defense to build partner capacity for “time-sensitive, ‘new and

²²⁵ These programs are categorized as “funding programs” here solely because they serve as authorized “pots of money” that can be used to help fund other activities; they are not referred to as “funding programs” anywhere else in legislation, policy, or doctrine.

²²⁶ Jordan, “Funding Authorities and Security Cooperation.”

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Nina M. Serafino, *Global Security Contingency Fund: Summary and Issue Overview* (CRS Report No. R42641) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 4, 2014) <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42641.pdf>; Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress*.

emerging' counterterrorist operations or to participate in or support military and stability operations in which the U.S. armed forces are a participant.”²³⁰

- **Section 1206 “Train and Equip”** – “provides the Secretary of Defense with authority to train and equip foreign military forces for two specified purposes—counterterrorism and stability operations—and foreign security forces for counterterrorism operations. Section 1206 authority now extends through FY2017.”²³¹
- **Section 1207 “Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF)”** – is a pilot program jointly administered by the Department of Defense and the State Department. The purpose of this fund is to “carry out security and counterterrorism training, and rule of law programs.”²³²
- **Section 1208** – “provides authority and funds for U.S. SOF to train and equip regular and irregular indigenous forces to conduct counterterrorism operations. Section 1208 is considered a key tool in combating terrorism and is directly responsible for a number of highly successful counter-terror operations.”²³³
- **Section 1233 “Coalition Support Fund”** – authorizes “the Secretary of Defense to reimburse coalition nations for support provided to U.S. military operations, and provide other specified support to these nations.”²³⁴

Again, the programs and activities listed above are merely a sampling of the numerous programs and activities that support SOF BPC programs. Often these programs are blended together within a BPC enterprise in order to attain broader authorities or increased funding in order to more efficiently achieve the BPC objective. It is important to note that all of these programs have their own series of requirements, timelines, and approval processes, which presents challenges for those trying to synchronize them.

²³⁰ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, “Section 1206 Train and Equip,” accessed October 30, 2014, <http://www.dsca.mil/programs/section-1206-train-and-equip>.

²³¹ Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: “Section 1206” Background and Issues for Congress*, i.

²³² Serafino, *Global Security Contingency Fund: Summary and Issue Overview*, i.

²³³ Andrew Feickert and Thomas K. Livingston, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress* (CRS Report No. RS21048) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 3, 2010), 6, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS21048.pdf>.

²³⁴ National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year 2013, 1211.

E. THE CHAIN OF ACTORS

Thus far, this chapter has examined the missions and tools of SOF BPC, now the examination will turn to the actors that bring the enterprise to life.

1. The Tyranny of Time

As addressed above and in the previous chapter, BPC efforts are long-term endeavors. In careers that normally last around twenty years, these mission sets are generational problems that can far outlast the career of a single USSOF operator, and certainly that of any one commander, planner, or rotational unit. The challenge USSOF has to overcome is maintaining unity of effort and focus over these long durations while simultaneously continuing synchronization of all of the tools outlined in the previous section. While examining how USSOF employs operational art in pre-crisis environments—increasingly referred to as *Phase Zero*,²³⁵ career Special Forces officer Colonel Brian S. Petit observes that USSOF has adapted to the challenge imposed by time by employing a chain of operational artists.

2. The Arranging Chain

Petit argues that USSOF has, in practice, modified the elements of operational design as outlined in joint doctrine, to better operate within the environments they normally find themselves in, and for the extended durations these missions often require. Petit argues that USSOF's arranging chain "combines the creative application of arranging operations with the logic of supply chain management."²³⁶ The supply chain is the chain of organizations required to get a product from its point of origin into the hands of the end user.²³⁷ As Robert Handfield, the executive director of The Supply Chain Resource Cooperative, explains supply chain management "represents a conscious effort

²³⁵ In the SOF vernacular, environments short of open conflict are commonly referred to as *Phase Zero*. (See: Brian S. Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero* (S.I.: Outskirts Press, 2013)).

²³⁶ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 161.

²³⁷ Robert Handfield, "What Is Supply Chain Management?," *Supply Chain Resource Cooperative (SCRC)*, North Carolina State University, January 11, 2011, <http://scm.ncsu.edu/scm-articles/article/what-is-supply-chain-management>.

by the supply chain firms to develop and run supply chains in the most effective [and] efficient ways possible,” continuing, “supply chain activities cover everything from product development, sourcing, production, and logistics, as well as the information systems needed to coordinate these activities.”²³⁸

In the past, noted Handfield, “most organizations have only paid attention to what was happening within their ‘four walls.’”²³⁹ Few businesses understood, much less managed, the entire chain of activities that ultimately delivered products to the final customer.²⁴⁰ To be successful, the organizations, or nodes, in the supply chain need to be linked together both physically, through the flow of goods; and immaterially, through the flow of ideas in order to coordinate, manage, and enhance the efficiency of the chain.²⁴¹ This business management approach facilitates operational efficiency over large spans of time and space; exactly the requirement, Petit argues, SOF needs to meet in the Phase Zero environment, to include capacity building endeavors.

Petit credits the arranging chain with allowing USSOF to synchronize its efforts over time and in various geographic areas “at multiple levels by small forward-stationed teams.”²⁴² “Within these formations,” articulates Petit, “small units exercised a distribution (materiel) and influence (ideas) chain to purposefully connect tactical actions to strategic outcomes.”²⁴³ Petit’s arranging chain also accounts for USSOF’s ability to maintain unity of effort and synchronization over the long duration of undertakings such as BPC.

3. The Actors

Petit describes the arranging chain, depicted in Figure 8, as “a USSOF posture of connected, distributed, nodes that are hierarchical for control and resources, yet are

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 161.

²⁴³ Ibid., 161–162.

networked for ideas and opportunities.”²⁴⁴ Figure 8 contains a lot of information that warrants specific consideration:

1. The illustration highlights the difference between joint doctrine’s inferences of where operational art is applied, and where it is applied in the Phase Zero Domain
2. It also illustrates the expansion from a singular *artist* to the chain of *artists*.
3. In the War Domain, this figure indicates that the design and implementation of an operational plan is not only centralized, but directive as indicated by the one-way arrows. However, in the arranging chain, planning and implementation are decentralized, and all of the actors are connected by feedback loops. These feedback loops and the absence of one-way arrows indicate that ideas and information flow between actors. This illustrates the supply chain nature of this approach, and also indicates that all the actors share in the role of influencing a partnership.
4. It is also important to re-emphasize in the War Domain, the operational artist is planning and executing operations over the span of weeks and months, whereas the operational artists in Phase Zero are orchestrating and operating over years and decades.

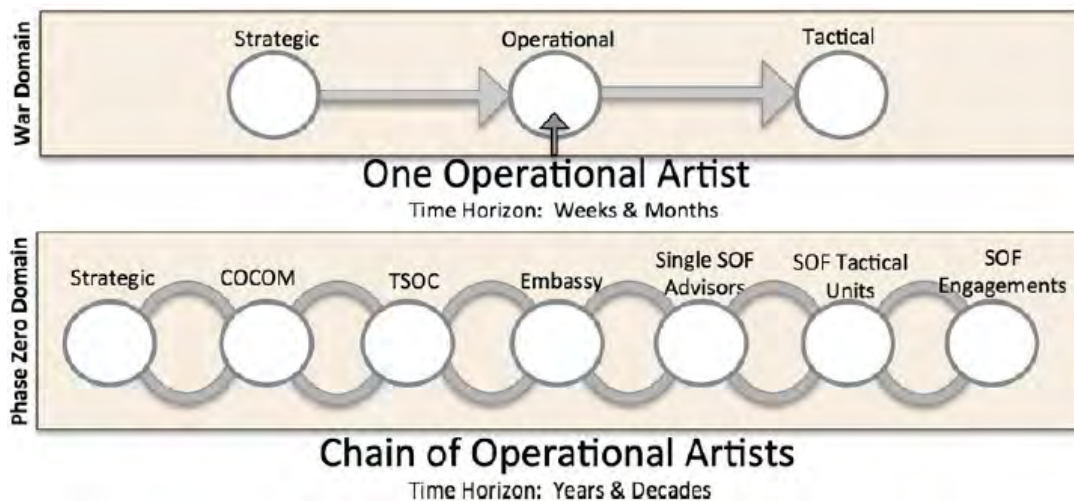


Figure 8. The Chain of Operational Artists²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 172.

²⁴⁵ Petit, *Going Big by Going Small*, 163.

4. Position on the Chain Matters

By making some modifications to Petit’s chain one can better examine the actors and the skills and qualities they need to possess as members of a SOF BPC enterprise.²⁴⁶ These changes are reflected in Figure 9. This section examines the actors in terms of qualities and skillsets. A quality is a characteristic of an actor, and a skillset encompasses skills actors need to succeed at their position on the chain.

a. Qualities

This work has identified four qualities that are inherent in partnerships and capacity building endeavors; they are: visibility and authority; and speed and sustainability.

(1) Visibility versus Authority

The previous chapter makes a point of noting that policy and strategy are the engines that drive the capacity building train—they are important. However, SOFs ability to make on the ground assessments of situations and intangible dynamics is one of their hallmark abilities that make them so valuable to senior decision makers.²⁴⁷ Equally important, authority and visibility on the ground share an inverse relationship. As Chapter II highlighted, authority resides at the highest levels of national power. Law and policy delegate authority down, but the farther down the chain it moves the narrower the authority becomes. Conversely, visibility of ground truth decreases as information is passed back up the chain. As it is reported up, each ascending actor is farther removed from the tactical level interaction than the actor below details and *feel* for the situation tend to get lost.

²⁴⁶ The first modification reduces the number of positions on the chain from eight to seven by eliminating “SOF Engagements,” since an engagement is an activity, not an actor. Additionally, the term “Policy” was added to the “Strategy” position to reflect the extensive amount of action and friction that occurs at the policy level as noted in Chapter II. It is important to note that this position on the chain does not reflect a single *policy* or *strategy*, but rather the numerous levels of commands and government above the COCOM level. These actors include the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Congress, and the President, as well as other entities at the national level that influence U.S. foreign policy and strategy. Finally, the chain has been rotated into a vertical position, which will serve to better illustrate how position and perspective impact the form and function of a partnership.

²⁴⁷ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 154.

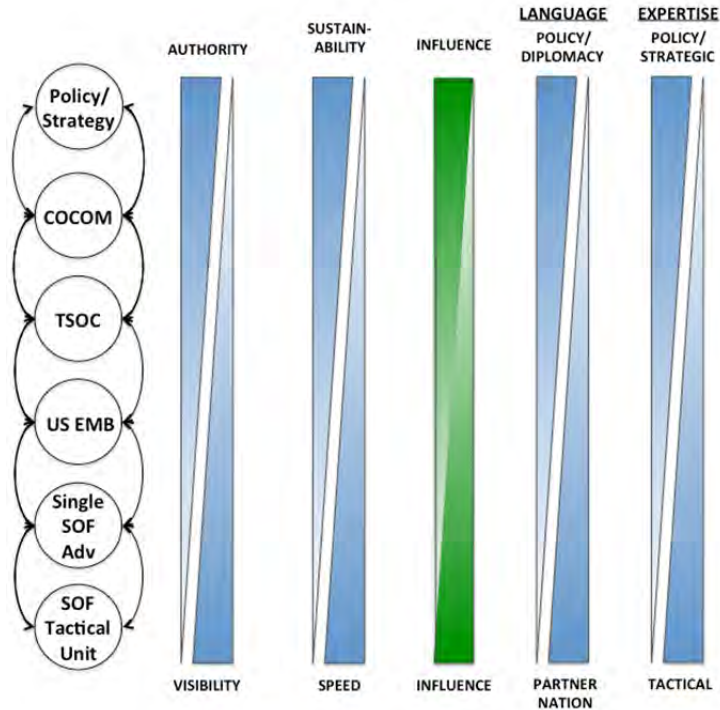


Figure 9. The Modified Arranging Chain

(2) Speed versus Sustainability

Chapter II offered insight into the problems that beset military planners and leaders during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, namely the emergent and urgent requirements to build the capacity of the two countries' security forces. As the Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance notes on their website, "in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. military found itself doing something where it had no existing terms that described what they were doing or doctrine on how to do it."²⁴⁸ Situations and requirements on the ground evolve faster than policy and strategy can keep pace.

Actors at the lower end of the chain can act very fast, developing creative solutions with the resources at hand to solve immediate and localized problems. Conversely, changes in policy, strategy, and doctrine, are notoriously slow; a point reiterated by former Secretary Gates time and again. Although actors at the top of the

²⁴⁸ "Historical Context and Contemporary Understanding of SFA." Joint Center for International Security Force Assistance.

chain lack speed they make-up for it in staying power. Law and policy are hard to change, but once they do change they stay on the books for a long time. Gates illuminated that point when he reminded readers the last major piece of legislation that governs foreign assistance was signed into law by John F. Kennedy.²⁴⁹

The speedy actors at the bottom of the chain, however, lack this level of sustainability. To begin with, units and individuals continually rotate, so there is a time limit on their physical presence. Even single SOF advisors that live in the partner country full-time can really only hope to stay there for three to four years before being assigned elsewhere. As a result, the ideas and solutions that tactical level units are able to quickly implement to address localized problems may be as short-lived as that unit's deployment cycle. Therefore, these solutions need to take root programmatically if they are going to survive and span the years and decades a capacity building mission may take. That requires the sponsorship of a higher headquarters or policy decision, and the funding, resourcing, and approval—the protection and institutionalization—that come with them.

b. Skillsets

The skills the actors need to succeed vary at different levels as well. This work has combined those skills into two broad categories: Language and Expertise, although others may exist as well. These skillsets were apparent in research and operational experience, and are highly illustrative and are factors generally considered in all partner nation engagements.

(1) Language

Communication in a partnership is key. Language and cultural understanding therefore becomes extremely important. However, not all the actors need to speak the same language. For actors at the lower level being able to interact with the partner nation forces in their native language is very important.²⁵⁰ However, towards the top of the

²⁴⁹ Gates, "Helping Others Defend Themselves," 4.

²⁵⁰ Russell D. Howard and Joint Special Operations University (U.S.), *Cultural and Linguistic Skills Acquisition for Special Forces: Necessity, Acceleration, and Potential Alternatives* (Hurlburt Field, FL: JSOU Press, 2011), 1–4.

chain the host-nation language becomes less important because counterparts at that level tend to speak English themselves, or have access to excellent interpreters.²⁵¹ What does become important at the higher level, however, is the ability to speak the language of diplomacy and policy. Actors at the upper level of the chain are required to navigate the challenging waters described in Chapter II interacting with other heads of state, ministerial level leaders, U.S. ambassadors, and others. The language, culture, and nuances of these “high-level engagements,” are very different from the language and nuances exchanged between tactical level units training at an outstation somewhere in the hinterland.

(2) Expertise

The expertise required by different actors is very similar to the varying language requirements. Where a tactical USSOF unit had better be experts in weapons, communications, medical aid, and demolitions, they have little use or time for studying protocol, the delicate nature of gift exchanges, and political signaling. However, TSOC and COCOM commanders very much do. Likewise actors at the upper rungs also require, as Petit noted, the knowledge to program funding and forces, and how to seek requisite authorities and approvals. Tasks, when carried out in a Phase Zero environment, will most certainly bring them to the front door of a U.S. embassy where they will need to be well armed in the art of diplomacy.

5. Influence: The Tie that Binds

Influence is the singular constant between the actors in the chain. Whereas the relationships of qualities and areas of expertise vary inversely between actors along the chain, all the actors share influence over a partnership equally. Since supply chains, as Handfield explained, are dependent on the efficient flow of ideas and support the actors in the arranging chain are dependent upon each other to overcome inherent deficits in their own qualities or expertise.

²⁵¹ Author’s personal experience at Special Operations Command Europe from 2011–2012.

For example, by virtue of his distance²⁵² from the tactical level engagement, a TSOC commander is reliant on the forward deployed tactical USSOF unit for the ground truth about various aspects of a capacity building partnership; aspects on which he lacks a sufficient level of resolution as a result of his position on the arranging chain. Likewise, the tactical USSOF unit is operating within in very restrictive parameters as determined by the authorities granted to them to conduct their missions. They may very well possess the ability to achieve greater success or effectiveness by leveraging their access, placement, speed, and feel for the situation, but lack the authority to do so. As a result, they are in turn reliant on the authorities the TSOC commander possesses and his ability to go up the chain to secure additional authorities if necessary.

Because the actors in the arranging chain are reliant on each other, their interaction with each other influences the overall effectiveness of the partnership. In the case of the TSOC commander and the tactical SOF unit, the effectiveness, tone, and content of the communication up the chain from the tactical unit via the feedback loops that exist between actors will have an impact on the TSOC commander's decisions and actions regarding the future of the BPC mission.

6. Why the Arranging Chain Matters to SOF BPC

Petit's notion of the arranging chain provides an excellent approach to examining the various actors that populate a SOF BPC enterprise. First, understanding the enterprise in terms of these actors helps to better understand how all the policy and programmatic hurdles of capacity building are interrelated and how they affect actors on the chain differently. Knowing who is involved in the process helps to increase understanding and

²⁵² *Distance* here refers to both the physical distance which almost always separates a TSOC commander from tactical level engagements in his AOR by virtue of other pressing duties and requirements, and the location of his headquarters in relation to the location of the tactical level engagement. But distance also refers to the distance that separates the TSOC commander, usually a two-star flag or general officer, from a tactical level unit usually led by an O-3 captain or U.S. Navy lieutenant. This physical separation in rank and position creates an invisible wall, albeit not impenetrable wall, that inhibits the commander from getting a true *feel* for what is happening on the ground. Commander visits are usually well-choreographed VIP visits which are designed to highlight strengths and minimize points of friction. As a result, some commanders minimize such as events to allow the tactical units to better focus on the tasks at hand.

provide some transparency. Second, the chain helps identify the inherent strengths and weaknesses of the different actors, and underscores the point that effective capacity building requires all the actors to work together; compensating for each other's weaknesses with each other's strengths. Finally, as addressed in the previous chapter, it is impossible to build partner capacity without the partner. Additionally, partnerships are very dynamic. As illustrated in Figure 10, understanding the enterprise in terms of this chain also helps all members consider and account for the partners' strengths, weaknesses, bureaucratic headaches and political dilemmas can help reduce friction within the partnership, and to function as a more resilient enterprise within the dynamic environment of international partnerships.

