



Assessing Security Cooperation as a Preventive Tool

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The report tested the assertion that U.S. security cooperation (SC) can help reduce fragility in partner states. Based on an analysis of SC data and state fragility scores for 107 countries in 1991–2008, the study found a correlation between provision of SC by the United States and a reduction in partner state fragility, though the presence and degree of correlation depended on partner country characteristics and the type of SC provided.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What empirical evidence is there to support the assertion that security cooperation reduces state fragility and increases stability?



KEY FINDINGS

On average, security cooperation has a statistically significant relationship with reduction in fragility.

- The one-year effect was small, with most of the impact concentrated at the low end of expenditures per country, and there were diminishing returns from increased expenditures.

The correlation of security cooperation (SC) with reduction in fragility depended on the characteristics of the recipient country and the type of SC provided.

- SC was more highly coordinated with reduction in fragility in states with stronger state institutions and greater state capacity.
- 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.

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- 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.
- Nonmateriel and mission-specific aid—such as education and law enforcement, counterterrorism, and counternarcotics aid—were more highly correlated; aid provided through the equipment-focused Foreign Military Finance program, which forms the majority of U.S. security cooperation, was not correlated with reducing fragility in recipient countries. This outcome may stem from the fact that Foreign Military Financing aid is often focused on SC goals other than reducing state fragility, such as strengthening relationships, improving U.S. military access to a country, or improving capabilities for external defense.

