

Leveraging the National Guard for Globally Engaged Operations

by

Lieutenant Colonel Clayton E. Kuetemeyer
United States Army



United States Army War College
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by

Lieutenant Colonel Clayton E. Kuetemeyer
United States Army

Colonel Thomas J. Kardos
Strategic Studies Institute
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

Abstract

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Leveraging the National Guard for Globally Engaged Operations

In his 2012 cover letter to the Secretary of Defense's Strategic Security Guidance, President Obama identified global stability as one of America's primary strategic interests: "the security of our Nation, allies, and partners" that enables "...the prosperity that flows from an open and free international economic system."¹ He emphasized a commitment to maintaining a military force that "preserves American global leadership," serving as an instrument of power to achieve these "ends."² This guidance provided a shift in focus to accompany the drawdown of the U.S. military footprint in Iraq and Afghanistan; the expectation being that Combatant Commands sustain, or in some cases expand, security cooperation with partner nations. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) affirmed that security cooperation has never been more important; that the U.S. must continue to support development of partner security capacity as an increasingly important national mission.³ The challenge currently facing the U.S. is that Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) have fewer forces assigned within their regions to accomplish this guidance, specifically directing increased commitment to global engagement. With more far-reaching force structure drawdowns expected under the Budget Control Act, the Army will not have sufficient Active Component forces to support GCC requirements while maintaining combat mission readiness.

The Department of Defense needs the National Guard to serve a more active and direct role in support of Combatant Command requirements. For over two decades, GCCs have integrated the National Guard into Theater Security Cooperation efforts through employment of the State Partnership Program (SPP).⁴ The National Guard has also improved readiness and emerged as a fully functional operational reserve. With

experience in partnering operations, as well as support to civilian authorities in disaster and consequence management roles, National Guard units bring invaluable capabilities that GCCs could employ during contingency operations.

The National Guard needs to foster improvements to Department of Defense processes that more strongly consider National Guard forces for deployment in support of Combatant Command requirements. The National Guard can achieve this through improvements in three significant areas: alignment mechanisms that enable GCCs to identify available National Guard forces and their capabilities; coordination between the National Guard Bureau and Combatant Commands; and finally, the requirements, reporting, and demonstration of National Guard readiness. This paper will review national policy guidance on security cooperation and how the National Guard has supported those goals with the State Partnership Program. Next, it will review the Army's emerging challenges in supporting theater security cooperation and describe the potential to increase National Guard integration within GCC contingency plans. Finally, it will provide recommendations to improve alignment, coordination and readiness to achieve greater National Guard integration.

Case Study

As The Adjutant General for the Illinois National Guard observed the riveting media reports of Russia's 2014 incursion into the Ukraine, he knew this crisis was stirring great alarm among both the citizens and the military leaders in Poland.⁵ In fact, he had just traveled to Poland that winter, meeting with senior Polish Land Forces officers.⁶ Since 1993, the Illinois National Guard had partnered with Poland through the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP).⁷ From cultural awareness developed through partnership experience, many Illinois soldiers knew that the Polish

people would feel greatly alarmed about Russia's aggressive posture. Based on the relationship built over twenty years of working with Polish Land Forces, the Illinois National Guard expected that the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) would take action to reassure our allies neighboring Ukraine and Russia. Reassurance was likely to take place not only through strategic communications, but also by employing military forces to conduct training with partner nations. Those forces might include Illinois units, some of which were already scheduled to participate in the Operation Anakonda exercise in Poland later that summer.⁸ The Illinois National Guard leadership waited for the call from the National Guard Bureau (NGB) that could mean a mission for Illinois soldiers.

A call did come, from an officer in the EUCOM staff, directly to the Illinois National Guard SPP coordinator.⁹ Rather than a warning order with upcoming mission guidance, the message was a somewhat cryptic inquiry: What is the possibility that Illinois could deploy units to Poland in an Annual Training status, for an undetermined length of time? How quickly could this be done; and could the Illinois National Guard cover the associated funding?¹⁰ These rather uncertain questions led to equally uncertain responses. Outside of SPP events, National Guard units normally mobilize for overseas deployments through a lengthy process. Typically, Geographic Combatant Commands submit a Request for Forces through the Joint Staff, who assigns the requirement to the appropriate Service Component.¹¹ The Army decides which missions to delegate to the National Guard Bureau (NGB), who then requests forces from a particular state. The Adjutant General of the state's National Guard, on behalf of the Governor, confirms that forces are available for deployment.¹²

The Illinois National Guard response to EUCOM's informal request confirmed that many units were available and could deploy quickly if necessary.¹³ In fact, the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) from Illinois was in the "available year" of its Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) cycle, the peak phase in readiness for possible deployment.¹⁴ Many leaders of this unit had experience operating with Polish forces. It seemed a reasonable possibility that EUCOM would request Illinois forces to reassure the allies with whom they had stood shoulder to shoulder during deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁵ The Illinois National Guard's reply included some clarifying questions. Did EUCOM intend to mobilize NG forces for deployment or conduct the mission as part of an unscheduled SPP exercise? What specific mission would EUCOM task these forces to conduct? Which deployment readiness prerequisites would EUCOM expect? Finally, who would fund transportation and sustainment activities? The Illinois National Guard was ready to support the mission, but would likely need funding assistance from EUCOM, USAREUR, or the NGB.