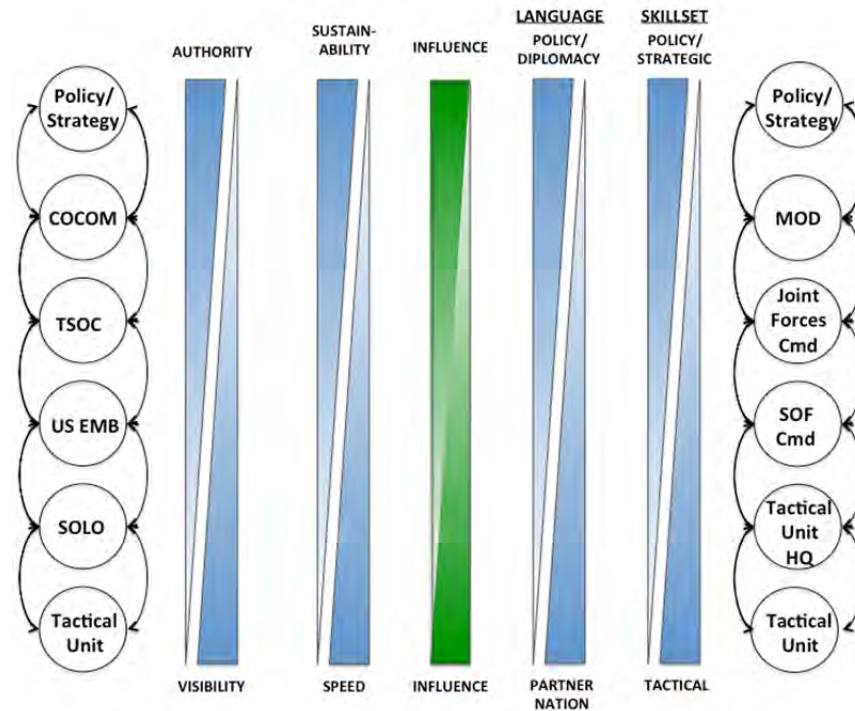


Figure 10. The Actors of the SOF BPC Enterprise

F. SUMMARY: THE SOF BPC ENTERPRISE

Building partner capacity is an integral part of what USSOF does. Since USSOF has been building partner capacity since their inception, one could say it is part of USSOF's DNA. That is certainly one difference that separates USSOF BPC from other

DOD BPC efforts. But they also vary because of the nature of the missions USSOF is asked to accomplish; USSOF's unique capabilities which allow them to employ specialized tactics and techniques to achieve their ends; and because of their ability, thanks in part to their nimble force structure, to construct resilient chains of actors. Combined, these qualities allow USSOF to build capacity in ways and in places that conventional DOD formations would exceedingly difficult. Additionally, the resiliency of their chain of actors allows USSOF to react more fluidly to the dynamic nature of international partnerships.

The USSOF BPC enterprise is a system of actors, activities and programs that uses unique techniques and procedures under unique conditions and to exacting standards to achieve the BPC objective. The enterprise requires continues synchronization vertically from the policy level to the tactical level, and horizontally with the partner nation, in order to ensure the right skills and equipment arrive in the right place at the right time for the duration necessary in accordance with U.S. law. These activities are usually carried out in challenging and politically sensitive environments, which require USSOF to conduct their efforts in a very adaptive manner. The following chapter will present a case study comparison of two such enterprises carried out by Special Operations Command South in South America from 2001 to 2010.

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IV. CASE STUDY: SOCSOUTH IN COLOMBIA AND PARAGUAY (2001–2010)

A. INTRODUCTION

The examination of capacity building endeavors presents a number of challenges, the most difficult of which is how to gauge and measure just how effectively the capacity is being built. This is a significant challenge for a number of reasons, especially because BPC enterprises are tough to compare. Endeavors in capacity building are all unique, by virtue of when the capacity is being built, by whom, with whom, and for what purpose. For example, while recent USSOF BPC efforts in South America are focused on building counter-narcoterrorism capacity to address internal instability within partner nations, USSOF in Europe are focused intensely on developing more advanced and interoperable Eastern European SOF partner forces that can participate in multinational missions beyond their own borders.²⁵³ Although both are USSOF BPC endeavors they are very much different. As a result a clean comparison of those cases would be frustrated for a number of reasons, and ultimately hold little value or weight. The matter is further complicated because success in such endeavors is rarely defined, partly because the objectives are not clear enough from the outset, but also because the dynamic nature of partnerships can increase or decrease the amount of time necessary to build the desired capacity. Therefore, it becomes difficult to distinguish a case where capacity building worked from one that has not, because it could easily be said that in the former case the capacity building has simply not worked *yet*.

To ensure a clean comparison of these two different endeavors, this case study will compare two post-9/11 BPC enterprises established and managed by the same TSOC, during the same period, with very similar capacity building objectives. This approach provides the opportunity to compare results between efforts while isolating constant factors in the partnership environment. These factors include U.S. political and

²⁵³ Wilson, interview; Dellinger, “Special Operations Command Europe: Strengthening Partnerships for Global Security.”

military leadership, U.S. strategic objectives, U.S. law, authorities, and other external factors such as world events, etc., as they would be as similar as possible between any two cases taken from the same TSOC during the same period. Given these criteria, SOCSOUTH's efforts in Colombia and Paraguay from 2001–2010 were chosen for this thesis.

These cases were selected for several reasons. First, they meet the case selection criteria. Second, SOCSOUTH's campaign in Colombia is often portrayed in professional literature as the gold standard of contemporary USSOF capacity building outside of a warzone.²⁵⁴ Although SOCSOUTH's efforts in Colombia garner the most attention, the command also gave a proportional²⁵⁵ amount of attention and level of commitment to Paraguay, yet these efforts are barely mentioned in professional literature, DOD documents, or congressional reports. The disparity in the level of success between SOCSOUTH's efforts in Colombia and Paraguay provides an opportunity to identify the factors that determine success in such BPC endeavors. Third, the Colombia case study is, more than likely, already a familiar one to most of those reading this thesis.

This chapter will first examine U.S. interests and objectives in South America, followed by an overview of U.S. Southern Command's and SOCSOUTH's perspective on South America and their operational approaches. The majority of this chapter is dedicated to the examination of Colombia and Paraguay, and SOCSOUTH's BPC enterprises in both of these countries. The analysis of this examination will be provided in the following chapter.

²⁵⁴ Mark Moyer, Hector Pagan, and Wil R. Griego, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: JSOU Press, July 2014) http://jsou.socom.mil/PubsPages/JSOU14-3_Moyar-Pagan-Griego_Colombia_FINAL.pdf; Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 125.

²⁵⁵ *Proportional* here refers to the smaller size of the Paraguayan military and U.S. presence and embassy in Paraguay as compared to Colombia.

B. BACKGROUND

1. U.S. Objectives in South America (2001–2010)

The United States is “bound by proximity, integrated markets, energy interdependence,” with the nations in the Americas.²⁵⁶ As President Obama states in his *2010 National Security Strategy*, “our deep historical, familial, and cultural ties make our alliances and partnerships critical to U.S. interests.”²⁵⁷ Throughout the first decade of the 2000s, the United States was focused on “bolstering security, strengthening democratic institutions, promoting prosperity, and investing in people,” in South America.²⁵⁸ Although, the United States has long had interest in the on-goings in South America, specifically the drug trade, the United States’ security interest in the region took on a new dimension after 9/11. Following the attacks of September 11th, terrorism moved to the forefront of U.S. security concerns around the globe, to include South America.²⁵⁹ The mutual threat of nacroterrorism that confronts many South American countries and the United States brings the U.S. national interests in South America into sharper focus.

Over the past decade the United States has grown increasingly concerned about terrorist and insurgent groups that are threatening several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.²⁶⁰ A recent Congressional Research Service report indicates that “although Latin America has not been the focal point in the war on terrorism, countries in the region have struggled with domestic terrorism for decades and international terrorist groups have at times used the region as a battleground to advance their causes.”²⁶¹ These concerns served to drive the focus of efforts in U.S. Southern Command and

²⁵⁶ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (2010) 44.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2006) 37.

²⁵⁹ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2002).

²⁶⁰ Mark P. Sullivan and June S. Beittel, *Latin America: Terrorism Issues* (CRS Report No. RS21049) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 15, 2014), 2, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RS21049.pdf>.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

SOCSOUTH during this period. Two of the nations where SOCSOUTH focused its limited resources were Colombia and Paraguay.

2. U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM)

United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) is the GCC responsible for all DOD activities carried out in Central and South America, and the Caribbean. The command's objective is simple: to ensure "the forward defense of the United States."²⁶² Recognizing the increased interconnection and interdependence between all the nations in the western hemisphere, USSOUTHCOM published their ten year strategy in March of 2007 under the motto of "Partnership for the Americas."²⁶³ As the motto indicates, USSOUTHCOM was, and remains, clearly oriented on partnership and military-to-military engagements whenever and wherever it can.²⁶⁴ However, there are several factors that inform the command's strategy and approach.

First, as the United States prosecuted the Global War on Terror (GWOT) around the world during this period, USSOUTHCOM was not a top priority.²⁶⁵ The majority of funding, resources, and personnel, during this period were being funneled to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As an economy of force theater, USSOUTHCOM, in the words of one of the command's leaders, was left with "tough choices about where to put our strength and where to accept risk."²⁶⁶

The second factor is the diverse nature of USSOUTHCOM's AOR, and the equally diverse nature of U.S. diplomatic relations throughout this area. As a study on the command observes, "American relations with individual nations in the region vary

²⁶² Bantz J. Craddock, *Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Southern Command, before the 109th Congress House Armed Services Committee* (Washington, DC, 2006), 2, http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/olc/testimony_old/109_second.html.

²⁶³ U.S. Southern Command, *United States Southern Command Strategy 2016* (Miami, FL, 2007).

²⁶⁴ Craddock, *Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Southern Command, before the 109th Congress House Armed Services Committee*, 3–4.

²⁶⁵ Wilson, interview.

²⁶⁶ Brian S. Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero* (S.l.: Outskirts Press, 2013), 126.

dramatically from the highest levels of cooperation on trade agreements and security issues on one extreme to an absence of diplomatic relations and trade embargos on the other”²⁶⁷

The third factor is the nature of the security threat. The SOUTHSOM strategy, Strategy 2016, states, “the potential for force-on-force military actions between two or more nations in the region is relatively low; however, we face many other conditions and challenges that threaten security, stability, and prosperity,” which include: poverty and inequality, corruption, terrorism, and crime.²⁶⁸ Although these security challenges, with the exception of terrorism, do not directly fall within the tradition realm of military issues, they certainly serve as the tinder for strife and conflict and warranted their due attention and effort.

Combined, the lack of resources and forces, the diverse array of diplomatic relations throughout their AOR, and the non-traditional security challenges, served to present USSOUTHCOM with a challenging problem set. To best address the challenge before them, USSOUTHCOM divided their AOR into four sub-regions: the Andean Ridge (Colombia, Venezuela, and Bolivia), Central America, the Caribbean, and the Southern Cone (Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay).²⁶⁹ Within these regions, USSOUTHCOM focused intently on partnership, engagement, and capacity building. Also, as a result of the limited resources allocated to the theater, the command made extensive use of various types of authorities to procure additional funding and operational latitude.²⁷⁰ This creative and adaptive approach was particularly true for USSOUTHCOM’s special operations component, SOCSOUTH.

²⁶⁷ Christian M. Averett, Louis A. Cervantes, and Patrick M. O’Hara, *An Analysis of Special Operations Command-South’s Distributive Command and Control Concept* (DTIC Document, 2007), 10, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA475840>.

²⁶⁸ U.S. Southern Command, *United States Southern Command Strategy 2016*, 4.

²⁶⁹ Craddock, *Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Southern Command, before the 109th Congress House Armed Services Committee*, 5.

²⁷⁰ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 126–127.

3. SOCSOUTH

SOCSOUTH is a sub-unified command directly subordinate to USSOUTHCOM. As such, SOCSOUTH was limited by the same constraints and faced the same challenges as its parent headquarters. In line with USSOUTHCOM's overall strategy, SOCSOUTH developed its own approach to support the larger SOUTHCOM effort. In what SOCSOUTH referred to as its regional war on terror (RWOT), the TSOC sought to achieve a "layered defense of the homeland," by simultaneously carrying-out three different types of campaigns in three different regions within the AOR.²⁷¹ Those campaigns were: "disruption in the Southern Cone sub-region, stabilization in the Andean Ridge, and interdiction in the Caribbean and Central America."²⁷²

a. *Layered Defense*

Naturally, given the different campaign objectives, SOCSOUTH employed different approaches in these different regions. As Averett, Cervantes, and O'Hara note, "The purpose of SOCSOUTH's efforts in the Southern Cone (SC) is to disrupt transnational terrorist activities...Special operations forces in this area integrate their operations with other USG and partner nation government activities. These same SOF forces also serve as advisors in regional shaping operations."²⁷³ Whereas, in the Andean Ridge (AR), the command "focused on maintaining or increasing the stability of existing governments within the sub-region through a sustained SOF presence, as well as the targeting of high value narco-terrorist leaders."²⁷⁴ Activities in support of these objectives in the AR required SOF to "provide coordination, counterterror planning assistance, intelligence support, operational preparation of the environment (OPE), and inter-agency liaison to many of these Andean governments. In addition, Joint and

²⁷¹ Averett, Cervantes, and O'Hara, *An Analysis of Special Operations Command-South's Distributive Command and Control Concept*, 20.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid., 21–22.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 22.

Combined Exchange Training (JCETs) are used to build relationships and maintain partner nation capacity.”²⁷⁵

b. *Four Integrated Ideas*

To achieve these objectives, SOCSOUTH’s approach contained four integrated ideas:

1. A creative but transparent use of authorities and forward posture;
2. A tactically focused engagement effort with appropriately missioned partner nation units;
3. A forward-deployed headquarters to provide executive level interface; and
4. Personal, private collaboration with strategic leadership including the USSOUTHCOM’s commander, U.S. interagency leaders, and key partner nation political and military leaders.²⁷⁶

c. *The SOC-Forward*

The third integrated idea listed above, a “forward-deployed headquarters,” took the form of the *SOC-Forward* (SOCFWD), a non-doctrinal approach to command and control, commonly attributed as the brain-child of SOCSOUTH’s former Commanding General, then-Brigadier General Charles T. Cleveland.²⁷⁷ The SOCFWD concept took shape in 2006, and was defined by SOCSOUTH as “a flat, networked command and control architecture that incorporates multiple, tailored C2 nodes, facilitates rapid decision making, interagency coordination and proper resourcing of special operations forces operating over vast geographic areas in support of the RWOT.”²⁷⁸ The SOCFWD served several key functions to include serving as an “in-country” synchronizing headquarters, conducting daily coordination and longer-term planning and coordination

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 132–133; Wilson, interview.

²⁷⁷ Wilson, interview.

²⁷⁸ Averett, Cervantes, and O’Hara, *An Analysis of Special Operations Command-South’s Distributive Command and Control Concept*, 25.

with U.S. and partner nation officials, and providing effective “reach back” capabilities between units on the ground and the TSOC headquarters in Florida.²⁷⁹

Additionally, as General Cleveland noted at the time “traditional military structures are optimized for unilateral action are neither necessary nor welcome by ambassadors and partner nations.”²⁸⁰ SOCFWDs also provided a solution to that problem because they were smaller and less invasive while still providing all of the advantages listed above. In all, SOCSOUTH established three SOCFWDs within SOCSOUTH’s AOR; one in Colombia, another in Paraguay, and the final one in the Caribbean.²⁸¹ This examination will now turn to the two BPC enterprises in Colombia and Paraguay.

C. SOCSOUTH IN COLOMBIA

1. U.S. Interests and Relations with Colombia

The United States has a very long relationship with Colombia, one that even includes the deployment of Colombian forces to Korea during the Korean War, the only Latin American country to do so.²⁸² By the end of the 1990s, however, Colombia was on the verge of being a failed state. Plagued by violence and insurgencies ongoing since the 1960s, the Colombian government was near collapse under the pressure of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC)*, the *Ejercito de Liberacion (ELN)*, and the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC)*.²⁸³

According to a 2003 report from the U.S. Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Colombia was the number one producer and distributor of cocaine in the world, and a “significant” supplier of heroin to

²⁷⁹ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 134.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

²⁸¹ Wilson, interview; Averett, Cervantes, and O’Hara, *An Analysis of Special Operations Command-South’s Distributive Command and Control Concept*, 28.

²⁸² Mario A. Murillo, *Colombia and the United States: War, Unrest and Destabilization* (Seven Stories Press, 2011), 124.

²⁸³ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 120–123.

the United States.²⁸⁴ As Petit observes, “illegal drugs, principally cocaine and heroin, drive U.S. interests in Colombia.”²⁸⁵ However, after concerns about terrorism, and terrorism’s ability to breed in areas of unrest and instability, the United States began to look at Colombia from a new perspective in the early 2000s.

In the first National Security Strategy published after 9/11, President George W. Bush addressed the problems in Colombia directly, stating, “In Colombia, we recognize the link between terrorist and extremist groups that challenge the security of the state and drug trafficking activities that help finance the operations of such groups.”²⁸⁶ These security concerns were nothing new to the members of Southern Command and SOCSOUTH, but the United States’ increased attention on countering terrorism would prove to bolster their efforts in the country. During this period Colombia and the United States forged a close partnership focused initially on, counter-narcotics and later counterterrorism which quickly broadened to “include trade, human rights, and development.”²⁸⁷

2. Colombia: A Domestic Perspective

Despite being one of the oldest democracies in Latin America, Colombia also holds the dubious record of hosting the longest armed conflict in the western hemisphere.²⁸⁸ Colombia is the third-most populous country in Latin America, but 50% of that population lived in poverty as of 2002.²⁸⁹ This factor, in addition to a “lack of state control over much of Colombian territory,” social-inequality, and political corruption have left Colombia “plagued by violence and a conflict that has lasted nearly

²⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, 2003, IV-19.

²⁸⁵ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 125.

²⁸⁶ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (2002) 10.

²⁸⁷ June S. Beittel, *Colombia: Background, U.S. Relations, and Congressional Interest* (CRS Report No. RL32250) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, November 28, 2012), i, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32250.pdf>.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

five decades.”²⁹⁰ It was not until the late 1990s, teetering on the verge of collapse, that Colombia began to turn things around. Change in Colombia began politically. Many see the election of President Andres Pastrana in 1998 and the implementation of Plan Colombia as the starting point of this change.²⁹¹ The following sections will examine Colombia’s national security strategy, political leadership, and the Colombian military.

a. Plan Colombia, Plan Patriota, and the National Consolidation Plan

Colombia initiated a series of national strategies in 1999, which have carried through to present day, and are seen as having been critical to Colombia’s rapid turnaround from a near-failed state. The first of these plans was Plan Colombia. Initiated under President Andres Pastrana, Plan Colombia was a “comprehensive civil, military, and development plan” although it was heavily weighted towards police and military operations and infrastructure.²⁹² As Thomas A. Marks, a noted Colombian scholar observes, Plan Colombia allowed the Colombians to wrest the “strategic initiative” away from the FARC.²⁹³

Plan Patriota was the follow-up to Plan Colombia, and was brought into action by Pastrana’s successor, Álvaro Uribe. As Petit observes, Partiota was a “muscularized version of Plan Colombia that capitalized on the expanded Colombian security capability.”²⁹⁴ Initiated in 2004, “Plan Patriota was the military component of a dual security strategy designed to secure rural populations and drive the FARC from their safehavens.”²⁹⁵ Not without its critics, Plan Patriota ultimately “reduced FARC ranks, recaptured land held by the FARC, and confiscated large amounts of material used to process cocaine.”²⁹⁶

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 123–125.

