

**Hearing of the  
House Armed Services Committee  
Framework for Building Partnership Capacity Programs and  
Authorities to Meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges  
February 14, 2013**

I'd like to welcome everyone to today's hearing on a framework for building partnership capacity programs and authorities to meet 21st century challenges. Although "building partnership capacity" may seem like a broad term, this is an important area for the committee's oversight of the recent defense strategy, which places great emphasis on the important role of partnerships to U.S. national security. Likewise, we have enacted significant legislation in this area because the Committee has supported the notion that military commanders' need to build certain capacities in partner nations to satisfy specific theater security requirements.

We heard testimony yesterday about the fiscal challenges the military faces as it deals with implementing sequestration, a long-term continuing resolution, and the under resourcing of Overseas Contingency Operations accounts. These constraints will disproportionately hurt the Department's operations and maintenance (O&M) account, from which building partnership capacity authorities are also funded. Given this fiscal environment, the emphasis on building partnership capacity in last year's Defense Strategic Guidance and the global threats to U.S. national security interests, this hearing is the beginning of a continuing discussion on what is the proper role of these BPC authorities. In spite of our support for these authorities, many questions remain. What is the right amount of funding? What is the right balance between the Defense and State Departments in funding, strategizing and executing these authorities? What is the right level of engagement and focus by the combatant commands and services on these activities? And is it a plausible assumption that partner nations will, in fact, use their new capabilities to act consistent with U.S. national security objectives? Congress is the ultimate decision maker on funding. Our oversight responsibilities also require us to understand the

impact of these authorities on U.S. national security interests and the ability of the COCOMs and Services to execute these authorities without compromising other key priorities and core capabilities.

Furthermore, this committee has expressed concern about the proliferation and duplication of BPC authorities. The authorities to be discussed today make up at least \$750 million per year in authorized funding – not including over a billion a year in counternarcotics activities. And the trend is on the rise. In today’s fiscal environment, it’s important that the Defense Department, COCOMs and Services prioritize these BPC authorities and activities, in coordination and consultation with the State Department. And it’s critical that the administration understand Congress’s intent in authorizing these authorities, and the need to strategize, plan, fund, execute and assess these authorities.

To testify before the committee today, we have:

Mr. Michael Sheehan

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict

Lieutenant General Terry Wolff

Director, Strategic Plans and Policy (J5), Joint Staff

Ms. Janet St. Laurent

Managing Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

U.S. Government Accountability Office

I’d like to thank our witnesses for being with us today and to note that the Department of State, who has a key role to play in this discussion, was also invited to participate, but declined. We will continue to engage State, in partnership with the Foreign Affairs Committee, in this ongoing dialogue.