



ARROYO CENTER

- CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
- EDUCATION AND THE ARTS
- ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
- HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE
- INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION
- INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
- LAW AND BUSINESS
- NATIONAL SECURITY
- POPULATION AND AGING
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
- TERRORISM AND HOMELAND SECURITY

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.

This electronic document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Skip all front matter: [Jump to Page 1](#) ▼

Support RAND

[Purchase this document](#)

[Browse Reports & Bookstore](#)

[Make a charitable contribution](#)

For More Information

Visit RAND at www.rand.org

Explore the [RAND Arroyo Center](#)

View [document details](#)

Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND electronic documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND electronic documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see [RAND Permissions](#).

This report is part of the RAND Corporation research report series. RAND reports present research findings and objective analysis that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors. All RAND reports undergo rigorous peer review to ensure high standards for research quality and objectivity.



RAND ARROYO CENTER

Assessing Security Cooperation as a Preventive Tool

Michael J. McNerney, Angela O'Mahony, Thomas S. Szayna,
Derek Eaton, Caroline Baxter, Colin P. Clarke, Emma Cutrufello,
Michael McGee, Heather Peterson, Leslie Adrienne Payne,
Calin Trenkov-Wermuth

The research described in this report was sponsored by the United States Army under Contract No. W74V8H-06-C-0001.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

McNerney, Michael J.

Assessing security cooperation as a preventive tool / Michael J. McNerney, Angela O'Mahony, Thomas S. Szayna, Derek Eaton, Caroline Baxter, Colin P. Clarke, Emma Cutrufello, Michael McGee, Heather Peterson, Leslie Adrienne Payne, Calin Trenkov-Wermuth.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8330-8146-9 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Military assistance, American—Evaluation. 2. Security sector—International cooperation. 3. Conflict management—International cooperation. 4. Terrorism—United States—Prevention. 5. Political stability. 6. Security, International. 7. United States—Military relations. I. Title

UA23.M254 2014

355'.031—dc23

2014005202

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.

Support RAND—make a tax-deductible charitable contribution at www.rand.org/giving/contribute.html

RAND® is a registered trademark

© Copyright 2014 RAND Corporation

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law. This representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for noncommercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is given to duplicate this document for personal use only, as long as it is unaltered and complete. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see the RAND permissions page (www.rand.org/pubs/permissions.html).

RAND OFFICES

SANTA MONICA, CA • WASHINGTON, DC

PITTSBURGH, PA • NEW ORLEANS, LA • JACKSON, MS • BOSTON, MA

DOHA, QA • CAMBRIDGE, UK • BRUSSELS, BE

www.rand.org

Summary

The Policy Question

Since 2005, U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) policy documents have asserted that security cooperation (SC) can be used to help prevent instability and reduce fragility in partner states. This premise—the preventive hypothesis—has become an important aspect of U.S. global strategy and a strategic pillar for the U.S. Army. The premise has been accepted as intuitively true and backed up by important case studies and numerous anecdotes. Our research had the purpose of assessing empirical support for the preventive hypothesis.

Because the preventive hypothesis underpins U.S. policy goals and applies across all security sectors, we use a modified definition of SC as “activities undertaken by the U.S. government to encourage and enable international partners to work with the United States to achieve security sector objectives.”

Using the information provided in policy documents, we explicitly specified the preventive hypothesis. Then, based on the empirical linkage between states’ high fragility levels and the incidence of major unrest or instability, we focused on the correlation between SC and reduction in state fragility. We compiled data on SC based on the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Greenbook,¹ which captures most foreign assistance (including SC) expenditures, as well as the For-

¹ U.S. Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945–September 30, 2011*, Washington, D.C., 2012, known popularly as the USAID Greenbook.

eign Military Training Report, Government Accountability Office and DoD reports to Congress, and data from DoD's regional centers. We included only concessional aid (e.g., grants), not sales of equipment or services. To assess changes in state fragility, we used the State Fragility Index developed by the Center for Systemic Peace and widely used in the conflict and development communities.

