

Building Partner Capacity for Combating



Azerbaijani soldier participating in Exercise Combined Endeavor

Removing cobalt 60 in radioactive chemical container in Iraq, 2003

435th Communications Squadron (Shannon N. Kluge)

982nd Signal Company (Rachel M. Ahner)

By JENNIFER D.P. MORONEY and JOE HOGLER

One of the greatest challenges to national security is the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of those who would use them indiscriminately against our homeland, interests abroad, or partners and allies. It is not difficult to imagine how eagerly terrorists would use a weapon that could kill hundreds or thousands, or how much a terrorist network would pay for such a weapon. Porous borders, willing suppliers, and ungoverned spaces complicate the threat. Addressing the problem requires the full participation of the U.S. Government and the cooperation

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of its international partners. Without this joint effort, catastrophic consequences could result. The United States simply does not have the resources, access, or in-depth knowledge of every possible transit route, source, or network to stop WMD proliferation.

The most immediate threat is not that a fully assembled nuclear, biological, or chemical weapon would somehow change hands.

Rather, the illicit transfer of components, technologies, specialized industrial equipment, and dual-use items or chemicals is especially difficult to observe or detect. There is still much to be done in helping partners to appreciate the urgency of the problem and developing cooperative approaches to combating WMD proliferation as close to the source as possible.

A coordinated effort to enhance all partners' border security, WMD detection, and interdiction capabilities is needed to address the global nature of the threat. Where nations are less capable, focusing U.S. assistance on building indigenous

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Military Mission Areas for Combating WMD

Mission: Dissuade, deter, and defeat those who seek to harm the U.S., its partners and allies through WMD use or threat of use. If attacked, mitigate effects and restore deterrence.

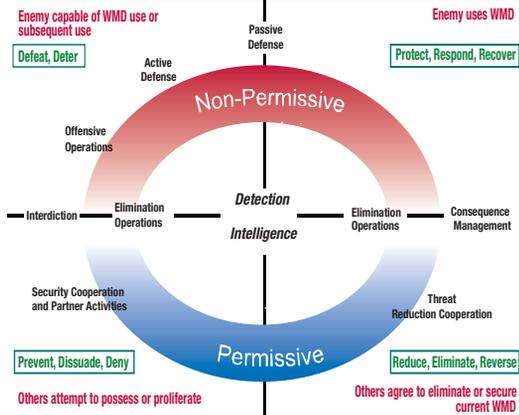


Figure 1

Defense Threat Reduction Agency team checking Iraqi missile abandoned in Baghdad, 2003



55th Signal Company (igor Paustowski)

capacity to combat the proliferation of WMD is critical. The importance of nations working together to stop proliferation is highlighted in the Group of Eight Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction agreement: “Recognizing that this global partnership will enhance international security and safety, we invite other countries that are prepared to adopt its common principles and guidelines to enter into discussions with us on participating in and contributing to this initiative.”¹

Strategic Guidance

Before discussing the who and why of building partner capacity to combat WMD, it is useful to explain strategic guidance and the strategy-to-task management process relative to nonproliferation assistance.

National Level Guidance. The 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* emphasizes the urgency of addressing proliferation and, in particular, highlights the nexus of WMD and terrorism as one of the gravest dangers facing the United States. The *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* guides the overall U.S. effort. The focus areas of the document are nonproliferation, counterproliferation, and WMD consequence management.

Department Level Guidance. The recently published *National Military Strategy for Combating WMD* builds on the three focus areas by defining eight military missions and how they are to be conducted. One mission area is security cooperation and partner activities, which focuses on the day-to-day military role. The strategy highlights theater security cooperation as the primary vehicle for the U.S. military to build partner capacity to combat proliferation. Security cooperation allows not only for the transfer of technology and know-how to partners, but also for direct observation and interaction, helping to ensure that equipment and training are used properly.

