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Building Partner Country Capacity for Stability Operations

Counterterrorist operations, along with the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have highlighted the important roles for the United States in stability operations, i.e., maintaining security, providing humanitarian aid, beginning reconstruction, and bolstering local governments. The Department of Defense has emphasized that a sustainable counterterrorism strategy should ideally allow the United States to work “by, with, and through” its allies and partners and, when necessary, bolster the capacity of their governments and security forces to conduct stability operations.

The U.S. government thus needs to build its own interagency capacity for conducting stability operations while simultaneously helping build partner capacity (BPC) for stability operations across a wide range of nations. To support this objective, RAND Arroyo Center recently conducted an exploratory analysis of key strategic elements necessary to align U.S. government security cooperation efforts with the goal of BPC for stability operations in a security environment without major overseas contingencies.

BPC and Stability Operations Lack an Integrated Approach

An important objective of the study was to clarify the relationship between BPC and stability operations. In general, BPC and stability operations are receiving a good deal of attention in official strategy and planning documents. However, an integrated strategy is lacking.

Key U.S. government agencies have come to an agreement on the major goals for stability operations. Largely absent from existing documentation, however, is a means to help decisionmakers prioritize and implement goals in a variety of pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict circumstances. Further, DoD planning guidance establishes only a general connection between stability operations goals and BPC activities, not a clearly defined and well-integrated strategy. Key agencies have yet to reach consensus on their

Key Points

- Building partner capacity (BPC) and stability operations are receiving attention in official strategy and planning. However, an integrated strategy is lacking.
- BPC for stability operations activities tend to be more effective when they: are planned and resourced over a period of years; involve all relevant U.S. military and civilian agencies and allies; target multiple countries throughout a region; employ a variety of security cooperation tools; and consider indigenous partner requirements.
- Recommendations for the Army and DoD include: better integration of BPC and stability operations; improved visibility into related security cooperation activities; a concerted effort to learn from the experience of major U.S. allies; and rigorous methods for selecting and prioritizing partner countries—and assessing capacity-building efforts in those countries.

respective roles and missions. However, in certain combatant commands (COCOMs), such as U.S. Southern Command, a significant number of events, resources, and personnel are focused on BPC for stability operations.

RAND Arroyo Center conducted an exploratory analysis to help determine potential partners, assess the pros and cons of each, and choose ways to weight and assess selection factors. The analysis found that there are only a few well-rounded stability operations partners that are neither major allies nor advanced industrial states. However, the number of potentially willing partners expands significantly if one values past participation in U.N. operations over involvement in U.S.-led operations.

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A New Assessment Approach Is Needed to Inform Decisions About BPC for Stability Operations

Arroyo developed a six-step assessment approach to enable the Army and other DoD agencies to make more informed decisions about BPC for stability operations planning, programming, and budgeting (see the figure). This approach provides a systematic method to evaluate the performance and effectiveness of existing security cooperation programs and activities with respect to stability-related objectives and end states in particular countries.

Based on its analysis using this approach, Arroyo found that BPC for stability operations activities tend to be more effective when they are used in the following ways:

- Applied in coordination with other related activities to reinforce key concepts.
- Worked with, by, and through existing regional organizations and arrangements.
- Not “handed over” to an ally with little to no U.S. oversight.
- Sustained through careful planning and resource allocation.

Recommendations

RAND Arroyo Center’s analysis resulted in a number of recommendations for the Army and DoD to consider in moving forward.

- **BPC and stability operations need to be more clearly defined and better integrated.** U.S. government agencies need to understand not only primary strategic objectives but also their respective roles and missions. Mechanisms for aligning Army, DoD, and national BPC

Six-Step Approach to Assess the Effectiveness of BPC for Stability Operations

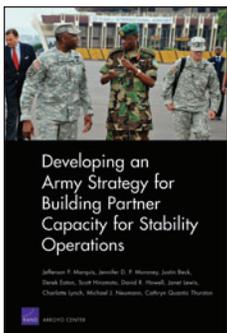
1. Select desired end state and specific goals
2. Develop generic input, output, and outcome indicators and external factors
3. Identify focus countries, programs, program aims, and appropriate objectives
4. Identify appropriate indicators and external factors
5. Apply assessment framework
6. Determine overall program/activity contribution to the achievement of the desired end state

for stability operations strategy, planning, and resourcing should be constructed.

- **DoD and the Army should seek to understand the extent and effectiveness of the BPC for stability operations activities that they, their interagency partners, and major U.S. allies are currently conducting.** Coordination and cooperation should be promoted where possible.
- **The military, and particularly the Army, should improve its visibility into security cooperation activities relevant to BPC for stability operations.** The Army should assist the COCOMs in developing a holistic approach to BPC for stability operations that involves all relevant U.S. agencies and allies while also considering the indigenous requirements of partners.
- **In the future, the Army should increase the number and extent of its BPC for stability operations activities in certain regions, such as U.S. Africa Command.** The Army might also make a concerted effort to learn from the BPC for stability operations experience of its allies, in particular, the United Kingdom and France, in key areas such as trainer selection and training of trainers.
- **The Army and DoD should place greater focus on coalition and regional candidates that have a demonstrated willingness to participate in U.N. deployments.** The apparent scarcity of high-potential partner nations could justify a narrowing of U.S. government BPC for stability operations efforts or serve as an impetus for greatly increasing the amount of resources dedicated to those efforts. Arroyo recommends, more specifically, that the Army and DoD emphasize potential coalition partners that have shown willingness to participate in U.N. deployments. Because few countries are both fragile and receptive to U.S. help, the decision to attempt to build indigenous stability operations capacity may, in many cases, have to be based on the degree of a country’s internal weakness and the salience of the U.S. strategic interest in that country.

Conclusion

Building partner capacity for stability operations is an ongoing process. Ideally, the results of these analytical processes will have a significant impact on the set of BPC for stability operations activities and partners, aligning relevant and effective activities with appropriate partners. ■



This research brief describes work done by the RAND Arroyo Center and documented in *Developing an Army Strategy for Building Partner Capacity for Stability Operations*, by Jefferson P. Marquis, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Justin Beck, Derek Eaton, Scott Hiromoto, David R. Howell, Janet Lewis, Charlotte Lynch, Michael J. Neumann, and Cathryn Quantic Thurston, MG-942-A, 2010 (available at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG942.html>). This research brief was written by Kristin J. Leuschner. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND’s publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. RAND® is a registered trademark.

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