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TECHNICAL REPORT

Security Cooperation Organizations in the Country Team

Options for Success

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Summary

The United States conducts a wide range of security cooperation missions and initiatives that can serve as key enablers of U.S. foreign policy efforts to assist and influence other countries. For a relatively small investment, security cooperation programs can play an important role by shaping the security environment and laying the groundwork for future stability operations with allies and partners.

Security cooperation,[1] in the form of noncombat military-to-military activities, includes "normal" peacetime activities, such as building the long-term institutional and operational capabilities and capacity of key partners and allies, establishing and deepening relationships between the United States and partner militaries, and securing access to critical areas overseas. Security cooperation also can include conducting quasi-operational efforts, such as helping U.S. partners and allies manage their own internal defense.

However, current national security challenges both create significant demands for U.S. security cooperation programs and deplete the resources needed to carry out these missions. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are occupying the regular, reserve, National Guard, and Special Forces trainers and advisors who would normally be called on to train and advise military counterparts. Furthermore, U.S. allies, who often complement the efforts of U.S. advisors and trainers, are also stretched thin by their own deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

In an effort to find ways to improve security cooperation planning, coordination, and execution, the U.S. Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans asked RAND Arroyo Center to conduct an assessment of key facets of U.S. security cooperation—specifically, the missions, capabilities, and structure needed in the security assistance organizations (SAOs)[2] that coordinate the military aspects of U.S. foreign relations, including security cooperation activities, at U.S. Missions around the world.

Challenges Exist at All Three Levels of U.S. Security Cooperation

In its assessment, the RAND research team identified three levels of players that plan, coordinate, execute, and oversee U.S. security cooperation efforts. However, a number of challenges exist at each level that can inhibit the effectiveness of SAO efforts.

[1] In this context, "security cooperation" includes both security assistance (Title 22 U.S. Code) and security cooperation (Title 10 U.S. Code).

[2] Although SAO is sometimes used as an abbreviation for *security assistance officer*, we do not use it as such in this report.

Washington, D.C., Level

At the federal government level in Washington, D.C., anywhere from thousands to billions of dollars are allocated for security cooperation efforts in a given country through various programs. Executive Branch agencies, particularly the departments of Defense and State, work together to ensure that funds are allocated according to the wishes of Congress and the President. At the same time, Congress plays a pivotal role in these processes through its annual authorizations and appropriations bills, as well as its oversight and approval of the statutory framework that governs security cooperation.

At this level, two main funding authorities govern security cooperation:

- **Title 22** funds are appropriated to the State Department, which often transfers them to DoD, which in turn manages and executes most security assistance programs. Title 22 includes Foreign Military Sales programs. Title 22 is less flexible in some ways, mainly because Congress authorizes and appropriates these funds on a by-country and by-program basis, and requires congressional notification and permission to move funds from one effort to another.
- **Title 10** funds are appropriated to DoD and are intended for operations and maintenance of the U.S. military. These funds are often used to fund international participation in U.S. joint exercises, military personnel exchanges, or military-to-military contacts as a way to enhance the relationships between partner militaries and U.S. forces.

Because of the differences in funding authorities for Title 10 and Title 22, there is a general separation between the two, resulting in distinct organizations and cultures and leading to stovepiped approaches to working with foreign countries.

Regional Level

At the next level in the military chain of command are the Regional Combatant Commands (RCCs) and the service component commands that support them. The RCCs play a critical role in guiding military manpower and resources via their regional strategic planning processes to the country team at the U.S. Mission, and they also play a significant role in developing regional security cooperation objectives, particularly the judgments they make about the requirements to build complementary partner capabilities.

Organizationally, DoD and the State Department are not well matched to develop or coordinate policy. The State Department has no organization equivalent to the RCCs because ambassadors and country teams answer directly to the State Department in Washington. Therefore, while the State and Defense departments coordinate policy at the headquarters level in Washington, they coordinate less often and in an ad hoc fashion in the regions, which is where DoD actually crafts the bulk of its security cooperation plans.

Country Level

At the country level, each U.S. Mission has a country team that includes representatives from many federal agencies, as well as the key players from the departments of Defense and State, all under the direction of the U.S. ambassador. The members of the country team, which includes the SAO, must coordinate their efforts both in country and with their home agencies to successfully deliver U.S. assistance, including security cooperation.

However, given the restrictions on Title 22 funding, ambassadors have no authority to move money among different security cooperation activities or accounts, which greatly restricts the SAO's ability to tailor security cooperation during a given year should the need arise. In addition, most SAOs frequently have only a handful of military personnel to arrange and execute complicated and delicate security cooperation activities.

Changes Are Needed to Improve Security Cooperation Effectiveness

The RAND research team found that organizations that currently manage U.S. security cooperation work relatively well in most countries where peacetime engagement is the norm. In particular, current practices and authorities suffice if security cooperation efforts can be planned in advance and there is no need for significant change during a given budget year. However, when unbudgeted requirements arise, whether they are for new programs or for significant changes to existing programs, the current system has trouble working within inflexible authorities and funding mechanisms and what is, at times, less-than-ideal interagency coordination.