The Security Cooperation Guidance not only provides themes approved by the Secretary of Defense to guide the combatant commands in developing their theater security cooperation strategies and plans but also ensures that the aims of the WMD strategy and the overall DOD security cooperation effort are consistent.

Operationalizing the Guidance

The *National Military Strategy for Combating WMD* details how DOD supports its day-to-day nonproliferation element, comprising many of the most critical, ongoing efforts. In the lower right quadrant of figure

1, for example, threat reduction cooperation activities such as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program place controls on existing WMD and aims to reduce nuclear, biological, and chemical stockpiles.

The security cooperation and partner activities mission in the lower left quadrant of figure 1 represents a collection of interrelated activities that occur day to day aimed at denying, dissuading, and preventing potential adversaries from obtaining or proliferating WMD, and in which DOD has a role that is significant but often overlooked. These activities include traditional export control regimes and nonproliferation treaties that allow partner nations to contribute to stemming the proliferation of WMD materials and components. Nonproliferation initiatives such as the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Nuclear Suppliers’ Group create international norms regarding proliferation and give visibility to export control problems that could otherwise lead to the spread of technology and materials.²

Partner activities, as the primary tool for building partner capacity, also support other mission areas. For example, initiatives such as the NATO Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Battalion and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) address

ensuring that the right partners are engaged for the right reasons is crucial to U.S. efforts to combat WMD proliferation



U.S. Government Nonproliferation Activities

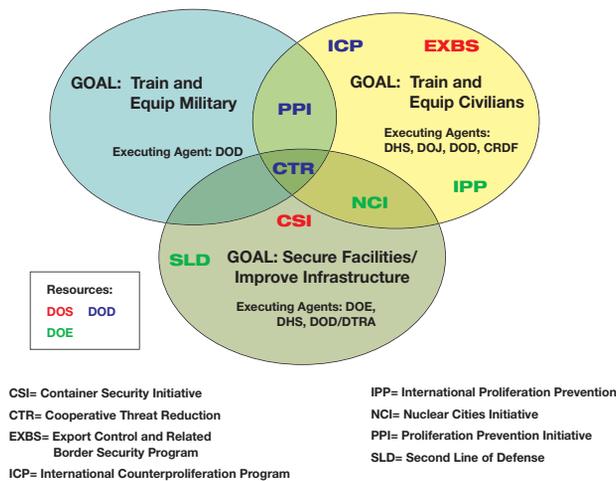


Figure 2

targeting challenging partners promotes access to new and existing facilities and key officials in states that lie across trafficking routes

such mission areas as defense against WMD attack and interdiction.

Multinational activities such as PSI provide opportunities for discussion between like-minded nations and result in innovative ways to detect and interdict the movement of WMD materials and components across international borders. PSI, with the voluntary participation of nearly 100 countries, shows how international cooperation can lead to concrete results. The most tangible success of this approach was the October 2003 diversion of a German-owned ship carrying uranium centrifuge equipment to Libya, which helped prompt the Libyan government to abandon its pursuit of WMD.

Turning to the security cooperation portion of the security cooperation and partner activities mission, figure 2 depicts some of the key U.S. security cooperation programs aimed at combating proliferation. Traditionally focused on the former Soviet Union, some of these efforts have expanded to other regions that carry a risk of WMD transshipment, including Southeast Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America. Although U.S. programs are more limited outside the former Soviet Union, they are not entirely absent. For example, CTR is now assisting Albania in securing and eliminating chemical weapons stockpiles. Moreover,

since 1998, the DOD International Counterproliferation Program has provided law enforcement and border security training and equipment to 22 countries.

Several interagency programs have succeeded in increasing partner capacity to combat proliferation. For example, since 1998, U.S. counterproliferation programs have led to at least 8 significant seizures by foreign authorities that have been attributed to training and equipment, including the discovery of 10 grams of highly enriched uranium (U-235) by Bulgarian customs officials at the Ruse border crossing in May 1999 and 10 highly radioactive lead containers found in a truck entering from Kazakhstan by Uzbekistan customs officials at the Gisht Kuprink border crossing in March 2000. The common goal of these programs is to provide partners with their own capabilities and to communicate the important role the partners play. Ensuring that the right partners are engaged for the right reasons is crucial to U.S. efforts to combat WMD proliferation.