²⁹² Ibid., 123.

²⁹³ Thomas A. Marks, “A Model Counterinsurgency: Uribe’s Colombia (2002–2006) versus FARC,” *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (2007), 43.

²⁹⁴ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 124.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Beittel, *Colombia: Background, U.S. Relations, and Congressional Interest*, 15.

In 2007 Colombia's strategy was advanced further under what eventually became known as the National Consolidation Plan (PNC). The PNC was Uribe's strategic plan for his second term and was "intended to consolidate the gains of the Democratic Security policies that were successful in reducing violence in the first term and to consolidate state presence in marginal areas where insurgent activity by illegal armed groups, drug trafficking, and violence converged."²⁹⁷ The PNC, the third evolution of the original Plan Colombia, remains in effect today in Colombia.²⁹⁸

b. President Álvaro Uribe (2002 – 2010)

Uribe was elected in 2002 for his aggressive violence reduction plan that included components to "address the paramilitary problem, defeat leftist guerrilla insurgents, and combat narcotics trafficking."²⁹⁹ After being elected, Uribe came out swinging. Increasing the size, capabilities, and roles of the Colombia military and police, Uribe was able to put significant pressure on the FARC.³⁰⁰ His quick and decisive action garnered him substantial political capital allowing him to pursue and attain additional legislation to support Plans Colombia and Patriota. The major piece of legislation was the Justice and Peace Law, facilitating the demobilization of paramilitary organizations by giving Uribe authority to grant amnesty to illegal combatants as part of peace negotiations.³⁰¹ The success of Uribe's actions can also be derived from the public mandate he received in 2005 when Colombia amended its constitution to allow Uribe to serve a second term in office.³⁰²

Uribe's results were not only politically palpable; they are easily quantified as well. In 2002 the FARC exercised such freedom of action around the national capital of Bogotá, they were able to launch a mortar attack on the presidential palace during Uribe's

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 35.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 1.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 4.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 22.

³⁰² Ibid., 4.

first presidential inauguration. However, four years later, the FARC, despite their declared desire to do so, was completely unable to disrupt Uribe's second inauguration.³⁰³ From 2002 to 2008, U.S. State Department figures indicate "kidnappings in Colombia declined by 83%, homicides by 40%, and terrorist attacks by 76%," and that, "police regained a presence in all of Colombia's municipalities, including areas from which they had been ousted by guerrilla groups."³⁰⁴ Supported by a detailed and decisive national strategy, Uribe achieved rapid security gains and is a central figure in the story of Colombia's turn-around.

c. The Colombian Military

In 1999, a former U.S. Ambassador summarized the Colombian military as "basically a barracks military, not...organized to go after the guerrillas...[having] some brave and capable people, but...strictly a reaction force, and not a very mobile one at that."³⁰⁵ Despite the decades of conflict in Colombia, the nation's counterinsurgency capabilities were scant. In 1988 the Colombian Army only had three mobile infantry brigades, a four-battalion Special Forces Brigade, which was not created until 1996, and a minute army aviation brigade dedicated to countering insurgent threats throughout an entire country almost twice the size of Texas.³⁰⁶ Under Plan Colombia the military and national police went under drastic transformation "while in a pitched battle for Colombia," as "the FARC, ELN, and AUC moved from guerrilla tactics to a war of movement against the Colombian government."³⁰⁷

In 1999, the Colombian Ministry of Defense (MOD) "took the initial steps in what would be a multiyear trial-and-error process to transform the Armed Forces through

³⁰³ Ibid., 14.

³⁰⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Charting Colombia's Progress," November 5, 2008, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/documents/organization/112084.pdf>.

³⁰⁵ Robert D. Ramsey III, *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jacque: The Colombian Security Force Experience, 1998-2008*, Occasional Paper 34 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009), 13.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 15-16.

³⁰⁷ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 128.

institutional changes, new technologies, and new doctrine to address the internal security threats.”³⁰⁸ These changes were rapid, dramatic, and focused in three areas: reorienting the military apparatus from a garrison military to a military at war; transitioning its forces from a conscript military to a professional military; and retraining its military in counter guerrilla operations.³⁰⁹ By the time SOCSOUTH capacity-building efforts shifted to military forces in 2002, USSOF was walking into a transitioning force with a larger supporting apparatus in the MOD.

3. SOCSOUTH ON THE GROUND IN COLOMBIA

a. Overview

SOCSOUTH’s capacity building engagement on the ground in Colombia was cautious at first, but not without reason. During the 1990s “U.S. Special Forces engagement with the Colombian military was prohibited due to U.S. policy objections over Colombian human rights issues.”³¹⁰ As a result, USSOF engagement in Colombia was limited almost exclusively to counter drug units in the Colombian National Police (CNP) under the close eye of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and the U.S. Department of Justice.³¹¹ However, given the worsening nature of the conflict in Colombia, the promise that Plan Colombia showed to outsiders like the United States, and the United States’ changing view on terrorism post-9/11, the U.S.-Colombia partnership shifted in 2002.³¹² A report from the Congressional Research Service notes, “Because narcotics trafficking and the guerrilla insurgency had become intertwined problems, Congress granted the Administration flexibility to use U.S. counterdrug funds for a unified campaign to fight drug trafficking and terrorist organizations.”³¹³ With the

³⁰⁸ Ramsey III, *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jacque: The Colombian Security Force Experience, 1998–2008*, 48.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 127.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 128.

³¹² Beittel, *Colombia: Background, U.S. Relations, and Congressional Interest*, 31.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

increased funding and operational latitude SOCSOUTH gradually began to expand its capacity building enterprise in Colombia.

After the issue of Plan Colombia in 1999, “USSOF engagement focused on the Colombian National Police counter drug brigade, the *Brigade Contra el Narcotrafica* (BRNCA) and the Colombian Army Tactical Retraining Center (CERTE).”³¹⁴ After the U.S. policy shift in 2002, however, “USSOF began engagements outside of the counterdrug-focused BRNCA elements. Consequently, USSOF assisted Colombian units that were increasingly operating in the FARC-dominated Southern Colombia regions.”³¹⁵

As the skill of Colombian forces increased, so too did the demand for additional capacity building bandwidth. In 2002 and again in 2004, the U.S. Congress authorized increases in U.S. military personnel caps in Colombia. These increases facilitated broader capacity-building engagement at the institutional level, efforts which resulted in the creation of a Colombian Army Special Operations Command (COESE) and eventually “the Colombian equivalent of [the United States’] Joint Special Operations Command (CCOPE).”³¹⁶ The creation of these headquarters, aided by USSOF advisors and planners, demonstrate how this BPC enterprise required capacity building not only at the tactical level, but also at the operational level in order to achieve the desired objective.

b. SOCFWD-Colombia

SOCFWD-Colombia was established in 2006, and during steady-state operations maintained approximately 120 SOF personnel in Colombia at any given time.³¹⁷ These operational forces included a persistent presence of multiple U.S. Army Special Forces Operational Detachments-Alpha (SFOD-A) and their headquarter elements Operational Detachments-Bravo (SFOD-B), in addition to elements from Naval Special Warfare

³¹⁴ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 128.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.

³¹⁷ Wilson, interview.

Group (NSWG), Civil-Military Support Elements (CMSE), Military Information Support Operations teams (MISO).³¹⁸

In addition to managing the activities of these multiple SOF entities within the country, the SOCFWD in Colombia also provided several intangible advantages that enhanced the overall effectiveness of the BPC enterprise in Colombia. A 2007 study on SOCFWD-Colombia draws the following conclusions:

1. The colocation of an operational level headquarters in country with tactical level units significantly reduced communication barriers that had existed previously.
2. The SOCFWD provided “top cover” for the tactical level units at the U.S. Embassy. This relieved the tactical level units of numerous administrative responsibilities allowing the units to focus more intently on their capacity-building efforts.
3. By virtue of their colocation at the U.S. embassy, and the SOCFWD commander being of commensurate rank, the SOCFWD was able to very effectively resolve issues and procure resourcing through the Defense Attaché (DAO) and the Security Cooperation Office (SCO) in a manner that junior, rotational units and officers were unable to.³¹⁹

According to Colonel (Ret.) Gregory Wilson, who commanded SOCFWD-Colombia twice during this period, the SOCFWD provided an additional intangible benefit which aided the capacity building enterprise in Colombia—trust building. The permanent presence of an O-6 headquarters in-country, a costly endeavor for a resource-strapped command, demonstrated the commitment of SOCSOUTH to both the U.S. country team as well as to their Colombian counterparts. Furthermore, the headquarters’ permanent presence provided a level of transparency and understanding among all parties that was not possible when the TSOC was operating solely from its headquarters in Florida.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Averett, Cervantes, and O’Hara, *An Analysis of Special Operations Command-South’s Distributive Command and Control Concept*, 44.

³²⁰ Wilson, interview.

c. Operation Willing Spirit

On February 13, 2003, Colombian and American interests were drawn closer together when three U.S. civilian contractors crash landed in a remote Colombian jungle and were taken hostage by the FARC.³²¹ The captured Americans became USSOUTHCOM's top priority in Colombia, and in 2005 the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff issued an execution order for Operation Willing Spirit (OWS) to locate and recover the hostages.³²² OWS drastically impacted SOCSOUTH's BPC enterprise.

First, as a named operation, OWS increased authorities, funding, and resources allocated to SOCSOUTH, which USSOUTHCOM designated "as the lead for all DOD hostage rescue and recovery actions."³²³ This increased the tools at SOCSOUTH's disposal, and broadened the rules within which SOCSOUTH had to operate. These additional tools and rules were greatly needed as SOCSOUTH determined that to rescue the hostages it would require a broader "mosaic of engagement and assistance programs in Colombia." They would be needed in order to increase certain capacities they saw requisite for the hostage rescue such as U.S. Colombian planning and increased operational reach into the interior jungles.³²⁴ Second, OWS gave both the Colombians and Americans a sharp, common operational focus that heightened the sense of urgency and commitment between the partners.³²⁵

Third, OWS also brought the American chain of actors closer together. Wilson notes that the staunchest ally that SOCSOUTH had in Colombia was William R. Brownfield, the U.S. Ambassador to Colombia himself, stating "we would not have been able to do what we did in Colombia without the unbelievable support of Ambassador

³²¹ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 130.

³²² Craddock, *Posture Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, United States Southern Command, before the 109th Congress House Armed Services Committee*, 5; Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 131.

³²³ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 131.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 131–134.

³²⁵ Wilson, interview.

Brownfield.”³²⁶ With the increased support on the diplomatic side, the BPC enterprise was able to operate more efficiently.

Fourth, OWS provided SOCSOUTH a rare opportunity to seize on operational gains on the ground in Colombia. As the aperture opened on what SOCSOUTH was permitted to do in country, the Colombians were making consolidated gains on the FARC, ELN and AUC. Combined these factors allowed SOCFWD-Colombia to take a more aggressive approach, at first by providing USSOF experts in sensitive site exploitation to examine FARC prisoner of war camps immediately after Colombian forces had liberated them; then by embedding USSOF personnel with frontline Colombian reconnaissance units as the combined effort closed in on the hostages.³²⁷

The hostages were finally rescued on July 2, 2008, in a daring rescue carried out unilaterally by Colombian SOF and Colombian interagency partners. *Operation Jaque* (Checkmate) rescued 12 other hostages in addition to the three Americans without firing a single shot. This operation is lauded as one of the great military deceptions of the contemporary era, and is often used as the proof-positive of SOCSOUTH’s BPC efforts in Colombia. However, the BPC efforts in Colombia did not end with Operation Jaque, and to assume so would be unfair to SOCSOUTH.

In the days following Operation Jaque, numerous high level distinguished visitors traveled to Colombia to congratulate the Colombians on their stunning success, General Cleveland was one of those visitors. In a meeting with President Uribe, the Colombian president reaffirmed to the senior State Department officials and military leaders in front of him that the fight was not finished with the FARC, that the United States support was, and remained, essential to their success, and that he was very pleased with his new SOF capacity.³²⁸ The following day, General Cleveland met with the Minister of Defense and Service Chiefs of the Colombian military, and he was about to leverage the power of the key leader engagement to build some capacity of his own.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 134; Wilson, interview.

³²⁸ Wilson, interview.

The success of all the effort that led-up to Operation Jaque and the president's affirmations the day before presented General Cleveland a fleeting opportunity, and he seized it. Seated before the civilian and uniformed leaders of the Colombian military, Cleveland spoke, "Gentlemen, our special operations command was born out of the ashes of Desert One,³²⁹ you have the opportunity to build yours on the success of Op Jaque." According to Colonel Wilson, who was in the room when Cleveland made the statement, the entire room was stunned.

Given the jubilation surrounding the successful rescue and the president's support of special operations, just the mention of a special operations headquarters, which the service chiefs were not supportive of, had enough momentum to carry it through to fruition. Until that point, all of Colombian SOF reported to the commander of CCOPE, an O-6 supported by a small battle staff, who reported directly to the Chief of Defense. Shortly after Cleveland's proposition the Colombians established a two-star general officer, USSOCOM-like, joint, special operations headquarters.³³⁰ This headquarters not only bolstered the strategic and operational capacity of Colombian SOF, but also provided new BPC opportunities for SOCSOUTH. The command worked closely through staff integration and by bringing in subject matter experts from USSOCOM to help and assist in fashioning the new headquarters appropriately and to best meet the Colombian's needs.³³¹ Additionally, this act served to institutionalize and protect USSOF's capacity building investment in Colombia.

d. Results

From top to bottom, the results of SOCSOUTH's BPC enterprise in Colombia are impressive. In 2001, Colombian SOF lacked any sort of operational headquarters, by

³²⁹ Desert One was the initial landing and refueling site of Operation Eagle Claw, the failed operation to rescue American hostages held in Iran in April 1980. In addition to mission failure, the operation was a great military and diplomatic embarrassment for the United States and resulted in the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 and the creation of U.S. Special Operations Command. (See Mark Bowden, "The Desert One Debacle," *The Atlantic*, May 1, 2006, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/print/2006/05/the-desert-one-debacle/304803/>).

³³⁰ Wilson, interview.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

2010 SOCSOUTH supported the creation of the Colombian Army Special Operations Command, followed by CCOPE, and ultimately the establishment of the SOCOM-like two-star joint SOF headquarters. The skill, operational reach, and capabilities required to successfully execute Operation Jaque serve as an easy yardstick to measure how far Colombian capacity had come since a former U.S. Ambassador referred to them as “basically a barracks military, not...organized to go after the guerrillas.... strictly a reaction force, and not a very mobile one at that” at the outset of this case study period.³³² Colombian SOF elements can now operate jointly, a mark of skill and professionalization not easily achieved, and a capacity that U.S. observers noted as non-existent prior to 2004.³³³

More impressively, the combined effort of the Colombia government and military resulted in the FARC agreeing to a ceasefire and coming to the peace tables in 2012.³³⁴ Additionally, Colombian SOF now operate beyond their own borders. As a 2012 Congressional Research Service report observes, “Colombia has emerged as a regional leader providing training in security and counter-narcotics throughout the hemisphere and elsewhere.”³³⁵ Perhaps the most definitive measure of capacity is reflected in the level of trust the United States felt comfortable placing in their Colombian counterparts by completely imbedding USSOF personnel on the ground deep in FARC-held territory, and by remaining hands-off as Colombian SOF and their interagency partners successfully rescued the three American hostages that the United States had been searching for over five years.³³⁶

³³² Ramsey III, *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experience, 1998–2008*, 13.

³³³ U.S. General Accounting Office, *Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals Were Not Fully Met, but Security Has Improved; U.S. Agencies Need More Detailed Plans for Reducing Assistance* (GAO-09–71) (Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office, October 2008), 34–35, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0971.pdf>.

³³⁴ Beittel, *Colombia: Background, U.S. Relations, and Congressional Interest*, 1.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, i.

³³⁶ Wilson, interview.

D. SOCSOUTH IN PARAGUAY

1. U.S. Interests and Relations with Paraguay

The United States maintains healthy relations with the nation of Paraguay. The two nations work together bilaterally on several issues particularly democratic and economic reforms, counter narcotics, and counter terrorism.³³⁷ Paraguay, like Colombia, has a troubled political past, and “observers maintain that corruption is a major impediment to consolidating democratic institutions.”³³⁸ Of particular concern to U.S. security interests in Paraguay is the Tri-border Area (TBA) of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay; and the influence of Iran and Hezbollah in the region. Although, in stark comparison to Colombia, there appears to have been minimal U.S. political interest in Paraguay before 2009, since that time U.S. political interest has seemed to increase.³³⁹

The TBA has long been “an important regional nexus of arms, narcotics, and human trafficking; counterfeiting; pirated goods; and money laundering—all potential funding sources of terrorist organizations.”³⁴⁰ As cited, by the Congressional Research Service, Argentinean officials have implicated “Iran has been working for decades in Latin America, setting up intelligence stations in the region by utilizing embassies, cultural organizations, and even mosques as a source of recruitment.”³⁴¹ The same Argentinean report also implicated an Iranian as being Iran’s South American “coordinator for the export of revolution,” and operating out of the tri-border region.³⁴² There are also additional concerns about Hezbollah’s influence, recruiting, and fundraising efforts among sympathizers in the TBA.³⁴³ Although the security concerns

³³⁷ June S. Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations* (CRS Report No. R41067) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, February 1, 2010), 9, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41067.pdf>.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, i.

³⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013: Executive Summary* (Washington, DC, 2014), 18.

³⁴¹ Sullivan and Beittel, *Latin America: Terrorism Issues*, 16.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20.

in Paraguay were not as grave as the situation in Colombia, the indirect threats posed by Iranian and Hezbollah influences, the trafficking capacity of the region, and the favorable environment for instability in the TBA, gave SOCSOUTH plenty of reason for concern and purpose in Paraguay.³⁴⁴

2. Paraguay: A Domestic Perspective

As a 2002 article in *Military Review* notes, “Paraguay is landlocked, poor, a long way from everywhere, and seldom appears in the drama of international events but is nevertheless emblematic of our global security challenge.”³⁴⁵ Paraguay, roughly the size of California, is much smaller in size and population than Colombia, but it has an equally checkered political past. Although the small state in the center of South America has maintained healthy political relations with the United States, “Paraguay’s turbulent political history and tradition of political authoritarianism have resulted in international isolation.”³⁴⁶ Paraguay does not face any direct external threats, as a result, and in addition to the number of domestic issues, Paraguay’s political and military focuses are mostly directed internally.³⁴⁷

a. Paraguay’s National Security Strategy

Paraguay’s national security strategy during this period sought to address the widespread inequality, poverty, and corruption that plagued the country. From 2003–2008 President Frutos put his focus and efforts into battling corruption; in a broader approach, Frutos’ successor, Fernando Lugo, “emphasized empowering the poor, agrarian reform, health reform, and ending endemic corruption, which he viewed as the legacy of decades of Colorado Party³⁴⁸ dominance.”³⁴⁹

³⁴⁴ Wilson, interview.

³⁴⁵ William W. Mendel, “Paraguay’s Ciudad Del Este and the New Centers of Gravity,” *Military Review* 82, no. 2 (2002): 51.