To help DoD and the State Department overcome these hurdles, the RAND team developed three options that could help improve SAO capabilities and capacity:

Option A: Improve Efficiency

This option focuses on improving the functions of the current country-level SAO during normal peacetime engagement by capturing and implementing best practices. Because it requires changes in procedures only, it could be implemented through DoD policies and directives. These improvements in coordination and cooperation could be made immediately without any changes in authorities, structure, or staffing. Improving efficiency would include three principal elements:

Institutionalize vertical integration. To implement vertical integration for security cooperation, agencies in Washington, D.C., need to be able to work as a team, which could help integrate security cooperation policy and resources. Vertical integration would also provide reachback support to the country team and the regional players, as needed. The RCC and its service component commands would play critical roles in this process through its support of the country team and the SAO. The experiences of "Team Ukraine" offer a good example of vertical integration.

Institutionalize horizontal integration. Horizontal integration requires the establishment of functional working groups within the country team. This approach, in turn, would enable SAOs to cooperate with multiple military efforts as well as civilian agencies. To do so, security cooperation personnel in country would need the skills to understand the larger goals of U.S. foreign policy and civilian agency partners. The experiences of SAOs in the Philippines and Thailand offer good examples of horizontal integration.

Improve security cooperation training for Defense Attaché Office personnel. Another potential improvement would be to better educate all defense personnel within a country team on the security cooperation roles and responsibilities of the SAO and the defense attaché's office. This enhanced understanding can help improve the country team's ability to most effectively manage relations with the host nation's military.

Option B: Increase Flexibility

This option considers long-term legislative and funding changes that are needed to increase the SAO's flexibility to perform its security cooperation functions. In particular, this option recommends three principal steps that could be taken to more rapidly implement changes to authorities when needed.

Grant additional authorities. Given the abundance of restrictive authorities that govern U.S. security cooperation efforts, it would be a positive step if Congress passed legislation that would allow country teams to respond to "emergency" circumstances in the national security arena with prompt, flexible U.S. security cooperation missions (specifically, missions that do not require the introduction of a U.S. Joint Task Force) in support of allies and acceptable partners. This legislation could be based on the Stafford Act,[3] which permits the federal government to respond quickly to a domestic disaster. Congress should carefully define what criteria constitute an actionable emergency in order to control what programs are permitted under what conditions. The new authority could allow the ambassador or security assistance officer to

- move funding from one program category to another
- provide equipment and supplies
- conduct training on nonlethal techniques
- conduct training on lethal techniques
- conduct broader security-force training and provide advice and assistance.

To be viable, the statute would need well-defined conditions under which the President could declare a need for each type of activity, as well as prompt reporting requirements to the Congress.

Prepare "pocket" legislation. If Congress does not provide additional authorities that enable more-flexible security cooperation efforts, DoD can, in coordination with congressional staff, research and prepare draft legislation that would provide the flexible authority and funding needed if an emergency situation arose. This "pocket" legislation would be ready to be submitted for a vote as soon as possible in the event of an emergency situation that requires a rapid U.S. response.

Prepare "pocket" executive orders. Similarly, another step would be to examine the inherent powers of the President to delineate what the President can do without congressional approval in situations in which U.S. national security is threatened by actions abroad. If the presidential powers are deemed sufficient, DoD could draft standby executive orders that the President would activate, and delegate those powers when additional flexibility and funding are needed for particular security cooperation activities.

Option C: Shape and Assist

Currently, no single DoD official controls all military elements involved in security cooperation activities in most countries. Authority varies depending on the country, the function that is being performed, and the organization that is performing the function. To better integrate all the security activities and players within a country, this option seeks to give the senior

3 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Public Law 93-288, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 5121–5207, November 1988.

defense official (SDO) at the U.S. Mission additional authority over all security cooperation and train, advise, and assist (TAA) efforts in that country.

This option would not be appropriate for most countries. However, for select countries of high importance to the United States that are facing significant threats, it could be a critical element in U.S. national security efforts. Although Option C could stand alone, it would be most effective if it builds on Options A and B.

Under this option, the SDO would be responsible for and direct most military personnel in country—all except those operating directly under a combatant commander—using a staff that would be capable of managing a full TAA effort. The SAO should also include military personnel who possess the ability to act with great political sensitivity, who have a good understanding of U.S. foreign policy goals in their country and how military efforts fit within this framework, and who are experienced in the execution of advisory and assistance missions.

Because the SDO works for the ambassador, putting the SDO in charge of these activities would make the ambassador responsible for all activities that do not fall explicitly under a combatant commander. The SDO would have the ability to request, accept, and manage out-of-country assets and also to coordinate with special operations forces and intelligence agencies, as necessary. The SDO also should have the ability to hand off security cooperation and TAA efforts to an RCC.

Implications for the U.S. Army

Our research shows that the Army should play a central role in most of these proposed changes. As the service with the largest and most formal training and preparatory roles in security cooperation, the Army is a natural choice to either formally lead (e.g., as executive agent) or provide intellectual leadership in the realm of policy proposals and idea generation. In particular, should Option C be adopted, the Army would need to create a way to supply trainers, advisors, and direct assistance personnel. The Army can also help to develop a regional joint and interagency organization that can accept the incoming supply of DoD personnel and tailor teams that will in turn support the embassy and the partner nation.