Such agencies as the Departments of State, Defense, Homeland Security, Energy, and Commerce—all supported by the Intelligence Community—provide assistance. DOD, in coordination with these departments, engages partners and allies through focused training and equipment. The U.S. military,

for example, is uniquely equipped with capabilities that are readily applicable to border security and can be transferred rapidly. Three DOD programs worth noting are Cooperative Threat Reduction, Proliferation Prevention Initiative, and the International Counterproliferation Program, which together provide the resources to train and equip foreign militaries and civilians to secure WMD facilities and enhance border security. However, partner capacity is not always built by the military. Civilian agencies can, for instance, engage nonmilitary counterparts such as border guards, customs officials, and security services—those officials on the front lines who DOD often cannot engage due to statutory restrictions, such as the Leahy Amendment, which restricts security assistance to countries where there is credible evidence of gross human rights violations.

In terms of resources, the United States invests substantially in building partner capacity. The Department of Defense spent more than \$400 million on CTR in 2005, while the State, Energy, and Commerce Departments combined spent \$1.4 billion on nonproliferation.

From a military standpoint, both bilateral and multinational security cooperation efforts make the most direct impact. Security cooperation is essential to the U.S.

strategy to combat WMD and can serve as the long-term military means of creating a global network to oppose proliferation. The combatant commands can tailor security cooperation as well as Title 22, U.S. Code, security assistance (for example, foreign military financing and grants, international military education and training, and excess defense articles) to address specific problems throughout their areas of responsibility.

Toward a Strategy

To combat WMD proliferation globally, the U.S. Government should consider a comprehensive, phased approach to engage partners through security cooperation. The aim of the strategy would be to increase partner capacity through focused education, training, and equipment. Sustainment of all of these elements is essential to the long-term strategy. Using diverse programs in a balanced and complementary manner, the Government would, in the near term, engage in bilateral cooperation with targeted countries. In the longer term, an expanded program of regional cooperation as well as cooperation with international organizations would leverage other partner capabilities as well as non-U.S. programs.

Providing equipment and training will not be enough to build partner capacity.

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U.S. Marines and Ukraine soldiers training Exercise Peace Shield 2005

Consistent strategic communication of key themes is the long-term enabler that will help partners understand the need to enhance border security and stem WMD proliferation. The strategic themes America communicates must emphasize the nature of the threat and the potential consequences of not dealing with it effectively. Partners must not only have the capability but also the wherewithal to be part of a comprehensive effort.

The overarching goal is to effect change in partner mindsets, thus reinforcing the recipient nation's desire to use its capacity in a way the United States finds acceptable and that helps stop proliferation. Strategic themes may include, for example, assurances of U.S. assistance, the dangers of WMD falling into terrorist hands, and the role of secure borders.

Where to Engage

Washington must sustain cooperative activities with current partners. Working with allies reduces the ability of violators to escape detection and places counter-WMD capabilities closer to the sources of proliferation. Additionally, more capable partners and allies can help build capacity in less capable nations, reducing the U.S. burden. While it is

important to continue to work with long-term allies, the United States may find it desirable to engage new, if more difficult, partners.

The majority of new partners and candidates for security cooperation recognize and are addressing the proliferation threat. Some, however, are at best ambivalent toward the United States. Azerbaijan, for example, is not yet a close and long-term American partner, but it could lean more westward if the future geostrategic environment permits. It is strategically located in a known WMD transshipment region on the Caspian Sea and should thus be considered a primary target of U.S. non-proliferation assistance. Furthermore, the United States could someday be allowed to use military facilities in Azerbaijan for stability and expeditionary operations. While difficult, establishing closer cooperation with countries near sources of proliferation may be worth the effort.