³⁴⁶ Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, 7.

³⁴⁷ Library of Congress Federal Research Division, “Country Profile: Paraguay,” October 2005, 12, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Paraguay.pdf>.

³⁴⁸ The Colorado Party was the single political party that ruled Paraguay for over fifty years. (See: Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*)

There is no indication that ending the illicit trafficking that has permeated the TBA for generations, or countering the influence of terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, were at the top of Paraguay's security agenda during the early and mid-period of this case study. As the producer of over half of South America's marijuana, Paraguay still maintains a reputation of being "friendly to smugglers and traffickers."³⁵⁰ In many ways, the transiting, trafficking, laundering, and smuggling that occur in the TBA, and the political corruption that turns a blind-eye to these activities, are very much a way of life in Paraguay.

Despite Paraguay's efforts to stiffen anti-terrorism and trafficking laws and enforcement, particularly at the regular prompting of the United States, the results have been sluggish and rather ineffective. These efforts are often impeded by "porous borders, a lack of surveillance, weak law enforcement, and pervasive local corruption," in addition to the fact "its judicial system is weak and politicized, the police force is widely viewed as ineffective and corrupt."³⁵¹

In recent years, there has been increased mention of an insurgent group operating in Paraguay, *Ejército del Pueblo Paraguayo (EPP)*. The EPP is a Marxist-Leninist group that is frequently compared to, and implicated as having ties with, the FARC in Colombia.³⁵² As a recent article in recent *The New York Times* reports, the EPP "is evolving from a ghostlike irritant for the authorities in Asunción, the capital, into a broader security threat in a backcountry that is already a hub for traffickers of marijuana, defiantly cultivated here on sprawling plantations, and Andean cocaine smuggled into Brazil and Argentina."³⁵³

³⁴⁹ Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, 4.

³⁵⁰ Luis Fleischman, "The Case of Paraguay: A Challenging Ally," *Center for Security Policy*, January 17, 2014, <http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2014/01/17/the-case-of-paraguay-a-challenging-ally/>; Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, 10–11.

³⁵¹ Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, 12.

³⁵² Fleischman, "The Case of Paraguay."

³⁵³ Simon Romero, "Guerrillas Step Up Campaign in Paraguay," *The New York Times*, November 13, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/14/world/americas/guerrillas-step-up-campaign-in-paraguay.html>.

In contrast to the recent attention, not much focus was given to the group during the Frutos and Lugo administrations.³⁵⁴ After a rash of targeted bombings and shootings during the latter part of the decade, Lugo “declared a state of emergency and sent nearly 200 elite troops, some trained by the United States military, to find the rebels” which failed to produce any decisive or lasting result.³⁵⁵ Unlike in Colombia under Uribe, Lugo’s ineffectual political leadership was unable to galvanize any sort of new legislation to better address the insurgent threat. This type of legislative change did not actualize until after Lugo’s impeachment in 2012. Lugo’s successor was able to lobby for a change “to the law of national defense that enabled the military to take part in internal security,” promptly dispatching troops to address the problem with the EPP.³⁵⁶

b. Paraguay’s Domestic Politics

Political corruption has plagued Paraguay in the way insurgency plagued forward progress in Colombia for decades.³⁵⁷ As a former authoritarian government, Paraguay was under six decades of single-party rule, until 2008 when a former Roman Catholic bishop, Fernando Lugo was elected president.³⁵⁸ Lugo’s predecessor, Nicanor Duarte Frutos (2003-2008) had lead a fairly expansive crackdown on corruption, fraud, government spending, and illicit trade, which had some positive influence initially, but the gains quickly receded.³⁵⁹

Lugo’s election gave hope to many, including the United States, that Paraguay would turn-around its political inertia.³⁶⁰ However, by 2010 Paraguay was tied with Haiti, and ahead of only Venezuela, as having the most corrupt governments in the western hemisphere, only a marginal increase from where the nation was ranked in

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Fleischman, “The Case of Paraguay.”

³⁵⁷ Mendel, “Paraguay’s Ciudad Del Este and the New Centers of Gravity,” 51.

³⁵⁸ Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, 1.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 3.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 1, 12.

2002.³⁶¹ Despite the hope that ushered Lugo in to office, his administration was beset by a number of problems from the very beginning. Unable to deal with the political challenges, Lugo reportedly “retreated from leadership and has left the problems facing his reform agenda in the hands of his ministers,” seriously bringing into question his ability to bring about the change people had hoped for.³⁶² Within one year of taking office, Lugo’s popular support had plummeted from 38% in 2008 to less than 18% by the end of 2009; clearly a lame duck politically, a growing body of political opposition successfully impeached Lugo in 2012.³⁶³

c. Paraguay’s Military

Paraguay’s military is small, poorly funded, and very much informed by the decades of authoritarian rule and political corruption.³⁶⁴ During the years of dictatorship the military played “an important role in suppressing dissent.”³⁶⁵ It also has a long-standing reputation of playing a very formidable role in national politics—in the form of coups. The single party that ruled the government from the 1950s until Lugo’s election came to power through a military coup, and during the late 1990s and early 2000s there were at least five coups attempts to topple the country’s leadership.³⁶⁶ The military’s track record for coups did not escape the politically unpopular Lugo, who shuffled Paraguay’s top brass on a regular basis—four times in all during the first two years of his administration.³⁶⁷

³⁶¹ Transparency International, “2002 Corruption Perceptions Index,” *Transparency International*, accessed November 3, 2014, http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2002/0/; Transparency International, “2010 Corruption Perceptions Index,” *Transparency International*, accessed November 3, 2014, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2010/results#CountryResults>.

³⁶² Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, 4.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5; “Paraguay President Fernando Lugo Impeached by Congress,” *BBC News*, June 22, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-18553813>.

³⁶⁴ Library of Congress Federal Research Division, “Country Profile: Paraguay,” 19.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 4–5; Mendel, “Paraguay’s Ciudad Del Este and the New Centers of Gravity,” 51.

³⁶⁷ “Paraguay President Completes Military Shake-Up,” *BBC News*, September 21, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-11378349>.

At the time, Lugo's critics stated the president's actions were "inflicting successive blows on the institutionality [sic] of the armed forces."³⁶⁸ To be sure, such a constant change in leadership would inhibit and degrade any institution, particularly a hierarchical military, but this was not the only challenge facing the Paraguayan military. In 2005, the military, comprised of an army, navy, and an air force, totaled just over 10,000 personnel, approximately 20% of which were conscripts.³⁶⁹ Receiving around 1% of the nation's GDP, the military was armed with 20 World War II era tanks and weapons, and zero combat capable helicopters at the outset of this case study period.³⁷⁰ In addition to the equipment, most of the military's efforts were focused on "quelling domestic uprisings than on protecting Paraguay from international threats."³⁷¹ Additionally, the military was no exception to the corruption that permeated the rest of the Paraguayan government.³⁷² Nascent in capability and capacity in comparison the Colombian military, ineffectual against the EPP, largely unconcerned with external threats, and beset by corruption, a questionable public image, and sporadic changes in leadership, the Paraguayan military at the outset of this case study was very much a tool in disrepair.

3. SOCSOUTH ON THE GROUND IN PARAGUAY

a. Overview

SOCSOUTH's engagement in Paraguay began as a counter drug mission. As in Colombia,³⁷³ USSOF were operating in an advisory only capacity in support of these efforts. However, the number of similarities between Colombia and Paraguay end there. Paraguay's military was smaller, and not nearly as advanced as the Colombian military during the start of this case study period, as a result USSOF in Paraguay were required to

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Library of Congress Federal Research Division, "Country Profile: Paraguay," 19.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 20.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 19.

³⁷² Wilson, interview.

³⁷³ Until authorities were expanded under OWS.

build a national SOF capacity from scratch. Additionally, USSOF in Paraguay did not have the benefit of the long history of partnership with the host nation that they enjoyed in Colombia.³⁷⁴

b. Partner Unit

SOCSOUTH supported several operational lines of effort in the TBA, but their capacity-building efforts in Paraguay were focused solely on special operations designated to conduct counter terrorism and interdiction.³⁷⁵ USSOF built this force, the *Batallon Conjunto de Fuerzas Especiales* (BCFE) from the ground-up, starting with the assessment and selection of the unit's members circa 2006.³⁷⁶ The mission of the BCFE is to “respond to grave emergencies and to confront terrorism as well as working with other Paraguayan forces to maintain security in Paraguay.”³⁷⁷ Although engagement was initially episodic, in 2005 the Paraguayan Congress “approved a measure allowing U.S. Special Forces to conduct a series of 13 military exercises at Mariscal Estigarribia,” which allowed SOCSOUTH to begin a more persistent and systematic engagement with the Paraguayans.³⁷⁸ These exercises were intended to, among other things, “consist of counter-terrorism and domestic peacekeeping exercises.”³⁷⁹

c. SOCFWD-Paraguay

SOCFWD-Paraguay was established in 2007 and designed to serve all the same functions as SOCFWD-Colombia. Elements that conducted missions in support of SOCFWD-Paraguay found the same advantages of having an in-country operational

³⁷⁴ Wilson, interview.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Embassy of the United States Asunción, Paraguay, “Ambassador Participates in Ceremony Marking the Transfer of Equipment to Joint Special Forces Battalion,” http://usembassy.state.gov/pe_110409.html, November 4, 2009, http://paraguay.usembassy.gov/pe_110409.html.

³⁷⁸ Ryann Bresnahan and Andres Mantilla, “U.S. Intervention in Paraguay Continues,” *North American Council on Latin America*, accessed November 13, 2014, <https://nacla.org/news/us-intervention-paraguay-continues>.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

headquarters that units in Colombia noted above, namely faster response times from higher, more operational flexibility, and enhanced coordination and integration.³⁸⁰ SOCFWD-Paraguay was much smaller in size than its counterpart in Colombia. A former SOCSOUTH J3 Operations officer estimated its size at approximately 30 U.S. personnel at the SOCFWD with normally only one SFOD-A on the ground at any given time, in addition to some small slices of MISO and CMSE elements occasionally.³⁸¹ However, the difference in size between the two SOCFWDs is more directly attributed to the size differences between the countries of Colombia and Paraguay, their militaries, and the size of the U.S. country team in both countries.

d. Political Tension

At the same time Operation Willing Spirit and the Colombian's operational gains against the FARC were catalyzing SOCSOUTH's elements in Colombia, domestic and international political tension served as an impediment for SOCSOUTH's efforts in Paraguay. The primary source of tension arose from Paraguay's neighbors who were very skeptical and suspicious of the United States' true intentions in Paraguay. The rumors that swirled about that the United States' intentions in Paraguay ranged anywhere from a desire to build a permanent base in the country, to threatening neighboring Bolivia's strategic gas reserve.³⁸² As one BBC report from late-2005 observes "Paraguay's rapprochement with the United States has unsettled neighbouring governments, as well as social and peasant organisations throughout the region."³⁸³ Many analysts attributed these regional pressures to Paraguay's Southern Common Market (Mercosur) trade partners, Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. As *The Washington Post* reports, a Latin American specialist from the Inter-American Dialogue think tank opined, "My guess is

³⁸⁰ Averett, Cervantes, and O'Hara, *An Analysis of Special Operations Command-South's Distributive Command and Control Concept*, 52-54.

³⁸¹ Wilson, interview.

³⁸² Kelly Hearn, "US Military Presence in Paraguay Irks Neighbors," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 2, 2005, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1202/p25s02-woam.html>.

³⁸³ Charlotte Eimer, "Spotlight on US Troops in Paraguay," *BBC*, September 28, 2005, sec. Americas, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4289224.stm>.

there was a lot of pressure on the Paraguayans to fall more in line with Brazil and other Mercosur countries in terms of not having a special military relationship with the United States.”³⁸⁴

Whatever the reason, in 2006, just one year after agreeing to the series of 13 military exercises, the Paraguayan government denied an extension of diplomatic immunity to U.S. military members not permanently assigned to the U.S. embassy in Paraguay. As result, an extension of the defense cooperation agreement that set the conditions for SOCSOUTH’s persistent engagement was not renewed for 2007.³⁸⁵ An agreement was eventually reached, but these types of political tensions only served to complicate SOCSOUTH’s efforts in the already volatile political environment in Paraguay.

e. Results

SOCSOUTH successfully established the BCFE from scratch, which finally received a \$1.4 million dollar shipment of “high tech communications equipment, small arms, and night vision devices” in 2009.³⁸⁶ However, by 2010 SOCSOUTH was unable to achieve any of the longer-lasting institutional impacts that it was able to achieve in Colombia. Additionally, by the end of 2009, the situation in Paraguay had become too “politically untenable” to maintain the SOCFWD there, and as a result it was terminated.³⁸⁷

After SOCFWD-Paraguay departed, the engagements in Paraguay returned mostly to episodic JCETs and the occasional combined exercise.³⁸⁸ However, in the absence of the SOCFWD “top cover” the capacity building potential of those exercises were further diminished as tactical units reassumed the administrative and coordination

³⁸⁴ Pedro Servin, “Paraguay Hardens U.S. Military Stance,” *The Washington Post*, October 4, 2006, sec. World, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/03/AR2006100301627.html>.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ Embassy of the United States Asunción, Paraguay, “Ambassador Participates in Ceremony Marking the Transfer of Equipment to Joint Special Forces Battalion.”

³⁸⁷ Wilson, interview.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

burden the SOCFWD had previously handled. The Paraguayan military maintains positive relations with the United States and SOCSOUTH, and are also still committed to counter narcotics and counter terrorism operations.³⁸⁹ However, recent reports of limited effectiveness of the BCFE against the EPP provide a fair degree of certainty that there is much work still left to do to achieve the BPC goals that SOCSOUTH had pursued during this period.

E. SUMMARY

Given the dynamic and unique nature of capacity building, comparing cases is a difficult endeavor. However, this chapter has provided two examples of BPC enterprises carried out by the same operational headquarters, on the same continent, during the same period, and for very similar purposes. Although SOCSOUTH's approach was almost identical in both cases, the results are strikingly different. In the case of Colombia, that nation's SOF emerged from the last decade as an exporter of security, regionally and globally, with its own SOCOM-like headquarters. Meanwhile, Paraguay's SOF capacity has only shown modest gains at best, and the close of the decade saw SOCSOUTH maneuvered out of position to provide the persistent engagement many believe critical to capacity-building efforts.³⁹⁰ The following chapter will analyze the sources of these differences.

³⁸⁹ Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, 9.

³⁹⁰ Donna Miles, "Socom Officials Work on Plan for Global Network," *U.S. Department of Defense News* accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=120193>.

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V. ANALYSIS OF SOCSOUTH'S CAPACITY BUILDING ENTERPRISES

A. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented two cases of capacity building conducted by SOCSOUTH from 2001–2010. Although these BPC missions were carried out at the same time by the same TSOC, they produced substantially different results. To determine the cause of these differences this chapter will analyze both cases against three categories: the nature of the partnership, the rules and tools that SOCSOUTH employed in each case, and the chain of actors that comprised the BPC enterprise in each country.

B. NATURE OF THE PARTNERSHIPS

This section will analyze the national interests of Colombia and Paraguay as well as the United States' national interests in both countries. This analysis will take into account the domestic issues and politics, and the national security strategies of all three nations. This will be used to determine the overall level of political cooperation that existed between the United States and Colombia and Paraguay respectively, as well as the overlap of these nations' national security interests during this period.

1. Colombia and the United States

Colombia and the United States have a long history of political and military partnership. Despite the lack of USSOF military-to-military interaction during the 1990s the two countries were partners together in the war on drugs, and politically as the oldest democracies on their respective continents. In addition to this long-standing connection, three significant political incidents occurred during this case study that brought the United States' and Colombia's national interests into closer alignment: Plan Colombia and the successive national security strategies that followed; the attacks of 9/11 and the United States subsequent focus on countering terrorism; and the capture of three U.S. hostages by the FARC in 2003.

a. Plan Colombia

Plans Colombia, Patriota, and the National Consolidation Plan served a number of purposes that enhanced SOCSOUTH's overall ability to achieve significant capacity building gains in the country. Specifically with regards to the nature of the partnership between the two countries, Plan Colombia demonstrated to the United States a commitment to win back their embattled country. Additionally, the rapid security gains that these strategies achieved demonstrated the potential for their success, encouraging additional American support. The United States' belief and commitment to Plan Colombia can be seen monetarily. From fiscal year 2001–2010 the United States committed just shy of \$6.7 billion dollars of foreign aid specifically to supporting Plan Colombia.³⁹¹

b. 9/11

Prior to 9/11, the United States' and Colombia's security interests intersected primarily at countering narcotics. However, after the terrorist attacks in late 2001, U.S. interests shifted to include a greater focus on counterterrorism. In the wake of 9/11, Congress removed the legal barrier that differentiated narcotics trafficking and terrorism, this action resulted in an increase of authorities and funding that could be applied by agencies in Colombia. As one report observes, "This expanded authority provided the State Department and the Department of Defense flexibility in situations where there is no clear line between drug and terrorist activity" opening the aperture on the types of engagements that U.S. government agencies could conduct in Colombia.³⁹² Petit cites that the aegis of Plan Colombia and the United States' new focus on counterterrorism was the catalyst that reinitiated USSOF engagement with the Colombian military.³⁹³

³⁹¹ Beittel, *Colombia: Background, U.S. Relations, and Congressional Interest*, 38.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 31 ff.

³⁹³ Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 128.

c. *Operation Willing Spirit*

When three American government contractors were taken hostage by the FARC in 2003 the United States found its interests being drawn even closer to those of its Colombian partner. To be fair, this incident did not result in a shift in either country's national strategy; Colombia had dealt with FARC kidnappings and hostage taking for decades, and the United States was preparing to invade Iraq when the incident occurred. However, the event served as a catalyst that galvanized military and diplomatic cooperation between the two countries. As one Special Forces officer recounts, "the Colombians reacted to the U.S. pressure on finding the hostages...this generated momentum for better trained units and for a hostage rescue capability."³⁹⁴ These new operational requirements generated additional capacity building opportunities, broadening SOCSOUTH's overall capacity building enterprise. This was only one way in which OWS impacted this capacity-building effort in Colombia; several other instances will be highlighted shortly.

2. *Paraguay and the United States*

In 2001, Paraguay was a political backwater of American foreign policy. As the Congressional Research Service identifies, the United States paid little political attention to Paraguay for the majority of this case study period.³⁹⁵ Although Paraguay maintained healthy relations with the United States during this time, it is not surprising there was only a limited intersection of national interests between the two countries. There were several contributing factors that influenced the partnership with, and by extension SOCSOUTH's capacity-building efforts in, Paraguay. They are: again, the 9/11 attacks; and Paraguay's domestic political situation.

a. *9/11*

The TBA has long been a hotbed of illicit trafficking and a node in the drug trade, however, mention of Paraguay in security and congressional literature is almost void until

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 131.