However, beyond a few tentative phone and email exchanges, EUCOM's inquiry lost momentum. They eventually informed Joint Forces Headquarters - Illinois that EUCOM would pursue other options. Illinois would not mobilize and deploy forces as a contingency operation, but would assist Operation Atlantic Resolve by complying with its existing SPP exercise plan, with a slight increase in the number of soldiers involved.¹⁶ To fill immediate requirements, a Battalion from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, one of the few remaining Active Component units still stationed in Europe, would deploy a company to Poland, along with a company each to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.¹⁷ The 173rd was a more reasonable solution for EUCOM due to

existing command relationships, greater familiarity and close proximity, all of which reduced the complexity of planning for this evolving situation. However, as EUCOM's contingency response force, employing part of the Airborne Brigade was a significant commitment. Improved coordination between EUCOM and the National Guard Bureau could have addressed some of the deployment and sustainment concerns for a National Guard contingency force. This would have provided the Combatant Commander additional, feasible options to complement or relieve the 173rd Brigade units.

This vignette highlights the systemic dilemma of aligning National Guard forces to support Combatant Commands, coordinating force requests and sustainment between the National Guard Bureau and requesting headquarters, and identifying readiness requirements and reporting that ensure Combatant Command familiarity with the National Guard's ability to support routine and emerging missions.

National Military Strategy: Theater Security Cooperation

In his Defense Strategic Guidance letter to the Department, the Secretary outlined the "ways" the United States will accomplish global stability and leadership. "Provide a stabilizing presence" is highlighted as a "primary mission" of the U.S. Armed Forces:

U.S. forces will conduct a sustainable pace of presence operations abroad, including rotational deployments and bilateral and multilateral training exercises. These activities reinforce deterrence, help to build the capacity and competence of U.S., allied, and partner forces for internal and external defense, strengthen alliance cohesion, and increase U.S. influence.¹⁸

Department of Defense Instruction 5132.03 further clarifies this strategy as Theater Security Cooperation. It defines security cooperation as: "Activities undertaken by the DoD to encourage and enable international partners to work with the U.S. to

achieve strategic objectives.” This includes all DoD programs that build relationships, improve partner capabilities, and secure access for U.S. forces.¹⁹

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Martin Dempsey, describes this as globally integrated operations, the concept for which the Joint Force must posture to achieve National Security Strategy objectives.²⁰ The *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* explains that “...globally integrated operations place a premium on partnering. Joint forces must be able to integrate effectively with U.S. governmental agencies, partner militaries, and indigenous and regional stakeholders.”²¹ In Dempsey’s *2nd Term Strategic Direction to the Joint Force*, he clearly states that the Joint Force will “...deepen and strengthen military-to-military relationships throughout the world. ...Achieving our national objectives also requires that we develop and evolve our relationships with our interagency and international partners. The cooperative practices we establish will play a large part in our success.”²²

Security cooperation improves partner capacity and capability, as well as interoperability with other military forces. U.S. forces conduct courses and training with allied country soldiers to share techniques at the tactical level, such as professional leadership and small unit combined arms maneuver. At higher levels, they share information on topics ranging from consequence management to the organization and integration of reserve forces. The deployment of military forces from forty-seven other countries, working alongside American soldiers as part of the International Security Assistance Forces in Afghanistan, demonstrates a reciprocal commitment from our many foreign partners.²³ Furthermore, the ability of these forces to function as an integrated enterprise is a direct result of security cooperation efforts. Decades of

coordination, sharing of information and operating concepts, and conducting frequent exercises allowed forces from different countries to integrate command systems, communication systems, logistics practices, and tactical and operational formations in a combat environment, functioning at a level of cohesiveness not previously realized during previous multi-national combat deployments. Interoperability and integration of coalition operations demonstrate the strategic impact of U.S. partnership efforts achieved through the many individual engagements conducted over the past decades.

By routinely conducting training exercises and related coordination with allied countries' military forces, the United States builds partnerships and commitment to international cooperation. Team-building dynamics apply, in that routine exposure builds familiarity and understanding of customs and procedures. In a constructive environment, this fosters trust and confidence, resulting in improved cohesion. This achievement underscores the work that has become a core competency and part of U.S. military culture. As Ms. Kathleen Hicks, the former Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, concluded that: "Building partnership capacity is a core element of everything we do, and everything we hope to accomplish. The defense strategic guidance affirmed clearly that alliances and partnerships are central to how we approach the current and future security environment."²⁴ Consequently, by sustaining cooperative actions, we strengthen these relationships, not only in a bilateral sense, but enhance international support of the U.S. and institutions such as NATO as well. This, along with the physical presence of our military forces in partner countries, provides deterrence to those states that might otherwise consider aggression against our allies.

Identifying GCC Requirements

Combatant Commands develop Theater Campaign Plans to achieve goals derived from the U.S. National Security Strategy. Documents such as the *Guidance for the Employment of the Force* (GEF) and the *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan* (JSCP) further specify the tasks and missions the National Command Authority expects Combatant Commands to accomplish, including the global defense posture, security cooperation, and other ongoing activities.²⁵ “Globally integrated operations” suggests that Combatant Commands will vigorously cultivate partnering opportunities in their regions. Combatant Commands, through Defense Attachés and country teams, coordinate with partner countries to develop individual Country Plans, which specify security cooperation events they will conduct to achieve those goals.²⁶ These come in a variety of forms, including small unit training, senior leader information-sharing meetings, large-scale exercises, and advisory teams assisting in partner countries’ internal defense operations.