Targeting challenging partners promotes access to new and existing facilities and key military and civilian officials in states that lie across trafficking routes. Access could result in better intelligence and greater ability to conduct effective WMD interdiction. Security

a Government Accountability Office report found no overall strategy integrating interagency threat reduction and nonproliferation programs



cooperation programs can provide opportunities to gain insights into specific military as well as civil aspects of states that might otherwise be closed to political-military interaction. Such insights enhance U.S. ability to refocus existing programs or construct new ones to fill gaps and expand the network of nations committed to halting proliferation.

Security assistance may be limited for political as well as fiscal reasons. For example, nations that have a poor human rights record are involved in a civil or regional war may not be eligible. Moreover, some partners have seen their security assistance halted due to failure to ratify bilateral agreements, such as Article 98 of the American Service Protection Act (which relates to the treatment of U.S. Service members abroad). Where military assistance cannot be provided, however, there are U.S.-executed nonproliferation programs that are not under such tight restrictions. In any case, the effort should be made since programs that provide a recipient state with tangible assistance and enhance indigenous security capacity can have lasting effects by changing mindsets and creating avenues for further cooperation.

America simply does not have the resources to provide a high level of WMD assistance (training, equipment, and personnel) to every partner country, so priorities must be based on real and projected threats. Working with countries that are neither strongly committed to U.S. aims nor strongly opposed offers the opportunity to tip the balance in U.S. favor and shape partner perspectives in stemming proliferation in critical regions. Finally, limited resources require a focused approach to the areas of greatest concern, and while our most capable partners might at first seem likely choices for cooperation, geographically they may be in the wrong neighborhood. Likewise, countries in the right neighborhood are less likely to have a history of cooperation with the United States, military or otherwise.

How to Engage

Stemming proliferation requires a variety of efforts to address its many aspects. American nonproliferation resources need to focus on supporting coordinated bilateral, regional, and multilateral WMD strategies agreed on with partner countries. To these ends, the combatant commands have been drafting regional strategies and country plans that take nonproliferation goals firmly into account.



DOD should build on cooperation strategies such as the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) Caspian Guard, Black Sea Initiative, Horn of Africa, and Levant and Pan Sahel regional strategies.

There are several short- and long-term actions that should be considered for building partner capacity. In the short term, the United States should continue to work with allies, multilateral organizations, and targeted partners to:

- develop actionable national level plans for combating WMD proliferation
- develop regional response plans
- incorporate partner interagency officials (military and civilian) into bilateral and multilateral exercises and workshops and focus scenarios to address existing threats
- establish a “common sight picture” for land, maritime, and air border regions.

In the longer term, Washington should consider establishing interagency civil-military operations centers, first on a national and then on a regional basis, with the goal of creating a system of regional networks for combating proliferation. Civil-military operations centers will help partners to improve their overall land, maritime, and air border security (particularly if they share an operational picture with their neighbors), improve information/intelligence-sharing, and better coordinate operational responses to WMD threats. Such centers have been incorporated into several DOD security cooperation events. For example, the annual “Rough and Ready” consequence

management workshop in Ukraine, executed by USEUCOM and the National Guard, included a civil-military operations center command and control element to coordinate the event. Regional partners, including Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova, have participated as observers, and were thus socialized to the civil-military operations concept.

Second, in addition to U.S. bilateral assistance, the interagency community should develop a strategy to leverage the capabilities of advanced allies. Washington should organize regional donor conferences—or “clearinghouses”—toward these ends. Opportunities may exist, for example, to work with the French in Africa, the Australians in the Asia-Pacific region, and the Turks in the Caucasus to advance mutual nonproliferation objectives, reduce redundancies, and identify assistance gaps. Where allies have better relations with a target country through historical, cultural, or linguistic ties, they should take the lead, supported by U.S. resources where appropriate.