³⁹⁵ Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, i.

after 9/11 when articles such as William W. Mendel's *Paraguay's Ciudad del Este and the New Centers of Gravity*, began appearing in places like *Military Review* and elsewhere.³⁹⁶ In the frenzy to counter terrorism following the attacks of 9/11, interest in under-governed spaces—the dark corners of the world—increased dramatically as they were identified as places where terrorism and instability breed.³⁹⁷ The primary concern for the United States in the TBA and Paraguay, as a 2014 Congressional Research Service report notes, was the influence of Iran and Hezbollah. The United States suspected that Iran and Hezbollah used the hospitably lawless TBA to fundraise, recruit, launder money, and traffic goods; equally alarmingly to the United States was the potential for other nefarious actors to do the same.³⁹⁸

However, despite the United States' concerns and security interests, Paraguay, by all accounts, did not seem pressed to do anything about it. Although Paraguay cooperates closely with the United States “on anti-drug, counterterrorism and anti-smuggling initiatives” the proof-positive is lacking.³⁹⁹ According to the U.S. State Department, “although Paraguay was generally cooperative on counterterrorism efforts, its judicial system is weak and politicized, the police force is widely viewed as ineffective and corrupt, and the country lacks strong anti-money laundering and terrorist financing legislation.”⁴⁰⁰ The State Department reported similar findings again in 2013, noting Paraguay and the TBA remain “an important regional nexus of arms, narcotics, and human trafficking; counterfeiting; pirated goods; and money laundering—all potential funding sources of terrorist organizations.”⁴⁰¹ This situation is in clear contrast to the turn-around experienced in Colombia during this period, and in part is explained by Paraguay's domestic political scene.

³⁹⁶ Sullivan and Beittel, *Latin America: Terrorism Issues*, 20.

³⁹⁷ Mendel, “Paraguay's Ciudad Del Este and the New Centers of Gravity,” 55–56.

³⁹⁸ Sullivan and Beittel, *Latin America: Terrorism Issues*, 19–20.

³⁹⁹ Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*, i.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁰¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013: Executive Summary*, 18.

b. *Paraguay's Domestic Political Situation*

The gravest threat Paraguay faced during this period was corruption and poverty, not an armed revolution, terrorist attacks, or external threats. As a result, Paraguay's national security priorities had more to do with ending corruption, poverty, and agrarian reform than they did with national defense. The United States' perceived threat from nefarious actors and influencers was of little concern to the Paraguayan government, and certainly not a pressing matter, despite their support of the United States efforts. Even if Paraguay shared the United States level of concern, the political situation in Paraguay would have made any sort of change difficult. Very simply, Paraguay was a state in political turmoil during this period.

A recent report from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation “places Paraguay among the countries in the region that have suffered setbacks and reversals in its democracy.”⁴⁰² After 60 years of single-party rule, Fernando Lugo, in stark contrast to Colombia's Álvaro Uribe, was completely unable to galvanize the nation and quickly lost popular support, falling well short of the hope the United States had placed in his administration, and further miring the political system in Paraguay. Additionally, as opposed to Uribe who spent significant effort to bolster Colombia's national security apparatus, Lugo spent considerable effort shuffling around top brass in the Paraguayan military over alleged fears of a military coup. These deep-seated political issues left the nation rife with corruption, significantly challenged law enforcement, judicially weak on counterterrorism and trafficking, and with little traction or focus for the military.⁴⁰³

3. *Partnership Assessment*

Chapter II introduced two concepts to conceptually gauge the level of potential cooperation and effectiveness in a military partnership. The first was the “sweet spot;” the notional area where two states' security interests overlap and partners tend to operate

⁴⁰² Fleischman, “The Case of Paraguay.”

⁴⁰³ Beittel, *Paraguay: Political and Economic Conditions and U.S. Relations*.

most effectively. The second was an illustrative function, $P_C = D_C + M_C + E_C + X_C$, that aided in understanding the overall level of cooperation between two states.

a. The “Sweet Spot”

Given the analysis above, Figure 11 illustrates the sweet spots between the United States and Colombia, and the United States and Paraguay.

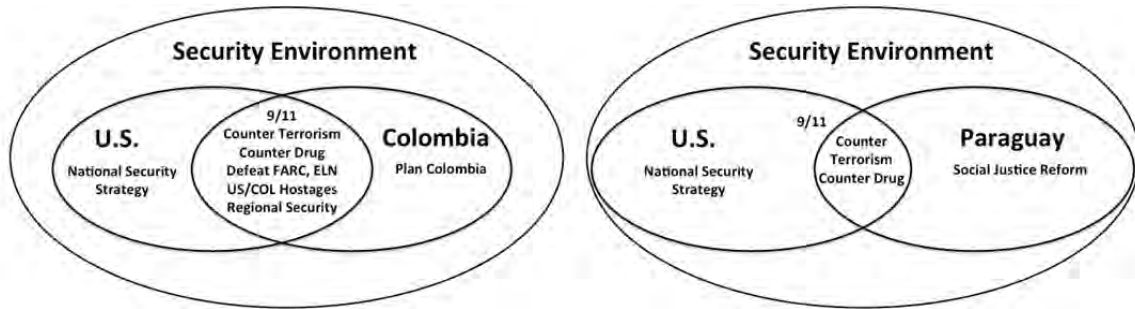


Figure 11. Overlapping Security Interests between the United States and Colombia and Paraguay, respectively.

A side-by-side comparison illustrates that there was a much larger sweet spot in the U.S.-Colombia partnership than there was in the U.S.-Paraguay relationship. In Paraguay, the sweet spot mainly consisted of counterterrorism and counter drug issues. The 9/11 attacks increased the United States security concerns with regards to Paraguay and the greater TBA, however, this research indicates Paraguay did not share the same level of concern about the 9/11 attacks and the threats similar acts of terrorism pose to the state; as a result 9/11 is depicted on the periphery of the sweet spot.

In Colombia, the United States had long shared security interests on counter drugs and counter terrorism; the events of 9/11 opened the aperture on how the U.S. government could address the narcoterrorism threats that faced Colombia and the United States. The 2003 hostage crisis was another shared security interest between the two countries that served to galvanize the capacity-building effort in Colombia. Additionally, the United States and Colombia also share a similar vision for regional security in South America.

b. The Level of Political Cooperation

While the sweet spot illustrates the areas of common interests, it does not implicitly account for the level of cooperation between two partners. As discussed in Chapter II, any and all military action is carried out in support of policy objectives; subsequently, military action requires the approval of policymakers. Therefore, the overall level of political cooperation between the two states ultimately limits the level of potential military cooperation. As discussed in Chapter II, states form partnerships for various reasons and along various lines of national power in order to achieve diplomatic, economic, and security objectives. The sum total of these efforts equates to the overall level of political cooperation between the two states. The following function was used to illustrate this relationship:

$$P_C = D_C + M_C + E_C + X_C$$

where the overall level of political cooperation is expressed as P_C . D_C, M_C, E_C , represents the levels of diplomatic, military and economic cooperation respectively, and X_C serves as a catch-all, for the sake of this argument, to represent the various other types of cooperation that states pursue. When considered in this manner, it is clear that the level of political cooperation between the United States and Paraguay was significantly lower than that of the United States and Colombia.

(1) Diplomatic Cooperation

After Lugo's election in 2008, President Bush made remarks that he supported Lugo and his "social justice agenda," and efforts to curb corruption in Paraguay. After Lugo took office "Paraguay received a one-time increase in health and economic growth assistance from the United States of \$10 million. The United States has supported anti-corruption and democratization programs in Paraguay including providing more than \$60 million in funding from the Millennium Challenge Corporation."⁴⁰⁴ However, this support pales in comparison to the nearly \$7 billion dollars the United States invested in Plan Colombia, and Colombia's regular by-name mention in both of the Bush

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 7.

Administration's National Security Strategies, recognition not paid to Paraguay in either document.⁴⁰⁵

(2) Military Cooperation

The level of military cooperation between the United States and Colombia, despite USSOF's military-to-military hiatus in the 1990s, was noticeably higher than in Paraguay. First, Colombia's military, as part of Plan Colombia under the Pastrana Administration, transitioned into a professional military oriented on combat operations; they were focused and ready to take-on and employ the United States' military support. Additionally, the FARC, ELN and AUC posed a clear and present danger to the government of Colombia; this served to catalyze the Colombians, and made it easy for the United States to quantify its investments. Paraguay was a different story, however. The corruption, political uncertainty, and lack of a tangible threat made military cooperation difficult in Paraguay. Additionally, although the United States was concerned about the nefarious influence and activities in the TBA—they are very intangible concerns, and therefore difficult to assess, quantify, and justify.

(3) Economic Cooperation

The United States initiated a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Colombia in 2006, one of only 20 such agreements the United States has entered in to.⁴⁰⁶ This FTA will “eventually eliminate tariffs and other barriers in bilateral trade in goods and services” and further the economic tie between the two countries.⁴⁰⁷ Additionally, the United States is Colombia's number one trade partner.⁴⁰⁸ However, Paraguay does not

⁴⁰⁵ Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2002; Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2006.

⁴⁰⁶ Office of the United States Trade Representative, “Free Trade Agreements,” accessed November 15, 2014, <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements>.

⁴⁰⁷ M. Angeles Villarreal, *The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement: Background and Issues* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, February 14, 2014), 1.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, i.

share a similar trade agreement with the United States, and as of 2013, it ranks 81 among U.S. trade partners as opposed to Colombia's ranking of 21 among partners⁴⁰⁹

The level of political cooperation that the United States shared with Colombia kept Colombia on the front burner of U.S. policy issues in the western hemisphere diplomatically, economically, and militarily. As a result, decision makers were more attune to matters concerning Colombia. Likewise, Colombia, particularly under President Uribe, was quick to act at the policy level to facilitate U.S. support for Plan Colombia. This was not the case in Paraguay. As a result, SOCSOUTH had to deal with the disparity in the level of political cooperation that limited their level of military cooperation in Paraguay. As Colonel Wilson recollects, "In the National Capital Region there were a lot more open ears on Colombia than there were on Paraguay," as SOCSOUTH sought to attain authorities and resources for their efforts in the two countries.⁴¹⁰

c. Analysis

The nature of the partnership between the United States and Colombia was more conducive to capacity building than the partnership between the United States and Paraguay. First, Colombia shared more security interests with the United States than Paraguay. This increased the latitude within the partnership and provided SOCSOUTH multiple different venues for partnership engagement. Second, the United States shared a higher level of political cooperation with Colombia than Paraguay; which increased the potential for military cooperation making it easier for SOCSOUTH to achieve its objectives in Colombia.

It is true the United States had a longer-standing relationship with Colombia than Paraguay. However, the factor that really differentiates the level of cooperation with Colombia over that of Paraguay is that Colombia was in a position and willing to act and capitalize on U.S. assistance. Faced with a clear and present threat from the FARC, guided by a pointed national security strategy, and unified behind the dynamic leadership

⁴⁰⁹ "Office of the United States Trade Representative," Office of the United States Trade Representative, accessed November 15, 2014, <http://www.ustr.gov/>.

⁴¹⁰ Wilson, interview.

of Uribe, Colombia soaked-up every last drop of U.S. support and immediately put it to use. Almost the complete opposite, Paraguay was not galvanized by any sort of clear or present danger, lacked a coherent strategy, and was troubled by domestic political turmoil. As a result, Paraguay did not receive the same level of policy attention in the United States that Colombia did during this period, which served to limit SOCSOUTH's capacity-building potential in Paraguay and increase the TSOC's workload to achieve policy decisions in support of their efforts there.

It is impossible to discern if SOCSOUTH's BPC efforts in Paraguay would have been more successful had Paraguay faced a clear and present threat like the FARC. However, given the catalyzing effect the FARC threat had on the effort in Colombia, it should not be discounted either. In the Colombia example, the threat was necessary but not in and of itself sufficient to produce the BPC success that was ultimately realized. Likewise, had Paraguay perceived a similar threat, the government still would have required a coherent strategy to counter it, the political dynamics to ensure the strategy was supported and resourced, and the political will and commitment to carry it out. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that such a threat certainly would have helped to galvanize the collective effort.

C. THE RULES AND TOOLS

The section will examine the rules and tools of SOCSOUTH's BPC enterprises in the two countries. The rules represent the authorities that empower and limit the capacity building enterprise; the tools encompass the assortment of programs and activities the enterprise has as their disposal. Together they inform how the capacity building enterprise is able to function.

1. The Tools

Table 1 provides a side-by-side comparison of the tools SOCSOUTH put to use in Colombia and Paraguay. At first glance, the tools employed appear very similar. Closer inspection, however, reveals that these tools were used to different effect in the two countries.

Table 1. Side-by-Side Comparison of the Tools Employed by SOCSOUTH in Colombia and Paraguay⁴¹¹

Colombia	Paraguay
Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) Combined Exercises Key Leader Engagements (KLE) Education (IMET and CTFP) Personnel Exchange Program (PEP) ⁴¹² Operationalization (OWS)	Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) Combined Exercises Key Leader Engagements (KLE) Education (IMET and CTFP)

The primary difference was in the number and nature of the events, particularly with regard to combined exercises and KLEs. Colombia hosted and participated in more combined exercises than Paraguay did, and they performed more complex tasks and missions during these exercises than their Paraguayan counterparts.⁴¹³ Additionally, there was a clear-cut difference between the KLEs conducted in Colombia and the ones conducted in Paraguay. As Wilson recalls, KLE’s were conducted in Colombia “constantly,” whereas they were carried out much less frequently in Paraguay.⁴¹⁴ Additionally, SOUTHCOM and their four-star commanding officer were very personally involved in the KLEs in Colombia lending more weight to the engagement; however in Paraguay it was SOCSOUTH, a two-star headquarters, which was normally the primary-lead for KLEs in country. This observation is also reflective of the disparity in the level of political cooperation between the two countries.

Operationalization was introduced by the author in Chapter II as another tool that SOF can employ in support of capacity building. By operationalizing a partnership, SOF is able to capitalize on the hyper-focus that normally accompanies real-world operations

⁴¹¹ Wilson, interview; “Data: Military Aid.” Security Assistance Monitor, Accessed November 14, 2014, http://www.securityassistance.org/data/program/military/country/2001/2010/is_DOD/Global.

⁴¹² PEP is a one-for-one exchange program where American and PN officers are exchanged and fully integrated into the other’s military. There were several PEPs in Colombia during this period to include one with the Colombian jungle unit and another with their CT force. (Source: Wilson, interview.)

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

by building significant amounts of capacity in a much shorter period of time than would be possible under normal conditions. The impact of the operationalization of the BPC enterprise in Colombia will be addressed several more times in this chapter, but of particular note at this point is the impact OWS had on the KLEs in Colombia. The higher operational stakes appear to have increased the payoff potential for KLEs in the country. This is seen most clearly with then-Brigadier General Cleveland's KLEs following the successful hostage rescue in 2008. It was through these back-to-back KLEs that Cleveland successfully planted the seed for Colombia's own SOCOM-like headquarters. What Wilson estimated would have taken at least five more years before the SOCFWD in Colombia would have even *mentioned* the idea of such a headquarters, the opportunity Cleveland's KLE presented put the matter to rest in a single meeting.⁴¹⁵

2. The Rules

Table 2 provides a side-by-side comparison of the authorities that governed SOCSOUTH's activities in the two countries. SOCSOUTH was able to operate within the same parameters with regards to CNT, Section 1207, and Section 1208 authorities; however, Section 1207 was only authorized in Paraguay in 2009 whereas it was authorized in Colombia from 2007 through 2009. Section 1208, as noted in Chapter II, is a SOF-specific provision in the NDAA that "provides authority and funds for U.S. SOF to train and equip regular and irregular indigenous forces to conduct counterterrorism operations."⁴¹⁶ Although Section 1208 was authorized in both countries, SOCSOUTH had a much harder time lobbying for its approval in Paraguay.⁴¹⁷ This is also reflective of the challenges faced at the policy-level when there is a smaller overlap of national interests and a lower level of political cooperation between partners, and how it increases the TSOC's workload by requiring more energy to secure those approvals.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Feickert and Livingston, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*, 6.

⁴¹⁷ Wilson, interview.

Table 2. Side-by-Side Comparison of the Rules Employed by SOCSOUTH in Colombia and Paraguay⁴¹⁸

Colombia	Paraguay
Counter-Narcoterrorism (CNT)	Counter-Narcoterrorism (CNT)
Section 1207	Section 1207
Section 1208	Section 1208
Operation Willing Spirit (OWS)	

The biggest difference in rules between the two enterprises is the authorities granted to SOCSOUTH in support of OWS in Colombia. From 2005 until 2008 SOCSOUTH received increased authorities and resourcing under OWS which eventually allowed them to increase their operational risk by first pushing U.S. sensitive site exploitation teams forward after FARC hostage camps were located and secured, and then ultimately to conduct combine U.S.-Colombian operations in support of the hostage rescue. These operational requirements increased the nature and urgency of the capacity building in Colombia. Expanding the types of capacities that needed to be built while also capitalizing on the “rapid transformation effect” of operationalization noted previously. The urgency and political sensitivities associated with rescuing American hostages also made it easier to secure approvals in certain instances. As a result, the BPC enterprise in Colombia grew quickly and extensively from 2005 to 2008 and is directly attributable to Operation Willing Spirit.

3. Analysis

The BPC enterprises in Colombia and Paraguay shared a number of common rules and tools; however, the nature of the partnerships seems to have very clearly impacted how they were applied. Both enterprises utilized various events like JCETs and exercises to maintain a persistent presence in the countries, however, the breadth and level of training at those events varied greatly between the two countries. Although, the disparity could be easily attributed to the skill level of the respective militaries at the

⁴¹⁸ Wilson, interview; “Security Assistance Monitor,” accessed November 15, 2014, <http://www.securityassistance.org/>.

outset of this period, and to the scale and scope of the two different enterprises, there are some additional factors that warrant consideration. First, there was the lower level of military cooperation between Paraguay and the United States, which served to impede progress, which has already been addressed. Secondly, as Wilson observes, “there was just a different level of focus in Paraguay than in Colombia.”⁴¹⁹ This difference may be attributable the lack of political cohesion and direction in Paraguay as identified in the previous section.

The single most significant difference in the rules and tools is Operation Willing Spirit in Colombia. OWS provided SOCSOUTH and their BPC enterprise in Colombia increased operational latitude, resourcing, political and military cooperation, and created the synergistic effect of increasing drive, focus, and commitment between the partners. These factors combined to allow SOCSOUTH to make capacity building gains in a fraction of the time they would have normally taken. However, this was not a planned component of SOCSOUTH’s BPC engagement. It was an unexpected event that changed the calculus in Colombia. The point here is less about what would have happened if a similar event occurred in Paraguay, and more about highlighting the dynamic nature partnerships and capacity building enterprises. It is also a tale of seizing and maximizing operational opportunities when they appear, as they possess the potential for significant capacity building gains.

D. THE CHAIN OF ACTORS

This section will examine and analyze the chain of actors that brought both of these BPC enterprises to life. As discussed in Chapter III, the chain of actors is a representation of USSOF posture in BPC enterprises. The nodes are hierarchical for command and control, but networked through a free-flow of ideas, opportunities, and influence. An examination of the BPC enterprise through this lens provides insight into the enterprise at the operational level, as well as illuminates the impact of the partnership

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

environment on the undertaking. Figure 12 provides a side-by-side depiction of the chain of actors that comprised both enterprises circa 2008.