Theater Security Cooperation initiatives require resources and time to plan, execute, and sustain. As the Theater Campaign Plan is developed, Geographic Combatant Commands identify the resources required to support cooperation events, along with other ongoing operations. Each GCC has Service staffs with planners and support elements responsible for coordinating and supporting Theater Security Cooperation exercises and events. However, these assets are limited in scale and number. Combatant Commands also rely heavily on assigned Active Component units. These forces are the forward military presence of the United States, ready to deploy for a variety of missions, from deterrence to initial entry into combat areas. As they are

usually stationed within the region, command and control and logistical support for security cooperation planning and execution are less complicated as well.

To request forces beyond the limited assets already assigned to the GCC, Combatant Commanders must submit a Request for Forces through the Joint Staff to the Secretary of Defense.²⁷ These requests include sourcing solutions to support annual requirements, contingency plans, and emerging requirements.²⁸ For example, if PACOM requires additional units to support an upcoming Silver Scimitar exercise, it would submit a Request for Forces in support of annual requirements. If SOUTHCOM develops a contingency plan for disaster relief in Central America, then it would submit a Request for Forces for contingency operations. Within these requests, Combatant Commanders may also identify preferred forces that are the most appropriate to support specific requirements.²⁹ Once the GCC has identified and submitted its requirements, the Joint Staff coordinates the resourcing solution with the appropriate Service Headquarters.

Generating Forces

The JSCP provides initial guidance to Combatant Commands regarding the types of forces available for planning, distinct from those already committed to ongoing operations or Homeland Defense.³⁰ The Global Force Management Board (GFMB) assesses and prioritizes Requests for Forces and the Joint Staff coordinates with the Services to identify the best options to support GCC requests.³¹ The Secretary of Defense approves the plan that either *allocates* or *apportions* forces to the GCCs. Allocated forces are those that the Secretary of Defense places under GCC operational control (OPCON) for a given time period; whereas apportioned forces are only available to the GCCs for planning purposes.³² In other words, the Secretary of Defense may

apportion forces identified to support contingency requirements, but they remain under Service control until the GCC executes this contingency or other emerging requirement.

The National Guard, like other Services, participates in this force planning process with the Joint Staff. The National Guard Bureau provides sourcing options for requested force capabilities. In addition to combat units, the National Guard also maintains significant capabilities in logistical sustainment and combat support functions. The Joint Staff routinely assigns recurrent force requirements, such as the Multinational Force and Observers mission in the Sinai Peninsula, to the National Guard.³³ Title 10 of the United States Code, section 12304b, authorizes the deployment of Reserve Component forces, mobilized to active duty for preplanned missions in support of Combatant Command requirements.³⁴ The Joint Staff also considers National Guard forces when developing options to support Combatant Command operational and contingency plans.³⁵

National Guard Forces in Theater Security Cooperation

National Guard forces support Combatant Command security cooperation requirements in two primary ways: routine security mission deployments and the State Partnership Program. The National Guard has been conducting security force, or “peacekeeping”, deployments for standing GCC requirements for decades. The National Guard has provided units to support missions in Bosnia and Kosovo since the 1990s.³⁶ In the early 2000s, National Guard forces deployed to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to provide security during Operation Desert Spring. National Guard units have deployed as part of the Multinational Force and Observers mission since 2002.³⁷ The National Guard has proven its readiness and ability to support GCC routine and emergent requirements as part of the U.S.’s globally engaged strategy.

Even more significant is the National Guard's support of Combatant Command theater security cooperation through the State Partnership Program. In a process independent from the Global Force Management Board, the National Guard Bureau matches individual states with a U.S. ally to conduct exchanges, exercises and other training events. The Department of Defense established this program in 1993 as an effort to build relationships with Baltic States that had recently departed the Soviet alliance.³⁸ After twenty years, the program now includes 68 partnerships with 74 countries around the globe.³⁹ One significant advantage of the SPP is that individual states maintain a habitual partnership with a specific country. This practice develops strong relationships that enhance efforts to build partner capacity. Soldiers and units share techniques to improve familiarity and interoperability through continued partnering experiences, to include deployments alongside their counterparts.

The State Partnership Program also capitalizes on the unique citizen-soldier skill sets that apply "across military, government, economic and social spheres."⁴⁰ These inherent competencies derive from the National Guard's principal mission to support state governments when mobilized for civil emergencies. Combatant Commands can leverage this expertise for security cooperation activities. The State Partnership Program sponsors many events during which National Guard soldiers, and in some cases other civil service experts, engage partner country military, government, and civilian entities associated with Defense Support to Civilian Authorities (DSCA). These opportunities assist our partners to build internal capacity for both Foreign Internal Defense and military support to disaster relief and consequence management scenarios.

An example of the DSCA skill set is consequence management planning, to include analyzing threats (such as natural disasters), identifying capabilities to respond to those threats, organizing available assets within the region, and determining capability shortfalls. States also develop agreements, known as Emergency Management Assistance Compacts (EMAC), with other states that are able to provide assistance to fulfill capability shortages. These agreements become part of the military planning process for NG DSCA missions. The National Guard is able to share these planning techniques with partner countries to improve their ability to prepare for disaster response and consequence management operations.