Third, the United States could work more closely with regional and multinational organizations, which could serve as reinforcing mechanisms or have the credibility to develop the regional networks with an invigorated nonproliferation agenda. Examples include the European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Organization of African Union, Southeast Europe Cooperation Initiative, and Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. Moreover, at their June 2004 summit, the United States and European Union issued a joint declaration in which they agreed to expand their

cooperation to prevent, contain, and reverse WMD proliferation, as well as their related materials and delivery systems.

Challenges

Coordination, deconfliction, and transparency within the interagency community are probably greater challenges to providing nonproliferation assistance to partners than lack of resources. First, some programs are controlled (through policy and resource oversight) by one agency and executed by several others. For example, the State Department is the executive agent for the Export Control and Related Border Security Program, but the Department of Homeland Security (Bureau of Customs and Border Patrol and Coast Guard), Department of Energy, and Department of Commerce are the executing agencies. Such an interagency relationship can create disconnects between policy guidance and program execution if not monitored.

Second, several overlapping programs exist for countering WMD proliferation (see figure 2), but the coordination mechanisms between them are problematic. For example, DOD controls two border security programs—the International Counterproliferation and the Proliferation Prevention Initiative Programs—that overlap with the Export Control and Related Border Security Program. The Department of Energy’s International Proliferation Prevention Program also overlaps with the Export Control and Related Border Security, International Counterproliferation, and Proliferation Prevention Initiative Programs. Energy’s Second Line of Defense Program overlaps with DOD’s Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. Several interagency programs have classroom/field training and equipment provision components. Some can only provide education and training and no equipment. The mechanisms to coordinate and deconflict at the interagency level need to be improved and institutionalized.

Third, while the National Security Council and Department of State have attempted to deconflict agencies and programs, there is no comprehensive mandate from the White House. Nonproliferation is too involved to expect a single agency to have the full worldwide picture, let alone to evaluate program success. A recent Government Accountability Office report found no overall strategy integrating interagency threat reduction and nonproliferation programs.³

The Department of Defense must take a comprehensive view of the programs it controls as executive agent and work closely with other agencies that have complementary programs. A possibility is to have in-country program managers, at least where there is substantial nonproliferation assistance from the United States, to protect against program overlap and identify gaps. The Export Control and Related Border Security Program, which employs ex-customs officials to serve as program managers in the Embassies of many target countries, is a good model in this regard.

The threat posed by weapons of mass destruction must be met by a coordinated effort across the U.S. Government, with help from partners and allies through bilateral, regional, and multilateral mechanisms. The Department of Defense can contribute most directly through its security cooperation activities, under the guidance outlined in the *National Military Strategy for Combating WMD* and the Security Cooperation Guidance. The focus should be on partners closest to the threat and key transit routes, even though they may at first be ambivalent toward cooperation. A sustained program of education, training, and equipment transfer, combined with the consistent communication of strategic themes, will help create relationships, improve partner understanding of the severity of the WMD threat, and focus the desire of partners to expand their own nonproliferation capacities. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ Group of Eight Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction agreement, available at <www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/11514.htm>.

² The Missile Technology Control Regime is an informal and voluntary association of 37 countries that share the goal of nonproliferation of unmanned delivery systems for WMD. The association seeks to coordinate national export control licensing efforts. The 44 member states of the Nuclear Suppliers Group contribute to the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons through voluntary adherence to agreed guidelines and sharing information on developments of nuclear proliferation concern.

³ Government Accountability Office, “Weapons of Mass Destruction: Nonproliferation Programs Need Better Integration,” January 2005, GAO-05-157.

CALL for Submissions



The following are areas of interest to which *JFQ* expects to return frequently, with no submission deadline:

- adaptive planning and execution
- coalition operations
- employing the economic instrument of power
- future of naval power
- humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
- industry collaboration for national security
- integrated operations subsets (new partners, interoperability, and transformational approaches)
- joint air and space power
- just war theory
- maneuver warfare
- proliferation and weapons of mass destruction
- prosecuting the war on terror within sovereign countries
- military and diplomatic history

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