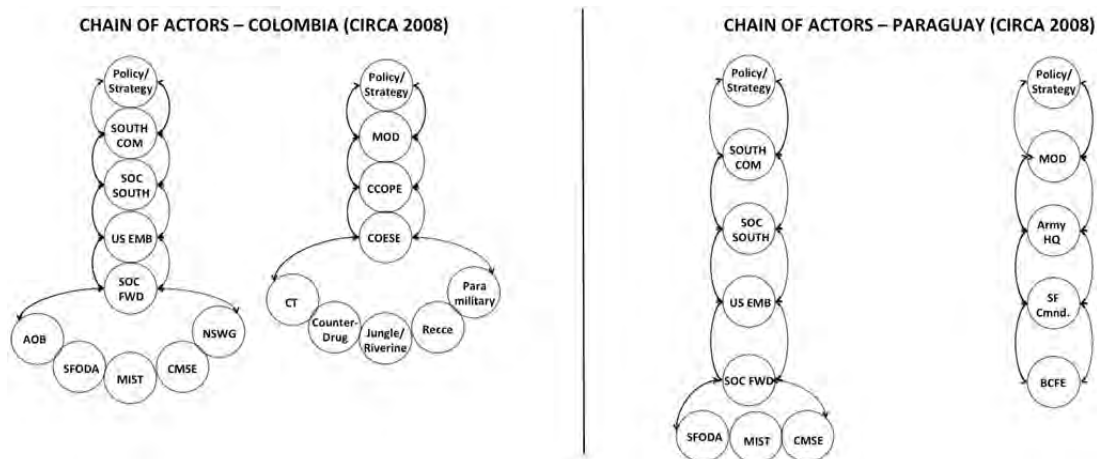


Figure 12. Side-by-side Comparison of the Chain of Actors in Colombia and Paraguay

1. Colombia

In Colombia, SOCSOUTH employed Army Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Military Information Support Operations (MISO) elements, and members of Naval Special Warfare at the tactical level. This allowed capacity building to occur with a wider range of Colombian tactical units, which included Colombia’s counter terrorism force, counter drug units, jungle, riverine, reconnaissance, and paramilitary formations.⁴²⁰ This broad level of engagement at the base of the chain provided both partners better access to each other at a tactical level, but also increased visibility and understanding up the chain. Together, this created the requirement for greater bandwidth at the operational and policy level in the form of awareness and decision making to support these tactical level engagements.

As Colonel Wilson was quoted as saying earlier, there was a different level of focus in Colombia. This higher level of operational acuity is accredited to Colombia’s

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

internal drive to revamp their military and defeat the FARC, and also to Operation Willing Spirit, which drew the Department of State and the Department of Defense into very close alignment in Colombia, and helped to further focus the Colombian's efforts. Additionally, the higher level of political and military cooperation between the two countries brought the partners closer together horizontally; increasing the likelihood of compromise and combined operational effectiveness.

2. Paraguay

In Paraguay, the scale and scope of the enterprise was much smaller than the effort in Colombia. However, there were also fewer opportunities to engage USSOF in Paraguay. While there were a number of units that SOCSOUTH was able to engage with in Colombia, SOCSOUTH in Paraguay had to build a unit from scratch. As a result, SOCSOUTH was only able to employ Army Special Forces, in a much smaller quantity, and very small slices of Civil Affairs and MISO teams.

The smaller engagement at the tactical level did not require the same bandwidth up the chain, and therefore warranted less attention. This only exacerbated the challenges SOCSOUTH had to overcome with regards to the lower level of political and military cooperation between the two countries. Additionally, the actors in Paraguay did not benefit from the focusing and catalyzing effects of a clear and present threat and a crisis situation like in Colombia. The result was a more vertically and horizontally dispersed chain of actors.

3. Analysis

The chain of actors that comprised the BPC enterprises in Colombia and Paraguay clearly look different when compared side by side. In Colombia, SOCSOUTH was able to engage with a greater number of tactical level units than in Paraguay. The nature of the threat in Colombia and the urgency of OWS brought the actors in the chain closer together, an effect that was not seen in Paraguay. Additionally, the level of cooperation between Colombia and the United States was higher than that of the United States and Paraguay, which drew the Colombians and Americans closer together than in Paraguay.

These factors resulted in a more resilient chain of actors in Colombia that was able to synchronize their efforts more efficiently, and could reach compromise more easily because both sides had less distance to travel to meet in the middle. The chain was made more resilient by its broader base of engagement which not only increased capacity building opportunities, but also increased the demands for operational and policy support from the actors higher-up the chain. Thanks to the focusing effects of OWS and pitched battle against the FARC, the actors in the chain were brought closer together minimizing the distance between actors when it came to purpose, understanding, unity of effort, and synchronization.

E. SUMMARY

The results of SOCSOUTH’s BPC efforts in Colombia and Paraguay vary for a number of interrelated reasons. First, Colombia presented a better military partner for the United States than Paraguay did. The United States and Colombia shared a higher level of political cooperation and a proportionally higher level of military cooperation, than experienced in Paraguay during this period. Additionally, Colombia was a partner poised for action, whereas Paraguay was a partner hampered by domestic political issues. As depicted in Figure 13, Colombia and the United States also shared more security interests than Paraguay did, increasing the opportunities for engagement in Colombia.

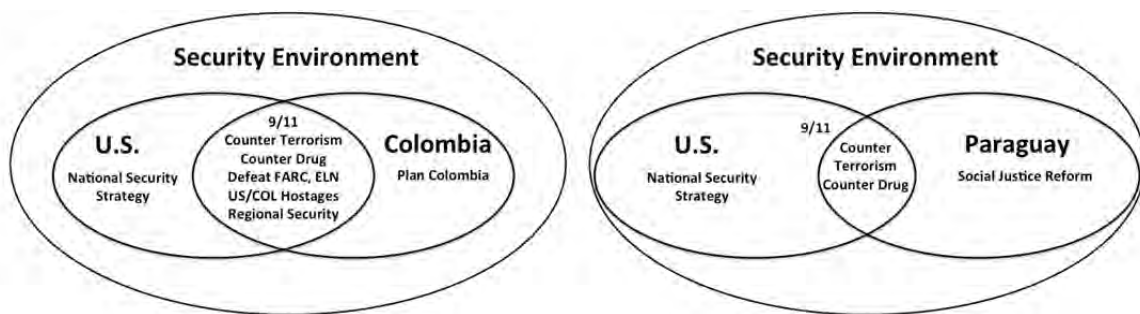


Figure 13. Overlapping Security Interests between the United States and Colombia and Paraguay, respectively

After 9/11 the United States became more focused on counterterrorism efforts around the globe, as a result, the U.S. Congress changed the rules for engagement making

it easier for SOCSOUTH to partner in South America. To achieve their objectives in both countries SOCSOUTH brought together a number of different authorities and employed a number of tools. Although SOCSOUTH applied essentially the same rules and tools in both Colombia and Paraguay, SOCSOUTH was able to accomplish more with them in Colombia than in Paraguay. A factor attributed partially to the fact Colombian forces were slightly more advanced than Paraguayan forces at the outset of this period, but also because Colombia was more willing and able to do more with the tools the United States offered than Paraguay was.

Combined, these two broad factors informed the chain of actors that took part in the capacity building enterprises, and how they interacted with each other. The chain in Colombia was clearly more robust, but the links in the chain are also shorter, as illustrated in Figure 14. The actors were drawn closer together both horizontally and vertically through an operational focus not seen in Paraguay. This focus increased synchronization and cooperation in Colombia, whereas its absence hindered the enterprise in Paraguay.

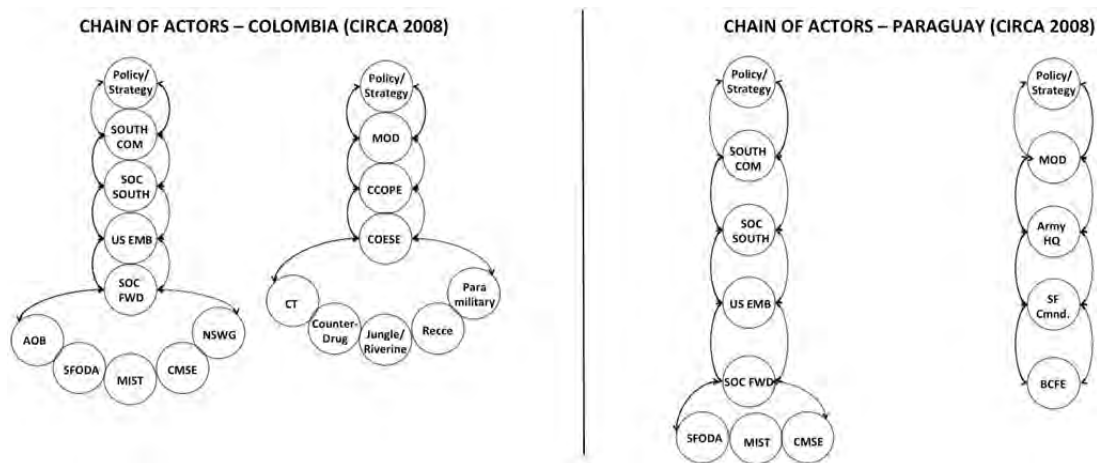


Figure 14. Side-by-side Comparison of Chain of Actors in Colombia and Paraguay

It is important to reiterate that the enterprise in Colombia also benefited from the positive effects of operationalization and the galvanizing effect of a clear and present threat. Whereas the Colombians and Americans were both given cause for accelerated

results due to the insurgent threat in Colombia and to rescue the American hostages, a similar situation did not exist in Paraguay. These intangibles complicate the comparison between the Colombian and Paraguayan case studies, but they also serve to highlight some important aspects of capacity building. First, catalyzing effects such as these present an opportunity for rapid transformation. In the case of Colombia, the threat of the FARC and the hostage crises increased focus, authorities, and resourcing; which resulted in more capacity built in a shorter period of time, and served to institutionalize the Colombian SOF capacity the United States had invested in. While it is impossible to know how the presence of a similar threat in Paraguay would have changed the partnership environment in that case, it is clear that the FARC energized the partnership environment in Colombia and it would not be unreasonable to assume that there would have been a similar effect in Paraguay.

Second, these events create unique opportunities to be capitalized on. In this example, General Cleveland took advantage of the newly built capacity used to rescue the American hostages, and ears and minds that the spectacular rescue opened to plant the seed for a SOCOM-like headquarters for Colombian SOF. The results catapulted what was an O-6 position to a two-star general position with a seat at the table with the other service chiefs in Colombia.

Third, these catalyzing effects are impossible to predict. It was impossible to know on February 12, 2003 that the following day three Americans would be taken hostage and a named operation would be created as a result. This point reinforces the observation that partnerships are dynamic and unpredictable. As a result, BPC enterprises need to be prepared to capitalize on opportunities as they emerge, and equally prepared to cope with or counter unforeseen and uncontrollable negative events.

Chapter VI completes this research by drawing conclusions and implications about building partner capacity, and Special Operations Forces role in the process.

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VI. CONCLUSIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

This research examines how USSOF builds partner capacity. It is an effort towards increasing the level of understanding of a core component of what U.S. Special Operations Forces do and a cornerstone of the post-9/11 American national security strategy. This research has drawn on interviews, conversations, and the written works of senior USSOF leaders, as well as national security documents, congressional and news reports, joint doctrine, historical and contemporary examples, and the author's own operational experiences with capacity building. When aggregated, these sources indicate that BPC is far less nebulous, yet far more intricate than commonly recognized. Based on this research the following conclusions have been drawn.

B. CONCLUSIONS

1. Building Partner Capacity

This research has led to several conclusions about BPC and how it is carried out by the United States.

a. Defining BPC

Building partner capacity is a whole-of-government approach employed by the United States to achieve national security objectives. At the macro level of policy and strategy BPC is a concept; it refers to and describes the act of helping others—partners—to get better at something. Who the partners are, and what they are getting better at vary greatly, but they are all linked by the common theme of using one partner's strengths to compensate for the other's weakness in an effort to achieve a mutual security benefit.

While a neat and tidy concept at the macro level, BPC is anything but neat and tidy at the micro level. Different government agencies understand and approach capacity building differently given their institutional predispositions. They use different—yet sometimes confusingly similar—terminology, programs, and authorities. Additionally, different partners—both U.S. agencies and departments, and international partners—may

have competing interests, which create situations where one agenda is advanced at the expense of the other.

BPC is also challenged as a term. Taken separately, the words partner and capacity are vague and broad. When the gerund building is thrown into the mix the aggregate of building partner capacity can be applied in a myriad of ways, to a number of different actors. As a result BPC is predisposed to serve as a catchall phrase, making it difficult to pinpoint how exactly capacity with any given partner is built, and equally difficult to articulate success or failure in such endeavors.

The challenge that contemporary threats pose require solutions that are beyond the ability of any one U.S. agency or department, which is why BPC is understood to be complete government approach. The primary U.S. BPC-leads are the DOD, DOS, and USAID, of which DOD has staked its claim as the primary stakeholder. Below the policy level at the DOD, BPC transforms from a clean, clear-cut concept into a system of gears, sprockets, and crisscrossing wires.

Technically, according to U.S. joint doctrine, the military does not conduct Building Partner Capacity, because BPC is not a doctrinal term or task. What the military actually does is build partner capacity through various disaggregated operational tasks, programs, and activities, the aggregate total of which results in an increased partner capacity. The military carries these tasks out under various national authorities and with the approval of various, and often numerous, decision makers. The sum total of which is situationally dependent.

The authorities that govern U.S. interaction with foreign governments, particularly military interactions, are old. The law that governs how U.S. foreign assistance, which a substantial number of U.S. BPC efforts fall under, was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy 40 years before the attacks on 9/11. Many of the programs and activities that the U.S. military uses to build capacity are equally antiquated, Cold War relics that remain on the books in an age of new threats and dynamics. Although the DOD BPC machine is a system of rusty gears, misaligned sprockets, and “jury-rigged” crisscrossing wires—it still works. Furthermore, it is the

only machine the joint force has to work with, so it is incumbent upon the military to make it work to the best of their ability.

Progress to streamline these processes has been made, but only incrementally, and at a gruelingly slow pace. It is important for the military professional to remember that the purpose of the “A” *Words*—authorities, approvals and appropriations—is to protect the U.S. Constitution and the image and ideology of the United States. Although increasing the operational efficiency in the pursuit of national security is a priority, it takes, as the U.S. system of government is designed, a backseat to protecting the constitution. Therefore, the operational level planner and below is better served learning how to operate more efficiently within the system, than hoping or waiting for the system to change.

b. The Partnership Environment

Further complicating the efforts to build partner capacity is the partner and the nature of the partnership itself. With respect to the partner, each one is different. However, it is probably safe to assume that for all of the points of friction the U.S. military has to overcome to build capacity, that the partner military and their government share a similar level of friction. These points of friction serve to illuminate aspects of the *partnership environment* (Figure 15), the aggregate of factors and conditions that influence the partnership, but only partially.

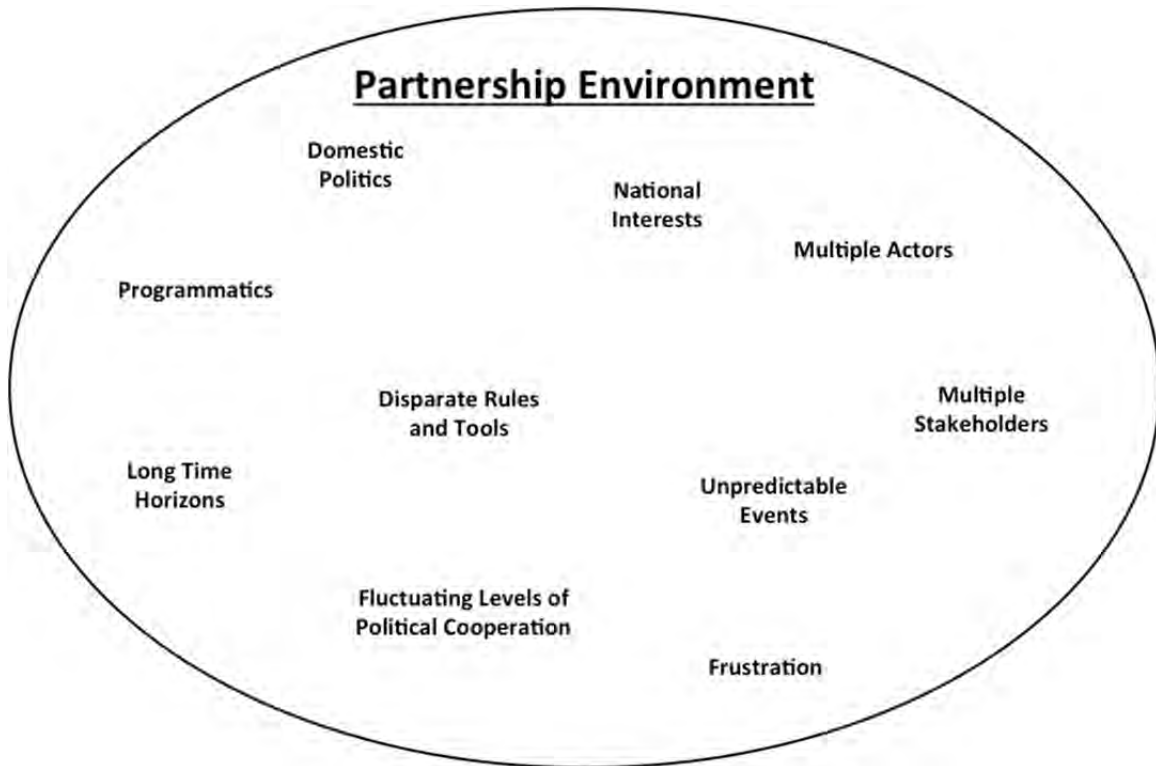


Figure 15. The Partnership Environment

An international partnership is dynamic. A partnership is driven primarily by the states' national interests, but is greatly influenced by world events and other phenomena that may cause those interests to change instantly, and without warning. The level of political cooperation between the two countries ultimately bounds the capacity building potential of any partnership. Since the partnership is inherently fluid, one can expect fluidity in how efficiently and effectively capacity can be built over any given period of time. This dynamic reality places greater tension on the already inefficient and programmatic gears and sprockets of the American BPC system. Compensating for and managing these incongruences, and articulating their operational impact, comprise an onerous burden that falls on the military formations and commands tasked with carrying these missions out.

c. The BPC Enterprise

To bring all of these disparate pieces together, to sustain them against the external influences of the partnership environment, and to maintain them for the long durations

necessary to build capacity, is beyond the ability of any one unit or command; it takes an entire enterprise. The nature of U.S. BPC requires assembling and managing an entire series of authorities, approvals, funding lines, activities, programs, and people to support the effort and accomplish complicated and interrelated tasks in support of the overall BPC objective. Every BPC enterprise will be different in form and function; but they will all serve the purpose of balancing the programmatic of government bureaucracy against the dynamic nature of partnerships, and will be required to synchronize efforts vertically from the policy to the tactical level, and horizontally with the partner nation.

d. The Seven Principles of Capacity Building

This research has identified seven principles that are critical to the success of capacity-building efforts. They are: common purpose, endurance, opportunism, resilience, synchronization, transparency, and unity of effort.