Another factor relating to the National Guard's support to Combatant Command requirements is the ability to sustain long-term overseas deployments. Over the past decade, the National Guard mobilized and deployed tens of thousands of soldiers in units of all types to perform missions in support of counterinsurgency operations. National Guard units consistently demonstrated the ability to achieve readiness requirements for deployment following the prescribed ARFORGEN model and after completing final training requirements at mobilization stations. There were concerns that deploying Reserve Component Forces, committing some soldiers and units multiple times over multiple years, would cause a significant decline in retention, mostly related to civilian employer support, and recruiting. However, the Department of Defense accepted this risk because the Nation could not generate enough Active Component units to support U.S. Central Command's (CENTCOM) requirements in the Iraq and Afghanistan theaters. Nonetheless, while there was post-deployment turnover similar to that experienced with Active Component soldiers, National Guard units were able to

sustain personnel numbers and readiness requirements despite completing over 760,000 individual overseas mobilizations.⁴¹ This aptly demonstrated that the National Guard could not only function as an “operational reserve,” but also sustain that effort over multiple years fighting our Nation’s wars.

Problem – Matching Forces to Combatant Command Requirements

As Combatant Commanders pursue globally integrated operations, reductions to force structure and resources challenge the Department of Defense’s ability to support GCC requirements. The Army, in compliance with the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, has already reduced Active Component manpower from 570,000 to a projected 490,000 by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2015.⁴² Under restrictions of the Budget Control Act, the Army prepares for an end strength of 420,000 by FY 2019.⁴³ With force structure reductions, there are fewer units assigned to the GCCs. U.S. European Command (EUCOM) has seen a decrease from a functional Army Corps with two combat divisions to only two maneuver brigades over the last ten years.⁴⁴ The thirteen percent drawdown of Army forces, to 450,000 soldiers by 2017 with only 32 Brigade Combat Teams, will reduce the Army’s ability to cover global engagement and security strategies.⁴⁵

While the Army’s requirement for combat deployments of brigade and below-sized units has eased, force reductions have resulted in fewer units available to support growing Geographic Combatant Command Theater Security Cooperation requirements.⁴⁶ Many of these events require staff officers that work at brigade headquarters level and above. Divisions and Brigade Combat Teams (BCT), that expected post-deployment schedules to focus and train on doctrinal missions, are being diverted to support new missions in the form of exercises and capacity building with

partner nations. Fewer in-theater assigned units limit GCC flexibility and agility to both support theater security cooperation as well as respond to emerging requirements.

In other words, the Department of Defense has limited the most readily available “means” that Combatant Commanders might employ to execute our “ways” and achieve our “ends.” Reduced budgets for Service Components and Combatant Commands further reduces the Army’s ability to support these requirements. The Joint Staff’s Capstone Concept underscores the challenge: “A fundamental assertion of this concept [globally integrated operations] is that Joint Forces with decreased overall capacity can continue to meet their global requirements through increased agility.”⁴⁷ The Department of Defense must find new solutions to support GCC force requirements, or assume more risk to the accomplishment of globally integrated operations.

Regionally Aligned Forces

The Army’s plan to mitigate the impact of fewer in-theater GCC-assigned forces is the “Regionally Aligned Force” (RAF) concept. The Army is providing support for both security cooperation and planned contingency operations using Active Component units stationed in the continental United States (CONUS).⁴⁸ The intent is to “align” a U.S.-based, Active Component maneuver Division with each GCC to provide forces to meet Combatant Command requirements, as well as build relationships and increase regional experience within that Division. Conceptually, the Army intends RAF to include more than just Active Component Brigade Combat Teams. GEN Odierno’s vision advocates inclusion of support and sustainment units, as well as the Army Reserve and National Guard.⁴⁹ The Army expects that RAF will be the solution to the Office of the Secretary of Defense’s challenge to increase global security cooperation with fewer available resources and the need to develop new solutions: “A reduction in resources will require

innovative and creative solutions to maintain our support for allied and partner interoperability and building partner capacity.”⁵⁰

However, “alignment” does not afford Combatant Commanders the predictability they had with assigned units. The Army cannot guarantee that a particular RAF unit will deploy to their aligned region for contingency operations. For example, the regional expertise that the 1st Infantry Division developed would have prepared them to support contingency operations in Africa. Instead, the Army deployed the 101st Airborne Division to Liberia in response to the Ebola outbreak in 2014.⁵¹ This response runs counter to the concept that regionally aligned forces would become the “go-to-units” for deployment to certain regions based on the familiarity and experience gained conducting security cooperation missions.

In practice, the regional alignment concept is not sufficient to meet Combatant Commands’ growing security cooperation requirements. Although RAF units are conducting many worthwhile training and other engagement events, often these activities are dispersed across entire continents, preventing substantive relationship development and cultural awareness to any meaningful extent with individual partner nations. Other aligned forces are limited to supporting only a few exercises each year. Alternating aligned Brigades within the Divisions annually will likewise diminish the organizational experience that RAF intended. Underscoring the problem in 2013, GEN Daniel Allyn, Commander of Army Forces Command, confirmed that a lack of resources was delaying RAF implementation.⁵² It appears that despite implementing RAF, force reductions, continuing combat operations, and global readiness requirements are straining the Army’s ability to meet GCC requests. Perhaps the Army should turn to the

National Guard, as it has done over the past decade in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, to assume a larger role in supporting the Combatant Commands.