We developed country-year observations using 107 countries from 1991 to 2008, ending up with almost 1,300 observations. While most SC is based on multiple U.S. interests, such as improved access and influence, we excluded only countries where SC was least likely to be motivated by prevention of instability. We normalized expenditures across countries by using SC per capita and by logging the data. We also used standard statistical methods to control for the diversity of countries and other factors that would affect fragility over time independent of SC. Finally, because SC does not produce instant results, we assessed its correlation with partner fragility five years after SC was provided. We also conducted case studies of a dozen countries to gain a more nuanced and rich understanding of the impact of SC in these countries.

Findings

Our findings support the preventive hypothesis. We found that on average SC has a statistically significant relationship with reduction in fragility. The one-year effect is small, with most of the impact concentrated at the low end of expenditures per country, and there are diminishing returns from increased expenditures. It is possible that SC over time could have more significant results. We also found that the correlation of SC with reduction in fragility is nuanced and depends on conditions in the recipient country:

- SC was more highly correlated with reduction in fragility in states with stronger state institutions and greater state reach.
- SC was not correlated with reduction in fragility in states that were already experiencing extremely high fragility.

- SC was more highly correlated with reduction in fragility in more-democratic regimes; the more democratic the regime, the greater the correlation of SC and reduction in fragility.
- The concentration of low state reach, authoritarian regimes, and relatively high levels of fragility in the Middle East and Africa meant that the positive correlation of SC and reduction in fragility was least pronounced in those regions; Latin America, Asia Pacific, and Europe had the best effects.

Some types of U.S. SC are more highly correlated with reductions in state fragility than others. Nonmateriel aid, such as education, law enforcement, and counternarcotics aid, were more highly correlated; provision of materiel aid, even though it forms the majority of U.S. SC, was not correlated with reducing fragility in recipient countries. This outcome may stem from the fact that materiel aid is often focused on goals other than reducing state fragility, such as strengthening relationships, improving U.S. military access to a country, and improving capabilities for external defense.

We did not find development aid from the United States or other developed countries to have a statistically significant effect on the effectiveness of U.S. SC. That may be due to the fact that much development assistance goes to the most fragile states and, based on recent trends in understanding the effect of development aid, because development aid appears to work on longer time frames than security aid.

Implications

Our research has established a statistically significant correlation between U.S. SC spending and improvement in the recipient country's fragility, but many unknowns remain concerning the preventive hypothesis. The effect was weakest in countries with high fragility scores and thus most at risk of state failure, and greatest in those where instability and state failure are highly unlikely. This suggests that SC may be better at "reinforcing success" or preventing backsliding than in halting a country's decline into instability.

Education offers the greatest impact in terms of categories of SC in reducing fragility. This finding supports the general idea that investment in human capital has large payoffs. But education is also the smallest of the categories we examined. There may be a ceiling as to how effective such programs might be if these programs were to be expanded. The finding that law enforcement and counternarcotics programs appear to have better results than traditional train and equip efforts needs to be examined more closely to determine whether their success stems from being well integrated into broader whole of government efforts.

Our findings suggest that, in situations of high fragility, SC is not sufficient to stave off instability, because highly fragile partner states are not able to use SC effectively. This point highlights the importance of prevention. In such cases, as well as in cases of partners lacking state reach, a more-coordinated aid program of development and security aid and a focus on institution building may be a better approach. In some cases of low state reach, development assistance, with its long-term focus, may be a better tool than SC.

The high correlation of small amounts of SC with a reduction in fragility and the fact that returns diminish rapidly with increased investments points to intriguing insights, such as the possibility that it is the fact of U.S. involvement itself—with its diplomatic and political backing—rather than its form or size that had the greatest impact on state fragility.

With judgment, the results of our study can be used for decision-making concerning the type of SC to provide on the basis of state characteristics. Our findings may provide better grounds for expectation management when it comes to provision of SC to highly fragile states. Our findings also may be of interest to SC planners at geographic combatant commands.

Our results suggest that training and education efforts make a real contribution to reducing fragility and preventing conflict. The Army's increased focus on SC, as shown by designating brigades for SC and aligning these units along regional lines, is a step that is in accordance with greater U.S. conflict-prevention efforts. Increased emphasis on low-footprint special operations forces efforts to build partner

capacity is also in line with the preventive hypothesis that is supported by our study.