1. **Common purpose** is what brings two partners together. This research advances that partners are more likely to share common purpose when their national security interests overlap. However, as the case in Colombia demonstrated with regard to the hostage rescue, common purpose can develop at any time during a capacity-building effort; conversely it can also degrade over time as well.
2. **Endurance** is vital to sustain the enterprise for the extended periods of time necessary to build partner capacity.
3. **Opportunism** is the mindset and practice of seizing the moment when unforeseen circumstances create an opportunity. The case in Colombia highlighted several examples when SOCSOUTH seized opportunities as they presented themselves. Although these opportunities are unpredictable, that is not an excuse for being unprepared. In-depth operational planning and understanding, and working towards the other six principles will increase the ability to rapidly identify and capitalize on these opportunities.
4. **Resilience** is a necessary quality of any BPC enterprise to cope with and adapt to unforeseen events and changes in political cooperation or policies over time.
5. **Synchronization** is required to bring together disparate programs, activities, and authorities, with their various programmatic timelines and

approvals, in order to get the right skills and resources in the right place at the right time.

6. **Transparency** horizontally between partners and vertically between actors stifles distrust and increases the synergistic effects of the other principles, which results in a more efficient and effective enterprise.
7. **Unity of effort** refers to the actors in the enterprise working together, over extended periods of time, towards a common goal.

Combined, these principles serve to fortify the BPC enterprise and allow it to function in the otherwise inhospitable partnership environment (Figure 16).

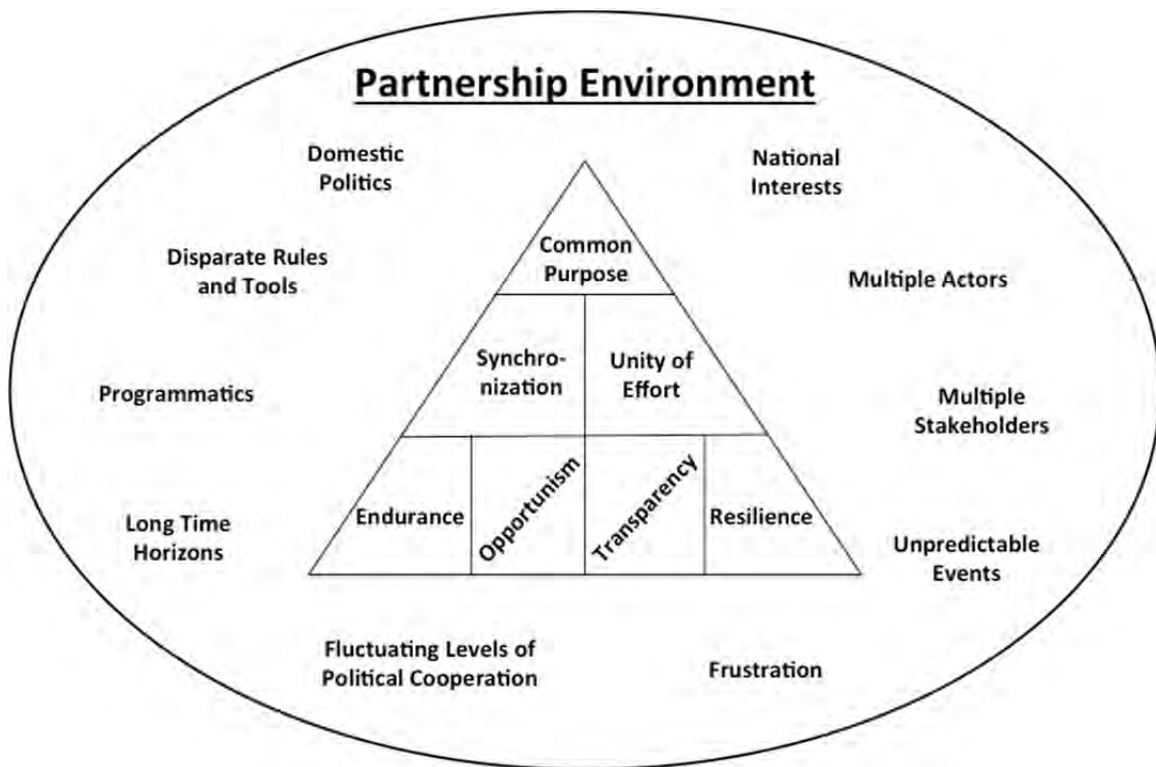


Figure 16. The Seven Principles of Capacity Building

2. USSOF: The United States Capacity-Building Force of Choice

Building the capacity of foreign forces has always been a primary task of USSOF. From the earliest days of U.S. Army Special Forces in Europe and the highlands of South Vietnam, to Village Stability Operations in Afghanistan, USSOF, regardless of branch or

Service, has been building capacity in one way or another. BPC is an integral part of USSOF's indirect approach, and something, according to the former SOCOM commander, "SOF focuses intently on."

There are three factors that differentiate USSOF BPC efforts from conventional DOD efforts: USSOF's operational history; how and where USSOF is applied operationally; and USSOF's nimble and adaptive force structure. The first difference is USSOF's long and dense history of capacity building that spans over 70 years. Over that time, USSOF has developed not only a reputation as able and effective capacity builders, but also an institutional knowledge and understanding of how to build capacity at the tactical level.

This BPC imprint can be seen on the core activities that USSOF conducts. Of the twelve core USSOF activities, eight of them, CWMD, CT, UW, FID, SFA, COIN, MISO, and CAO have BPC components or directly support BPC efforts. To the tactical level operator on the ground the tasks shared between these relational, and often-overlapping activities, look very similar. They mostly revolve around *OTERA tasks*—organizing, training, equipping, rebuilding/building, and advising—partner nation forces. They require skillsets such as indigenous languages, communications, weapons marksmanship, demolitions, construction, and increasingly a working knowledge of the rule of law and governance.

Second, USSOF is most often applied in "gaps" and "seams" where political sensitivities are such that a large conventional presence is not politically feasible, but the mission requirements are beyond the abilities of the interagency partners on the ground. USSOF is trained and equipped to apply special techniques and technologies to achieve their missions. When properly supported, USSOF is capable of producing significant operational gains while maintaining a very low American profile. To that end, USSOF can be used to address national security concerns without requiring an irreversible, public policy decision, like the deployment of a conventional formation would. These qualities make USSOF suitable for a wide range of operations and mission profiles, and as a result USSOF often finds itself employed, and has grown very comfortable operating, in new and dynamic situations that require adaptive and creative solutions.

Third, USSOF has a nimble and flexible force structure that allows for the assembly of highly capable and geographically dispersed actors in an arranging chain. This chain allows USSOF to synchronize and maintain the SOF BPC enterprise and unity of effort over the long periods of time and distance that BPC requires. Additionally, when properly managed, the chain of actors provides the SOF BPC enterprise resiliency by capitalizing on the strengths of different actors along the chain to better weather the dynamic partnership environment. Combined, these attributes and qualities allow USSOF unique and effective ways to achieve the seven principles of capacity building.

a. The Arranging Chain

The arranging chain serves to illustrate and better understand how the actors that bring a BPC enterprise to life fit together. Examining the actors in a BPC enterprise through this lens aids in identifying the inherent strengths and weakness of different actors. It also serves to better understand the partner nation's chain of actors, increasing transparency and allowing planners to identify potential sources of friction within the partner's chain that might otherwise be overlooked.

b. Operational and Strategic Capacity-Building Shortfalls

These factors combine to imbue the USSOF institution and the service members that comprise it with a certain proclivity for BPC. This knowledge and understanding is immaterial and difficult to capture, but it permeates USSOF's approach to BPC. The result is an exceedingly high level of comfort with the task, and a level of innovation and creativity in its tactical application, almost subconsciously, that is not seen in conventional BPC efforts. However, despite the expertise at the tactical level of capacity building, there is a gap of knowledge at the operational level, and a lack of articulation at the strategic level as to how USSOF goes about building partner capacity.

The lack of articulation was addressed sufficiently in Linda Robinson's special report to the Council on Foreign Relations as noted in Chapter III. Additionally, research in support of this thesis, and the author's own operational experience clearly indicate that the new strategic focus on BPC, the nature of the security challenges, and the operational requirements they demand, have presented USSOCOM and the TSOCs with

unprecedented requirements that the commands are still trying to figure out how to best address.

As a result TSOC-level commanders and their staffs are figuring out solutions and approaches on the fly. Case in point would be the creative application of command and control in the two SOCSOUTH case studies, where the TSOC created an in-country headquarters to better synchronize the efforts the TSOC needed to accomplish, but was not designed to conduct. It would also appear that the “second nature” familiarity USSOF has with the tactical application of BPC, the *it is just something we do* level of understanding, has left USSOF underprepared at the operational and strategic level. This shortfall is most clearly seen in the lack of institutionalized knowledge, planning, coordination, assessment, and articulation of capacity building requirements that USSOF is now being called upon to carryout.

C. A NOTE ON THE CASE STUDIES

There are several points that are worth highlighting or reiterating at this point with regards to the case studies presented in this work. First and foremost, USSOF were not the only DOD entities or formations operating in either country during this period. Therefore, this work is absolutely not trying to credit the gains in Colombia or Paraguay solely to USSOF and SOCSOUTH, or to the United States in general, as Colombia and Paraguay, as with any host nation, were the most integral components of these two cases.

Second, the SOC-Forwards in Colombia and Paraguay were not solely focused on BPC; those headquarters were operating along several lines of effort.⁴²¹ However, they did serve a very critical role as the in-country synchronizer for all USSOF BPC efforts, and maintained excellent balance between the strengths and weakness of the actors on the chain. This research indicates that the ability to provide that level of balance should be accredited to their persistent presence in the country, and of having the commensurate authority to demonstrate commitment and provide support horizontally and vertically

⁴²¹ Averett, Cervantes, and O’Hara, *An Analysis of Special Operations Command-South’s Distributive Command and Control Concept*.

within the partnership. As mentioned in Chapter III, SOLOs and similar TSOC-specific positions such as SOFREPs can also fill this role as an in-country synchronizer.

Third, this work advanced the concept of operationalization as a tool of SOF BPC. Operation Willing Spirit in Colombia presented an example of just such a case. However, it is important to note that the level at which operationalization occurs will determine how much of an impact the approach has. For example, in Colombia, OWS required action from all the actors on both sides of the chain. As a result both chains were galvanized from top to bottom, which in turn created a significant capacity building effect. However, in other examples mentioned in this work, specifically SOCEUR's operationalization of its partnerships in Hungary in Romania, the effects of operationalization are really only seen at the tactical level. This is because USSOF teams and SOF teams from Hungary and Romania train, deploy, and operate together in Afghanistan at a tactical level, with little, in comparison to Colombia, interface at the operational and strategic level in Hungary and Romania.⁴²² This operationalization definitely created the potential for additional capacity building opportunities in both countries, but it is important to note that that potential was not automatically realized solely because the partnership had become operationalized.

D. COMMON THEMES

Several common themes emerged during this research. They are outlined below.

1. BPC is Rife with Frustration.

For the USSOF planner and operator, the operational planning and execution of a BPC enterprise can seem like a futile Sisyphean task; like trying to build a house of cards outside on a windy day. The gears and sprockets of the American system do not align properly, the time horizons are endless, the political situation is always in flux, and your partner is dealing with the same exact problems. Also, everyone's perspective on the chain is different; what may make sense at the top of the chain may not make sense at the

⁴²² Author's personal experience with 10th Special Forces Group and Special Operations Command Europe from 2009–2012.

bottom, this can also lead to more frustration. But since all actors influence the chain equally, these frustrations need to be kept in check as they could have an unintended negative impact on the entire partnership.

2. Transparency is the Best Cure for Frustration.

Open and frank lines of communication horizontally and vertically along both chains will increase overall understanding of the situation and serve to alleviate a large amount of undue frustration. It is important to note transparency must be maintained over time as well. As different units rotate in and out of theater they will require the same level of understanding to maintain the enterprises' overall level of transparency.

3. The Most Important Vote is the Partner's.

The partner has to be ready and willing to receive the capacity-building efforts. In the case of Colombia, the Colombians were more than ready; in Paraguay, it appears that the time was not right. The time in Colombia was right because the Government and People of Colombia had decided they were committed to securing their country. It was from that commitment the other positive factors of the U.S.-Colombian partnership flowed. The FARC and other insurgent groups served as a catalyst for this decision, other unforeseen events such as the hostage taking also served as accelerants to capacity building, but ultimately it was the commitment to change that made the time right for capacity-building efforts in Colombia. The Government and People of Paraguay lacked this level of commitment to change, at least with respect Paraguayan security interests that were of mutual interest to the United States. Therefore, when considering their approach to BPC with a partner nation, planners must consider how much capacity building bandwidth the partner is ready for and can take on; keeping in mind that these are long-term endeavors, and that sometimes less is more.

4. The Principles of BPC Apply to Persistent Engagement

Persistent engagement is a keystone concept of *SOCOM 2020* and the Global SOF Network. *SOCOM 2020* states that “in support of Ambassadors and GCCs, aligned with our interagency partners, SOF will provide small unit, forward-based persistent presence

closely integrated with our partners to protect our interests and provide rapid response.”⁴²³ As indicated throughout this thesis, BPC is either the primary focus or a critical supporting element of the overwhelming majority of USSOF’s persistent engagements around the world. As a result, there is a high degree of transferability between the principles and components of USSOF BPC and USSOF persistent engagement writ large.

E. A RECOMMENDED APPROACH TO PLANNING AND DESIGNING A SOF BPC ENTERPRISE

The following is a recommended approach for TSOC planners to consider when designing and planning a SOF BPC enterprise. As noted above, this model can also be applied to planning any type of persistent engagement enterprise. In some cases, national directives or world events will direct a TSOC to initiate a BPC endeavor with a partner nation. However, there are cases, where a TSOC may choose to pursue capacity building on their own accord as a means to achieving certain objectives within their AOR. In any case, there are certain considerations and assessments that the TSOC should consider before embarking on such an endeavor. This approach considers the partnership environment and applies the seven principles of BPC to help develop a suitable BPC enterprise to best meet the TSOC’s needs.

Before beginning the planning process, it is important for the TSOC to recognize that they have varying degrees of control, as discussed above, over the effectiveness of the BPC enterprise. In terms of the seven principles, these varying degrees of control are depicted in Figure 17. By design, command climate, and approach the TSOC can increase the endurance, opportunism, transparency, and resilience of the enterprise fairly effectively.

⁴²³ U.S. Special Operations Command, “SOCOM 2020: Forging the Tip of the Spear,” 5.

The Seven Principles of Capacity Building



Figure 17. TSOC Level of Control over the Seven Principles of Capacity Building

However, while a TSOC can pour additional energy into synchronization and unity of effort, which at times they may have to, actors outside of the TSOC's span of control play a significant factor in the overall level of these two principles. Finally, common purpose cannot be manufactured. It either has to exist from the outset, or be identified and cultivated over time. The planning approach outlined below seeks to identify partners where the likelihood of common purpose is the highest. However, besides identifying these potential partners in the planning process, maintaining and cultivating that sense of common purpose will become the incumbent responsibility of the actors that comprise the enterprise.

1. Conduct an Assessment of the Partnership Environment

The partnership environment is the aggregate of factors and conditions that inform the partnership between two military partners. This initial assessment is used to determine the overall potential of the partnership. This work offered two methods for assessing the potential of a capacity building partnership: determining the "sweet spot" of national security interests; and assessing the level of political cooperation between the two countries using the P_C formula.

The “sweet spot” assessment helps to determine the amount of common ground that the TSOC will have to operate within the partner nation. (Figure 18) The greater the overlap of interests, as was the case in Colombia, the greater the latitude the TSOC will have to connect with partner nation and the U.S. country team. It will also serve to identify potential engagement opportunities. Essentially, the assessment is rather simple: identify each partner’s national interests and where there is overlap; the greater the overlap, the greater the opportunity to engage with the partner, the greater the potential for success.

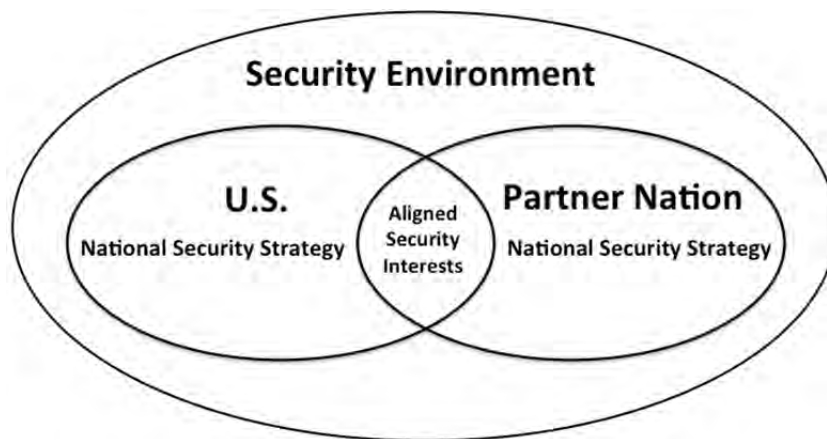


Figure 18. Aligning Common Interests⁴²⁴

However, just because security interests overlap, does not necessarily mean that the level of political cooperation between the United States and the PN will be of a sufficient level to effectively build capacity. The $P_C = D_C + M_C + E_C + X_C$ formula is a simple way to assess the level of political cooperation between two partners. It operates under the premise that the political cooperation between two countries is the sum of the diplomatic, military, economic, and other connections that exist between the two states.

In short, the lower the level of political cooperation, as was the case in Paraguay, the lower the potential for military cooperation. Conversely, the greater the level of political cooperation, as was the case in Colombia, the greater the potential for military

⁴²⁴ *Security Force Assistance Handbook*, 2012, II-2.

cooperation. No matter how hard a TSOC may try, it is impossible, given the United States Code and the laws and policies that govern foreign engagement, for military cooperation to exceed the overall level of political cooperation between the two countries. To overcome the low-level of cooperation, the TSOC will either have to increase its efforts and resources in the enterprise, with no guarantee of return on the investment; or lower its expectations with regards to the amount of capacity that will be built or increase the duration of time that will be needed to build the desired capacity.

This assessment should be frank, honest, and direct. The potential for friction and frustration in a BPC enterprise is inherently high; inaccurate assessments and misinformed expectations will only serve to increase those detracting factors. These assessments should include:

- U.S. interests in the PN and region;
- The GCC's interests and theater campaign plan;
- The resources the TSOC has available to it;
- The political capital the TSOC and GCC have with the State Department regional desk and with the country team;⁴²⁵
- The political situation in the PN, namely the PN's domestic political scene;
- PN civil-military relations;
- The state and focus of the PN military;
- And how easily the PN's regional neighbors influence the PN, as was the case in Paraguay.