Lack of GCC Awareness of National Guard Availability and Readiness

Despite increased interaction over the past decade, there remains a general lack of familiarity throughout the Army regarding National Guard forces, capabilities and readiness levels. This inexperience inhibits full integration within the processes that support Combatant Command requirements. Part of this unfamiliarity is at the individual level; Active Component personnel are not likely to have served in the National Guard, much less be familiar with its force structure. At the organizational level, Combatant Command planning teams have limited interaction with the National Guard Bureau or information regarding force availability. The Guard's major units have less prominence than Active Component divisions and brigades, which can make the National Guard less conspicuous regarding its formations and capabilities. Without exposure and familiarity, GCC planners are more likely to shape Requests for Forces that fit Active Component capabilities that Joint Force Planners source first through the Army.

Disparate capabilities across different states' National Guard forces also causes coordination challenges. Guard units can vary widely in both size and composition. The California Army National Guard has a force of over 15,000 soldiers, while the Delaware Army National Guard is a tenth of that size at approximately 1,500.⁵³ These variances present a challenge for GCC and Joint Force Planners in determining an appropriate force mix and suitability to support requirements. Within the State Partnership Program, individual state coordinators make these force mix adjustments through direct coordination with other states. For example, the Wisconsin Army National Guard

provided Field Artillery soldiers trained on a particular weapon system to support an Illinois SPP training event with the Polish Land Forces.⁵⁴ At the individual state level, this method of substitution is practical. However, when the AFRICOM Commander has an emerging requirement to deploy a civil affairs team to Liberia, he may be less likely to know if the Michigan National Guard, Liberia's state partner, has this capability, and if not, which state National Guard would.

Readiness is certainly a concern for Combatant Commanders; the U.S. military's ability to respond decisively to emerging crises in support of our partners and allies is central to our standing and influence. Combatant Commanders must be confident that National Guard forces are capable not only to mobilize and deploy in support of contingency operations, but also to perform missions once they reach the operating environment. Some senior leaders may still harbor misperceptions of National Guard readiness. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Army mobilized Guard units that had been inadequately resourced and trained and were, at times, non-mission capable. This reinforced opinions of a Reserve Component unable to support contingency operations. However, these judgments predate the restructuring of readiness systems in the Reserve Component, which greatly improved training proficiency, equipment resourcing, and administrative readiness processes. The reformed processes of post-mobilization/pre-deployment training that First Army used to validate Reserve Component units for combat operations often took several months. This extraordinary measure was a prudent step to ensure Reserve Component readiness in support of combat operations over the past fourteen years. While the National Guard has amply proven its ability to mobilize and execute missions, it must continue to transcend doubts

and overcome institutional preference for using Active Component forces to fulfill Combatant Command requirements.

A venue where the National Guard has demonstrated its capability is the State Partnership Program. Combatant Commanders recognize the value the SPP generates for theater security cooperation.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, National Guard achievements through State Partnership have remained distinct from overall Combatant Command planning. Much of this is due to the budget and planning processes that underpin this program.

Another challenge entails the planning and integration of the SPP with GCC Theater Campaign Plans. Activities conducted under SPP guidelines, like many security cooperation activities, are intended to be demand-generated - forming a “pull system.” The intent is that Combatant Commands develop Theater Security Cooperation Plans aligned to the priorities of U.S. interests in the regions. Security Cooperation Officials, to include State Department representatives, are the “on-the-ground” experts who conduct daily coordination to identify partner nation priorities and review requests for new programs. These opportunities often arise during planned SPP events, and are communicated through senior National Guard personnel who have long-term relationships in these countries. Security Cooperation Officials provide recommendations for future country-level engagement to GCC staff officers to support individual Country Plans that generate the requirements that “pull” forces through the Global Force Management Board.⁵⁶ However, that coordination does not always adequately capture partner country requests.

Absent significant coordination between the National Guard Bureau and the Combatant Commands, GCCs often publish Theater Campaign Plans and Country

Plans without incorporating recommendations from state National Guard SPP coordinators. This requires state National Guards to “push” their capabilities and resources into events that may not be identified in the Country Plan. In a way, the supplier of one form of security cooperation capability must force itself into the market of the GCC campaign plan.

Due to the lack of integration between the Country Plans and SPP-identified needs and National Guard capabilities, Combatant Commands often lack information about National Guard force availability to support emerging requirements. Each state develops its SPP engagement plan individually, with minimal coordination with the Combatant Commands. In that they are not directly involved in Country Plan development, National Guard planners struggle to remain current with changes to Combatant Commanders’ priorities and Theater Security Cooperation programs and adjust SPP efforts to support these changes. This creates the possibility for misalignment of Combatant Commander strategic priorities and contingency planning and NG SPP plans. In some cases, states conduct the same type of SPP events each year, primarily because those events were approved in the past and are the easiest to request approval to conduct again.

Combatant Commands need the capabilities the National Guard has to offer. National Guard forces are likely more able to sustain enduring partnerships than Active Component units operating under RAF. With decades of SPP experience, states have built long-term relationships and deep familiarity with U.S. partners. Some have even completed co-deployments within allied units, developing language skills and inherent understanding of both civil and military culture. With fewer Active Component units

available, whether under the Combatant Command authority or aligned from within the Services, the National Guard Bureau must resolve the best approach to increase National Guard employment in support of GCC requirements.

