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Building Partner Capacity to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction

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Summary

This RAND National Defense Research Institute monograph outlines and then applies a four-step process for developing regional approaches to BPC to combat WMD. Limited resources, access, and incomplete knowledge of WMD threats create a need for working with appropriate partner countries around the world to address these challenges. The monograph offers seven key themes to consider when implementing BPC regional approaches. The monograph argues that the United States needs a coordinated effort to enhance partners' border security, WMD detection, and interdiction, and other capabilities to address the global nature of the threat. When nations are less capable, it is critical to focus U.S. assistance on building indigenous capacity to combat WMD threats.

Developing a Process to Build Partner Capacity for Combating WMD

This monograph outlines a four-step process for developing regional approaches to BPC to combat WMD threats. These steps include

- identifying capabilities and desired end states relative to the WMD threat
- working with potential partners
- identifying relevant BPC ways and means
- developing a framework to assess the effectiveness of BPC programs and activities.

Recommendations for the Department of Defense (DoD)

The monograph provides specific recommendations for implementing each step in the four-step process. These recommendations comprise a means for DoD planners, and means for other agencies as well, to efficiently and effectively build partner capacity to combat WMD. The monograph offers seven key themes that are linked to the recommendations. These key themes include improving guidance, increasing visibility on activities at a global level, improving coordination, encouraging collaboration and implementation, conducting assessments, and securing resources.

For step one, identifying capabilities and desired end states relative to the WMD threat, we recommend that DoD ensure that programmatic ends are linked to strategic guidance. Further, we recommend regular planning sessions among the various program managers to ensure that the aims of the DoD BPC programs are complementary. Regular country-specific or functional working groups should be held to share ideas and lessons identified. Finally, we recommend that the organizational roles and responsibilities for DoD stakeholders—including the geographic and functional combatant commands—be fully defined and published.

For step two, working with potential partners, we recommend that DoD planners apply the process described in Chapter Four, using criteria outlined in this monograph, to understand which partners to work with and how to work with them. The criteria, while illustrative, demonstrate the importance of considering a range of factors that can help describe a potential partner's relevance to a WMD threat, as well as how the United States should approach working with that potential partner. Planners should coordinate with interagency and international counterparts to gain insights and to look for opportunities for collaboration. Finally, we recommend considering additional sources of insight into partners' perspectives and needs, such as the individual country reports provided in response to UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which obliges states to refrain from supporting by any means nonstate actors who wish to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer, or use nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.

For step three, identifying relevant BPC ways and means, we recommend that planners widen their knowledge (to the extent possible) of other DoD, U.S. government, allied, and international and regional organizations' BPC for combating WMD activities. This process would include using available information sharing systems, attending and participating in other agencies' working groups, and even supporting other agencies' events and activities. Chapter Four provides the framework for identifying the activity gaps and redundancies on a regional basis. By applying such a framework, planners will have a better understanding of the most effective and efficient ways to best apply resources.

For step four, developing a framework to assess the effectiveness of BPC programs and activities, we recommend that planners implement the seven-step assessment framework outlined in Chapter Five. Specifically, the process should begin with a pilot assessment to select a few programs to test the framework's application in a specific country or region. Further, we recommend that DoD consider establishing a single resource advocate for BPC to combat WMD programs, with single points of contact within each of the combatant commands and DoD supporting agencies, such as DTRA.