The healthier all of these relationships are, the greater the potential for success.

Assessing the level of political cooperation can be as in-depth or abbreviated as the commander requires or as time permits. In the end, the goal is an assessment of the

⁴²⁵ As observed by former Secretary Gates, and in the case studies of Colombia and Paraguay, most of these BPC enterprises will be established in countries where the United States is not at war, and the State Department is the lead agency. Therefore the U.S. country teams and their higher authorities are integral parts of the capacity building enterprise.

partnership environment. This will provide the TSOC greater understanding of the limitations they may face, opportunities that may present themselves, and better inform how they should construct their BPC enterprise. Regardless if the BPC undertaking is directive or elective, the partnership assessment will assist commanders and staffs in determining when, where, and how to best apply the limited resources at their disposal.

2. Define the BPC Objective

Like any other military operation, BPC requires an objective. The BPC objective should not only serve as a desired end state, but it should also serve as the focal point for all actors involved in the BPC enterprise; providing a degree of transparency and unity to the enterprise over time and space. The objective should also serve as the “yardstick” to measure and articulate the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the enterprise. It is from this objective that the all milestones and measures of effectiveness should be derived.

3. Identify the Rules and Tools Available

Military engagement cannot occur without the authority and approval to do so. The nature of these authorities and the fidelity of the approvals will determine how the TSOC is able operate within the partnership environment. Commanders and their staffs should be well versed in the authorities available to them, and with whom the approval authority resides.

The two case studies presented here indicate that there is no one-size-fits-all authority that will enable the TSOC to achieve all of its objectives. As result, it would be helpful for the command to think in terms of the effects they intend to achieve, and then reverse engineer what combination of authorities will best accomplish these objectives. This will serve to better focus the staff’s limited time and resources to pursuing authorities and approvals that will best meet the needs of the BPC enterprise.

The tools are the mechanisms that turn the commander’s capacity building intent in to reality. These tools include programs, activities, funding, and resources; and they can be combined in a limitless number of ways to produce a myriad of different results and effects. In terms of engagement and resiliency, more is better; but the application of

these tools has to be planned, systematic, and controlled. The TSOC should begin identifying what tools it has at its disposal that can aid in achieving the BPC objective, and how to ensure their controlled application.

This work listed only the most common tools used by USSOF in support or capacity building, but there are plenty of others. As with the authorities, planners should consider the effects they are trying to achieve and then stitch together existing tools to attain them. Additionally, in many cases, TSOCs have sufficient authority and funding to fashion their own tools to meet their unique needs. As referenced earlier, perfect examples include SOCEUR's Partnership Development Programs and SOFREP positions. These "in house" solutions offer the advantage of being quickly implemented and tailor-made to meet the TSOC's needs.

4. Construct the Chain of Actors

The chain of actors is what brings the BPC enterprise to life. Like most things pertaining to SOF, there is no single solution to how the chain should look or be comprised. How the TSOC chooses to construct the chain should be informed by the nature of the partnership environment and the resources available to the TSOC. Although each chain of actors will be unique, there are several guiding principles that TSOC commanders and staffs should consider:

(1) Consider the strengths and weakness of the actors on both sides of the partnership. As addressed earlier, each actor has their own inherent set of strengths and weakness given their position and responsibilities on the chain. (Figure 19) The nature of the enterprise may require more of one quality or skill than another; also, those requirements may change over time and therefore the chain may have to be modified.

(2) Personalities do matter. This research did not delve into the interplay of personalities in a partnership, but they are a factor planners should consider. As Averett, Cervantes, and O'Hara conclude in their study of SOCSOUTH's SOC-Forwards, getting the right personality matches are important, and failure to do so can serve as a significant

impediment to success.⁴²⁶ Given that observation, the seven principles of capacity building can be applied at the individual level as well, since all actors share equal influence over the enterprise and should act and interact with these principles in mind. These points are reflected in Figure 19.

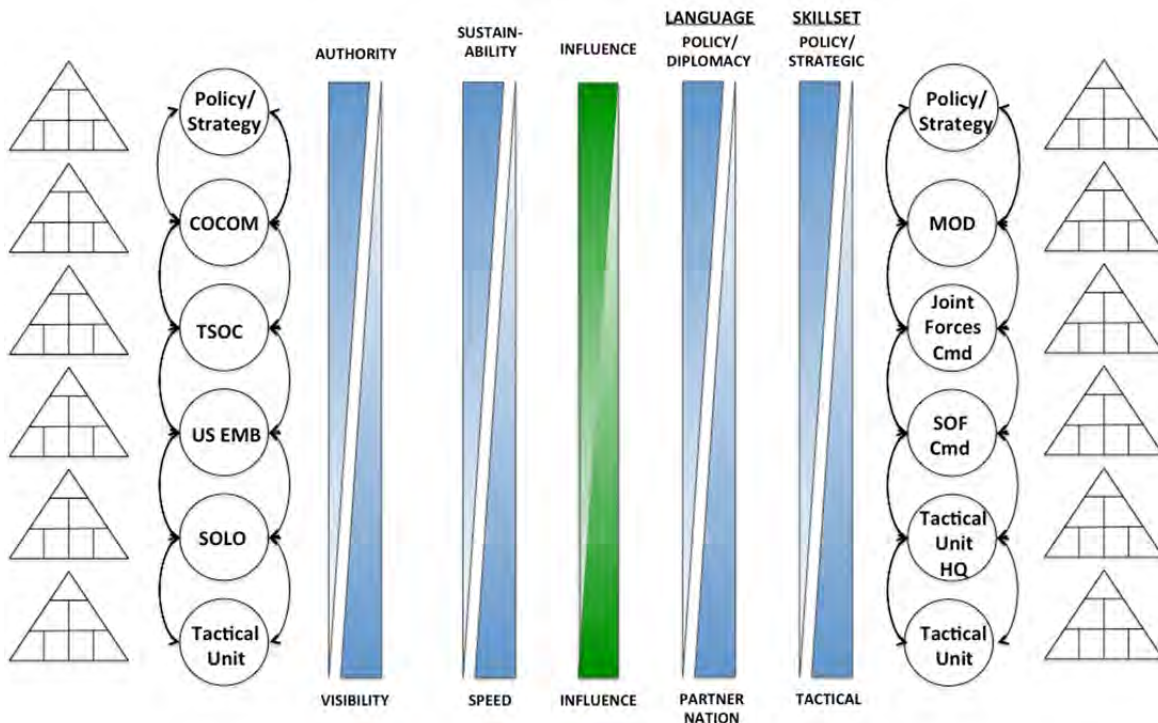


Figure 19. The Actors of the SOF BPC Enterprise

(3) Determine the size of the footprint. There are several factors that determine the size of the USSOF footprint that a partner nation can handle. The most common considerations should include:

- The size of the partner force;
- Political sensitivities;
- The security environment;

⁴²⁶ Averett, Cervantes, and O'Hara, *An Analysis of Special Operations Command-South's Distributive Command and Control Concept*, 70.

- And how much presence the U.S. country team is willing to accept.

From the American perspective, the country team's assessment should be taken very seriously. Most activities like country clearances and other forms of support will have to go through the U.S. embassy, and not all country teams have the same size staff and physical space inside the embassy's walls. SOSCOUTH was very cognizant of footprint limitations in both Colombia and Paraguay. As addressed earlier, part of the reason the enterprise in Colombia was so large, and the enterprise in Paraguay was significantly smaller, was because of capacity limits that the PN and the U.S. country team could handle. Oversized, forward deployed SOF packages can quickly find themselves unwelcomed guests, which will only serve to distance the actors in the chain.

(4) Identify the in-country synchronizer. The SOCSOUTH case studies, recent literature, and other contemporary examples, all indicate that an in-country synchronizer is a key component to the increased likelihood of success in a SOF BPC enterprise. This synchronizer can be in the form of a SOCFWD, as was the case in Colombia and Paraguay, or they can be a permanently assigned single-SOF advisor, such as a SOLO or a SOFREP, or another actor or entity not identified here that possess the capability to fill this role. This actor's presence provides the U.S. country team a resident SOF expert, facilitates communication horizontally and vertically which increases transparency, provides continuity as rotational units come and go, and is the TSOC commander's eyes and ears, and sometimes mouth, in the country. When done correctly, by the right personality, the end result is a more synchronized, resilient SOF BPC enterprise. In the absence of an in-country synchronizer, a TSOC has to fulfill those roles as best as possible through periodic visits, in- and out-briefs from rotational units, and via long distance communication, which is simply not as effective.⁴²⁷

- (5) Identify ways to make the enterprise more resilient.

Because the partnership environment is dynamic, a BPC enterprise is vulnerable to external influences beyond the TSOC's control. One way to mitigate unforeseen

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 23–25.

threats to a BPC enterprise is to make it more resilient. In the case of Colombia and Paraguay, the enterprise in Colombia was more resilient for the following reasons: the level of political and military cooperation between the two countries was high; there was the catalyzing hostage crisis; and SOCSOUTH had a much broader base of engagement in Colombia than in Paraguay (Figure 20).

There is not too much that a TSOC can do to increase the level of political cooperation between the United States and a PN, but it can take diligent steps to ensure the level of military cooperation is as high as possible. Likewise, catalyzing events such as OWS are unpredictable. Although commanders and staff should be prepared to capitalize on operational opportunities, they cannot be forecasted as part of the plan.

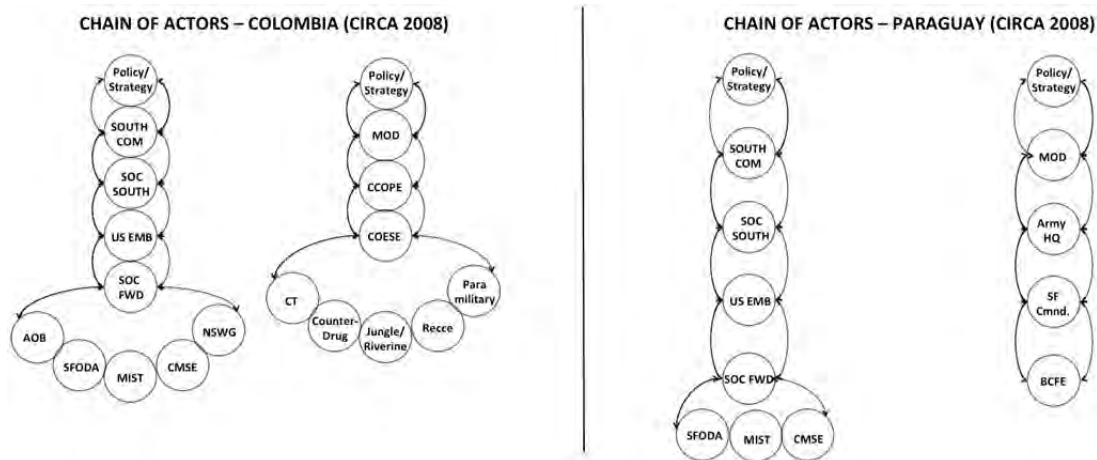


Figure 20. Side-by-side Comparison of Chain of Actors in Colombia and Paraguay

The one factor that the TSOC can actively pursue is more engagement opportunities with the PN. In Colombia, SOCSOUTH forces worked with counterterrorism, counter drug, jungle, riverine, reconnaissance forces and paramilitary formations. Working with different entities increased the demand signal of the enterprise in Colombia, to both the Colombians and the Americans. It also provided multiple points of access to Colombia, should either country's policy change. For example, if for some reason the United States decided to stop supporting Colombia's CT efforts, SOCSOUTH was still in a position to engage with the other formations; whereas in Paraguay, if the

U.S. implemented the same policy, SOCSOUTH would be left without any engagement opportunities in the country, as they were engaged only with the country's CT force.

5. Continue to Reassess and Communicate

Once the BPC enterprise is initiated reassessment is critical. As stressed time and again, the partnership environment is dynamic and changes over time; therefore a BPC enterprise cannot be run on autopilot. This is another reason having an in-country synchronizer is so important. They can manage day-to-day activities in country, and gauge and report changes and developments—*the feel*—back to the TSOC, freeing-up the TSOC to address its other myriad of responsibilities. Regular review of the BPC enterprise should be conducted, and adaptations made as required.

During this phase, additional transparency between different actors, particularly rotational units will become critical to enterprise efficiency and unity of effort. Additional communication requirements may be necessary to better communicate with actors and partners. KLEs should be planned and executed when possible or required. Regular assessment and adjustments to the enterprise will provide the commander and staff a more comprehensive understanding of the partnership environment and position them to better capitalize on emergent capacity building opportunities.

F. IMPLICATIONS

To date, USSOF lacks any sort of coherent theory or doctrine on capacity building. Over the past decade, as illustrated by the SOCSOUTH case studies, TSOC staffs have been working diligently to figure out how to make operational ends meet in order to achieve these new capacity building objectives. Major changes in USSOCOM have occurred over the last several years, the full extent of which have yet to be felt, but the guiding principles and critical components of SOF capacity building have yet to be identified and institutionalized. Moving forward, as demands for BPC increase and resources decrease, the need for such a theory will become increasingly urgent.

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

To best empower the TSOCs, the operational arms of USSOCOM, this research recommends USSOCOM increase the level of professional development it provides to its officers and non-commissioned officers. These special operators possess an inherent knowledge of building partner capacity at the tactical level. Although such knowledge and experience is necessary, it is insufficient to fully engage in undertakings such as a BPC enterprise when these personnel are promoted into positions at the operational level such as a TSOC.

Under USSOCOM's campaign plan, *SOCOM 2020*, the command intends to empower the Global SOF Network by pursuing persistent engagement, and disaggregating the force to connect with more partners via smaller formations and even with single individuals.⁴²⁸ In these environments, a working knowledge of the intricacies and interplay of factors that influence BPC enterprises will be essential to achieving USSOCOM's objectives. A basic understanding of these principles and factors will go a long way to reducing friction, while increasing adaptability, operational creativity and resiliency within the enterprise; whether serving as a single SOF advisor in a partner nation, or as a planner at the TSOC.

H. AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study focused solely on bilateral BPC enterprises, but as mentioned previously, multilateral SOF BPC enterprises are already in existence. One such example is SOCEUR's sponsored Combined Special Operations Task Force-10 (CSOTF-10) in Afghanistan under the auspices of ISAF SOF. As national interests continue to overlap, and partner nation SOF capacities become projectable beyond their own borders—an intended outcome of on-going SFA missions—the likelihood of multilateral SOF partnerships and multilateral BPC enterprises will only increase. As the partners increase in number so too will the dynamics of the partnership environment. An in-depth study of

⁴²⁸ Jim Thomas and Chris Dougherty, *Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2013), 89–95.

the factors at play in multilateral partnerships will be of much benefit to those charged with stewarding such enterprises.

I. CLOSING REMARKS

Building partner capacity remains a key tenet of the U.S. national security strategy, but it also remains a challenging endeavor, with broad objectives arrayed against diverse threats. The United States will continue to pursue capacity building as a principal approach to national defense for the foreseeable future, and SOF will remain the capacity-building force of choice. The threats are simply too diverse for the United States to face alone, and SOF has the experience, expertise, and ability to lead the way for the Department of Defense along this line of effort. Although USSOF has extensive experience building partner capacity at the tactical level, this new strategic emphasis and the operational requirements necessary to support long-term, persistent capacity building will require more of USSOF at the operational and strategic level, namely at the TSOC. This work by no means has come close to providing solutions to the challenges that lie ahead, but hopefully it has furthered the discussion and brought us a little bit closer.

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APPENDIX. BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY PROGRAMS

Program	Purpose	Program Authority	Funds Cancel Sept. 30
1203	<p>Enhance the capacity of the national security forces of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and forces participating in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to conduct counterterrorism operations</p> <p>Enhance the ability of the Yemen Ministry of Interior Counterterrorism Forces to conduct counterterrorism operations</p>	112-239	2019
1206	Build the capacity of foreign military forces to conduct counterterrorism or to support military, stability and maritime security operations.	109-163, as amended	2019
1207	<p>Enhance the capacity of the national security forces of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and forces participating in the African Union Mission in Somalia to conduct counterterrorism operations</p> <p>Enhance the capacity of the Yemen Ministry of Interior Counter Terrorism Forces to conduct counterterrorism operations</p>	112-81	2017
Afghan Train & Equip	Provide assistance to the Afghan National Army to enhance its capability to combat terrorism and to support U.S. military operations	108-106	N/A
Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF)	Provide assistance to the Afghanistan national security forces	113-66	2020

Program	Purpose	Program Authority	Funds Cancel Sept. 30
Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (ASFF)/CTRB	Provide assistance to Afghanistan Security Forces.	113-66	N/A
Coalition Readiness Support Program (CRSP)	Provide supplies, services, logistical support and non-reimbursable loan of equipment to certain coalition forces supporting military and stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan	111-383 113-66	N/A 2020
	Provide specialized training and procure supplies and specialized equipment; provide such supplies and loan such equipment on a non-reimbursable basis to coalition forces supporting U.S. military operations in Afghanistan		
DOD Counter Narcotics	Provide support for security, law enforcement, drug detection and reconnaissance with provision of equipment, training, facilities and communications	101-510 Section 1004, as amended / 105-85 Section 1033, as amended	Various
Global Peacekeeping Operations Initiative (GPOI)	Build international peacekeeping capacity and promote regional security operations.	FAA Section 551 (22 U.S.C. Section 2348) and FAA Section 551 for Peacekeeping Operations and the Global Peacekeeping Operations Initiative (GPOI), FY 14	2023
Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF)	To enhance the capabilities of national military and security forces that conduct border and maritime security, internal defense, and counterterrorism operations; for security sector, rule of law programs, and stabilization efforts	112-81, as amended	N/A
International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)	Provide assistance for the control of narcotic and psychotropic drugs and other controlled substances, or for other anti-crime purposes.	FAA Section 481 (22 USC Section 2291 et seq.)	2022

Program	Purpose	Program Authority	Funds Cancel Sept. 30
Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF)	Provide assistance to the security forces of Iraq	111-383	2017
Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR)	Provide anti-terrorism training services; equipment and other commodities relating to the detection, deterrence, and prevention of acts of terrorism	FAA Section 571	2022
Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capability Fund (PCCF)	Build and maintain the counterinsurgency capability of Pakistan's military and Frontier Corps	112-74	2021
Pakistan Counterinsurgency Fund (PCF)	Build the Counterinsurgency Capability of Pakistan Military and Frontier Corps	111-32	2015
Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)	Build international peacekeeping capacity and promote regional security operations.	FAA Section 551 (22 U.S.C. Section 2348)	2023
PKO and GPOI	Build international peacekeeping capacity and promote regional security operations	FAA Section 551 (22 U.S.C. Section 2348)	N/A
Other non-DOD Programs	Various (provided by the DSCA Program Manager)	Various (provided by the DSCA Program Manager)	Pursuant to authorities contained in annual Appropriations Acts

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