Solution - Improving Mechanisms for NG Forces to Support GCC Requirements

With declining available Active Component forces and the problematic implementation of RAF, the Department of Defense needs the National Guard to play a larger role in support of GCC theater security cooperation and contingency operations. This requires improving the mechanisms that enable Combatant Commands to incorporate available National Guard forces into plans for annual, emergent, and contingency requirements. The first step is to leverage the National Guard more actively during the Global Force Management Process, which would better align available National Guard forces with Combatant Commands. Second, the National Guard Bureau must improve its coordination processes with Combatant Commands. Finally, the National Guard must continue to demonstrate readiness to support Combatant Command missions. By achieving these objectives, the National Guard will be better integrated as the innovative and low-cost solution the Department of Defense seeks in order to accomplish globally engaged operations.⁵⁷

Improving Alignment

The first step to take better advantage of the National Guard as a force provider is to improve the processes that match National Guard states to GCCs, and GCC requirements to available National Guard capabilities. This effort begins with the Forces for Unified Commands Memorandum (“Forces For”). The President should provide specific guidance through the Secretary of Defense to consider the National Guard more prominently for Combatant Command requirements.⁵⁸ During the Global Force

Management Process, the Joint Staff should apportion more National Guard forces for GCC contingency planning. Additionally, the National Guard Bureau must assist Joint Force planners during the allocation of National Guard forces to support recurrent and emerging requirements. Combatant Commands can affect these deliberations by specifically requesting National Guard force and capabilities when submitting Requests for Forces.

New alignment constructs would capitalize on the relationships that National Guard states have already developed with partner countries, incorporating the SPP rather than supplanting it. This approach would prompt the allocation and apportionment of National Guard forces to Combatant Commands where they already operate in support of the SPP. In addition, alignment must account for NG capabilities and specialties. This would require spreading National Guard BCT capabilities among the Combatant Commands for adequate coverage.

To leverage National Guard strengths in Defense Support to Civil Authorities and Consequence Management, GCCs could develop Contingency Force Packages that specifically include NG forces. Combatant Commands could tailor these force packages for disaster relief or other missions, with National Guard and Active Component forces balanced appropriately. Similarly, during the development of contingency plans, GCC planners should consider existing SPP alignments as a matter of course. The Maryland National Guard, partnered with Estonia, should be integrated into EUCOMs contingency plans in the Baltics and required to maintain readiness in support of mission-aligned force packages. Joint Force planners would apportion National Guard forces for these

types of requirements, as done for recurrent missions such as the Multi-National Force Observer (MNFO) mission in the Sinai Peninsula.⁵⁹

Another opportunity is to incorporate a concept of “Preferred Partners.”⁶⁰ This would establish NG states with existing SPP relationships as the primary source for contingency force packages for partner countries. For example, if the PACOM Commander required units to assist Vietnam in response to massive flooding, the Oregon National Guard, Vietnam’s SPP partner, would be a central part of that response force. As SOUTHCOM’s “preferred partner” to Haiti, the Louisiana National Guard would remain prepared for disaster relief in the event of a hurricane. This type of mission alignment and readiness is similar to the capabilities these units sustain in support of the Governor of Louisiana.

The Army should also consider modifying the Army Training Information Management System (ARTIMS) process to better align National Guard units and the State Partnership Program with GCC requirements. This database announces upcoming training events and exercises that the Combatant Commands need forces to support. Reserve Component units can nominate themselves to perform those missions.⁶¹ However, ARTIMS creates an “open market bazaar” system for National Guard training officers to “shop for missions.” The process currently requires NGB intervention to ensure states are appropriately assigned to support exercises conducted in those countries to which they have standing relationships.

The ARFORGEN model also requires significant adaptation to improve alignment of National Guard forces, and provide more opportunity for Combatant Commands to access units for deployment in support of security cooperation missions. This model

currently fails to capitalize on the availability of National Guard forces and capabilities. The Reserve Component ARFORGEN cycle operates on the assumption that a unit will deploy during the “available year” to a combat theater to perform its doctrinal mission. Deployment to combat theaters to conduct doctrinal unit missions as part of unified land operations understandably requires units to be at the highest level of readiness. According to the model, this occurs at the end of Train/Ready Year 3. By contrast, the majority of security cooperation activities involve individual and collective training events, larger exercises, or consequence management related missions. The ability to execute these security cooperation missions does not mandate the same level of readiness as combat operations.

The Army should adjust the RC ARFORGEN model so that it better aligns NG units to GCC requirements. During Train/Ready Years 1 and 2, units would be available for individual and collective training events and exercises with partner nations; in Train/Ready Year 3, units would be validated as deployable for a recurrent in-theater requirement or as a consequence management reaction force. These deployability windows would be designated Train/Ready Year 1 through Train/Ready Year 3, and would remain in place for a one-year cycle during the Available Year. Updating the ARFORGEN model and guidance will better reflect the current deployment environment and incorporate theater security cooperation requirements as an inherent NG mission set.

With improved alignment mechanisms, GCCs could capitalize on available National Guard forces and their partnership-building competencies. The allocation and apportionment process of Global Force Management must allow Combatant

Commanders to incorporate NG forces more regularly into both security cooperation and contingency planning. Contingency Force Packages and Preferred Partner arrangements would leverage National Guard civil response capabilities. Lastly, a reformed ARFORGEN model would increase force availability for deployment in support of GCC requirements.

Improving Coordination

Improved coordination is the second task required for increased integration. The National Guard must improve communication with Combatant Commands and coordination with the Joint Staff to achieve greater integration. GCCs must also expand coordination of requirements identified in Theater Security Cooperation and Country Plans, to include National Guard planners. Finally, the National Guard and GCCs should improve cross-component coordination to resource most requests. These improvements will facilitate National Guard support to annual, emerging, and contingency force requirements.

The National Guard Bureau must promote a deeper familiarity of available NG forces at GCC and Joint Staff levels, to include more effective representation at major planning forums, such as the Worldwide Planning Conference and GCC theater security planning workshops. The National Guard needs senior ranking representatives to communicate the availability and capabilities of units to support Combatant Command requirements.⁶² These senior leaders would emphasize existing SPP relationships that are applicable in each region, highlighting successful engagements NG units have recently executed.

Increased communication would also clarify NG force availability, in particular Brigade Combat Teams, engineer units, and other units that would support specific

prerequisites within GCC strategic plans. This information would reinforce unit readiness assessments, while emphasizing DSCA and consequence management capabilities. Communication would clarify deployability considerations, to include timelines for short notice deployments, sustainment plans, and funding options. As with any complex organization, strong working relationships with planners at Combatant Commands and the Joint Staff will drive increased integration of the National Guard in planning and sourcing decisions.

The second area needing improved coordination is the identification of specific requirements in theater and for individual country plans. While the national strategy broadly guides theater-level campaign plans, Country Plans vary based on interests, the security environment, and military capabilities. Combatant Commands need to identify individual country priorities and communicate those needs to the planners who consolidate and prioritize overall GCC requirements. Bilateral Affairs Officers (BAO), working with the U.S. Defense Attaché Office in each partner country, are the in-country expert responsible for making these recommendations to the Combatant Command.⁶³ The BAO is usually detailed from the National Guard state that partners with a particular country and is responsible for coordinating State Partnership Program events along with other theater security cooperation activities. The BAO maintains awareness of security cooperation programs and military-to-military relationships and develops opportunities for future engagement.⁶⁴ Much of this feedback comes from senior leader engagement through the State Partnership Program. Combatant commands need to solicit more input from these BAOs, SPP coordinators, and the National Guard Bureau when developing security cooperation plans and subsequent requirements. Direct

coordination would facilitate early identification of National Guard assets that could support these requirements.

Resourcing is another area where GCCs and the National Guard must better coordinate. While increased funding for both the State Partnership Program and the Combatant Commands would allow for more security cooperation activities, increased funding is unlikely in a resource-constrained environment. Instead, GCCs and the NGB must help overcome each other's fiscal constraints. The National Guard Bureau should solicit more input from Combatant Commanders when developing annual funding plans for SPP activities. At the same time, the GCCs could do a better job at identifying priorities in time for NGB to coordinate funding and for states to plan events. By conducting detailed planning that matches National Guard forces to GCC requirements early, each component could better identify funding requirements and integrate resourcing plans. In 2014, the Pennsylvania National Guard increased the size of its forces participating in Exercise Saber Strike to support EUCOM's assurance operation in the Baltics. Coordinating additional transportation and sustainment support was a challenge for U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR).⁶⁵ The National Guard was able to secure air transport from Virginia Air National Guard units conducting concurrent annual training missions. Ultimately, USAREUR adjusted sustainment support to accommodate the changes to the exercise. However, there is significant room for improvement in achieving greater resource integration through proactive coordination.

Demonstrating Readiness

The National Guard must demonstrate and communicate its readiness to the Combatant Commands. To more accurately reflect security cooperation and contingency operation requirements, Combatant Commands should revise their

deployment readiness benchmarks. The National Guard must also improve readiness reporting for these missions as well. Finally, Guard units must demonstrate their deployment readiness through training and exercise performance, thereby overcoming biases and assumptions that might otherwise inhibit Active Component willingness to consider greater employment of NG resources in support of the Combatant Commands.

U.S. Forces Command (FORSCOM) publishes training requirements for regionally-aligned units, detailing those tasks the unit must complete and “validate” as ready for deployment. Each Combatant Command publishes an annex to their theater plans with guidance for tasks specifically required for the respective region.⁶⁶ These lists are arguably excessive for many short-term security cooperation or contingency operations. Combatant Commands should tailor their published deployment readiness standards, focusing on those tasks that more appropriately support requirements. Conversely, the National Guard Bureau should coordinate with Combatant Commands and FORSCOM to allow for streamlined readiness reporting. This should include simplifying the process that currently requires First U.S. Army personnel to validate National Guard commanders’ training plans and readiness. These actions will enable National Guard forces to maintain a ready posture with less lead-time required to mobilize and deploy in support of contingency operations.

Most National Guard units are able to mobilize and deploy rapidly for DSCA and consequence management missions. National Guard units are often prepared to respond to State emergencies within 24-72 hours.⁶⁷ It is entirely feasible for National Guard units to mobilize just as quickly for deployment in support of GCC contingency operations, particularly for missions with nominal equipment requirements. The National

Guard must communicate this message to GCC contingency planners. Bilateral Affairs Officers cannot be the sole messengers; the National Guard Bureau must reach out and engage GCCs directly. By doing so, the Combatant Commander would realize that the National Guard is a responsive asset available to support his TSC operations.

The National Guard must demonstrate its readiness for deployment and mission performance. While successful State Partnership missions are widely recognized, these training events usually involve small teams with extended planning and preparation time. The National Guard Bureau needs to place greater emphasis on those short-notice deployments in support of Combatant Command requirements. National Guard Brigade Combat Teams currently conduct training cycles using the “eXportable Combat Training Capability,” which expose Brigade Combat Teams to the Decisive Action Training Environment.⁶⁸ These training events are proving successful, but units must leverage this by better communicating readiness to COCOM planners and synchronizing training scenarios with COCOM requirements. Above all, the National Guard Bureau must secure more frequent Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations for its Divisions and Brigades. Within Army culture, CTC evaluations are considered the consummate test of proficiency and readiness. Demonstrating performance that is on par with Active Component formations is the best way to overcome lingering misperceptions as to National Guard proficiency.

Considerations

One concern from the National Guard Bureau’s perspective would be the stability and control of the State Partnership Program. Increased allocation of the National Guard to support Combatant Command requirements should not result in continual adjustments to planned SPP events or commit forces to a frequency of deployment that

states could not sustain. Effective alignment and coordination should not only improve integration with Combatant Command requirements, but also prevent over-commitment and unpredictability. The State Partnership Program should nest within the GCC strategic plan as another set of ways and means to accomplish the strategic ends and support long-term U.S. interests in the region. With active coordination, GCC priorities should guide NGB's SPP long-range plans. Short-notice changes to those plans would occur only as a result of significant changes in the GCC operating environment. Two statutory control measures would prevent over-commitment of National Guard forces: Title 32 budget authorities and the state Governors' authorization for deployment. Control over SPP funds would remain with the NGB, thereby limiting the amount of turbulence that could occur during the yearly budget execution cycle. State gubernatorial consent to soldier deployment in Title 32 status, or Title 10 mobilization status, would also ensure that governors will not lose control of their ready forces with state missions. However, states have rarely needed to invoke these authorities, even during the heaviest deployment periods in support of the two-theater war. It is unlikely that this would be an issue while supporting GCCs during theater security cooperation operations.

Another concern is that continuous deployment of National Guard forces in security cooperation missions could exceed their readiness capacity. This question is not vastly different from the concerns voiced as the Army prepared to deploy the National Guard as the operational reserve force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom/Iraqi Freedom. There was initial concern whether National Guard unit readiness would meet mission requirements. There was also apprehension that the

mobilization and deployment of tens of thousands of National Guard soldiers would be more than the states could support, particularly regarding the Governors' ability to support state mission requirements. However, National Guard forces were able to sustain the commitment of multiple deployments, while sustaining readiness for combat operations in U.S. Central Command.⁶⁹ Other precedents exist for National Guard support to recurring missions, such as the MFO-Sinai and peace operations in Bosnia.⁷⁰ With planning and coordination measures that improve alignment, the National Guard can be just as responsive for DSCA or security missions in all the GCCs.

The recommendations of this paper are broader than a mere integration of the National Guard into the Regionally Aligned Forces concept. Indeed, there is a commonality of intent: Providing Combatant Commanders with more force options for security cooperation and contingency operations. However, RAF's flexibility contributes to concurrent limitations in developing lasting relationships and expertise. The 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, "Dagger Brigade," from the First Infantry Division supported AFRICOM in 2013-14 and conducted over 160 theater security cooperation in more than 30 countries.⁷¹ Recently, it relinquished that support mission to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, the "Dragons."⁷² The 1st Infantry Division undoubtedly increased the number of engagements that AFRICOM was able to support. Nonetheless, conducting short-term activities spread across an entire continent with one brigade, and reassigning those missions to new people every two years, it is unlikely that RAF units will develop significant relationships, or country-specific situational understanding, in the way that National Guard states have done with SPP partner countries for nearly two decades.

The recent regional alignment of the National Guard's 48th Brigade Combat Team to U.S. Southern Command highlights this shortsightedness. While National Guard states support twenty-two SPP partnerships with countries in SOUTHCOM's region, the Georgia National Guard, home of the 48th BCT, is not one of those states; they are partnered with the country of Georgia in Eurasia. Instead of employing forces from states with regional expertise in Central or South America, the Army's RAF methodology was applied to a brigade with no regional experience. While the 48th BCT likely had higher readiness or more soldiers available than units from those states with experience in SOUTHCOM, this situation is indicative of the disjointed implementation of a concept that fails to capitalize on experience developed over twenty years of partnership building in the National Guard.

Conclusion

"Across the globe we will seek to be the security partner of choice, pursuing new partnerships with a growing number of nations."⁷³ The Secretary of Defense's guidance, and corresponding guidance from the JCS Chairman mentioned previously, make it clear that theater security cooperation remains a central tenet of the National Security Strategy. The National Security Strategy tasks Geographic Combatant Commanders with the responsibility to increase global engagement with U.S. allies and partners. Combatant Commanders manage that engagement through theater security cooperation, while at the same time preparing for contingency operations that range from support to civil authorities and deterrence missions to major combat operations.

The National Guard needs to work with the Joint Staff and the Department of the Army to make itself more available to support Combatant Command requirements in this time of declining resources. Active Component forces by themselves will not be

able to support all of these requirements while maintaining mission readiness. Our leaders must improve alignment mechanisms that make National Guard forces visible and available for GCC use. Improved coordination is necessary to facilitate this integration. Finally, National Guard forces must demonstrate readiness for GCC requirements. The integration of National Guard forces into the mix of resources employed by Combatant Commands for contingency operations, in addition to theater security cooperation, will enhance achievement of the National Security Strategy goal of global engagement.

The focus of this monograph, improving processes and practices to increase National Guard support to Combatant Command requirements, precluded an in-depth analysis of the implications related to the Title 10 and 32 sections of the United States Code (USC). There is precedence for modification to the USC regarding deployment length and purpose of the National Guard to support evolving requirements.⁷⁴ Should the Department of Defense more regularly mobilize and deploy the National Guard in support of globally integrated operations, this would be a beneficial topic for further exploration.

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