

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY

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ON BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY FOR 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY CHALLENGES

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Chairman McKeon, Ranking member Smith, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today and talk about the Department of Defense's efforts to build partner capacity to meet the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

From our strongest allies to our newest relationships, strengthening partner engagement increases stability and security around the world. These engagements are each specifically constructed to enable a range of results from developing trust and furthering partnerships to strengthening coordination and interoperability with mature allies.

## **STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY**

The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance emphasizes that Building Partner Capacity would be used to mitigate risks during personnel drawdowns and advance the strategic rebalance toward Asia. Thus, Building Partner Capacity is becoming a key component in how the United States will structure and employ military resources going forward. We find ourselves at a strategic inflection point and the 2012 guidance promotes BPC as integral to a U.S. security strategy that enables future savings through burden sharing with our partners and allies.

The Department's strategic guidance recognizes that deepening global interdependence calls for continued U.S. engagement and leadership in the world, including military power. The unique ability of U.S. military forces to project military power abroad has enabled the Department to deter aggression, defeat threats, protect the global security environment and provide crisis response. It also has made the United States the security partner of choice for allies and partners around the world. Looking ahead, the Department will

remain globally engaged, providing a stabilizing presence through a network of alliances, partnerships and cooperative approaches to address common security problems.

The Department undertakes numerous security cooperation activities to enable and encourage our foreign partners to work with us to achieve our common strategic objectives. These activities are aimed at preventing future crises, and should these preventative efforts fail, ensuring the Department and its partners are sufficiently trained and equipped to respond as necessary.

## **FOCUS AREAS OF OUR EFFORTS**

Building Partner Capacity is not one singular thing. It is a complex, interwoven system with multiple lines of effort being undertaken throughout the Department and across the Interagency. Our main goal for these efforts is to assist our partners to develop effective and legitimate security institutions that can provide for their own countries' internal security, contribute to a greater regional stability, and participate in multilateral operations. The Department's efforts include, and are not limited to:

- Building operational capability, capacity, and performance of our partners in their counterterrorism efforts. For example, the Department is engaged with Uganda, Burundi and other East African nations to increase their capacity to combat threats posed by al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda. In Central Africa, the Department is working with partners to counter the Lord's Resistance Army. The Department's efforts in the last ten years to bolster the capacity of security forces in the Philippines have allowed that country to significantly reduce the size and freedom of movement of the Abu Sayyaf Group, minimizing its capability to conduct terrorist activities.
- Enhancing the professional militaries of our partners. These activities are

conducted through programs and activities such as the International Military Education and Training program, senior leader visits and regional centers such as the Marshall Center and the Africa Center for Strategic Studies. In Fiscal Year 2012, the International Military Education and Training program reached approximately 6000 students from 135 countries. The regional centers are key institutions for building relationships and forging common understanding. They foster open communications and educational opportunities for military and civilian participants alike.

- Sharing intelligence and information. The Department is engaged with our partners to develop sharing agreements critical to success in combating threats from terrorist organizations as well as transnational organized crime. We have robust and mature sharing relationships with our long-term partners in Europe and the Pacific, and are collaborating closely with our newest partners, particularly in Africa where our relationships are in the nascent stages.
- Increasing interoperability. Sharing common tactics, techniques, and procedures as well as equipment and planning processes enable our partners to participate in multi-national coalition operations and respond to emerging security challenges worldwide. The myriad facets of interoperability are routinely exercised with our partners through the Joint/Combined Exchange Training activities and the Developing Country Combined Exercise Program.

There is no better example of the importance of interoperable and capable partners than the coalition in Afghanistan. Throughout the war, well-trained and highly effective partners have been fighting side-by-side with U.S. forces. Many of our coalition partners deployed without caveats to some of the most dangerous regions in Afghanistan and performed admirably. As U.S. forces begin to withdraw in 2014, our reliance on these partners will continue as we

collectively prepare Afghan forces to provide for their own security.

## **REGIONAL IMPACT OF BUILDING PARTNER CAPACITY**

As the Department turns the page on a decade of war, the Arab World is in a period of turmoil and change, impacting across the region and world with an uncertain future. While the wave of unrest has changed the security environment, many long-standing U.S. goals in the region endure.

The task of training, advising, and partnering with foreign military and security forces has moved from the periphery to become a critical element of our strategy. The successful implementation of this strategy paid dividends in Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, among others. **In Jordan, the evolution of the Jordanian Armed Forces as a regional enabler facilitated their ability to host the multi-lateral special operations-focused EAGER LION exercise.** The Department's partnership with the Lebanese armed forces through USCENTCOM's Joint Capabilities Review resulted in an increased capacity to secure and defend their borders. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates supported regional security by providing support to Operations UNIFIED PROTECTOR and ENDURING FREEDOM.

In the western hemisphere, the Department seeks opportunities to build partner capacity, develop security partnerships, and create innovative, low-cost and small footprint approaches to achieve hemispheric security objectives. The security assistance to Colombia, Central America and the Caribbean, as well as the deployments of El Salvadoran military personnel in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, underscores the opportunities for expanding capabilities and capacities to further regional stabilization efforts. For example, Colombia has provided security training to more than 11,000 police officers in 21 Latin American and African countries, as well as Afghanistan, making it a force multiplier for U.S. assistance. The

Department has tremendous partners in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility who are dedicated to our shared principles of democracy.

In Central America, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking organizations, gangs, and weak rule of law institutions, including the police and armed forces, are threats affecting the entire region. Our Central American partners are stepping up to this challenge and are taking tangible steps towards addressing the problem. For example, El Salvador is building joint civilian law enforcement – military narcotics interdiction teams, Costa Rica approved a security tax on business to help pay for increased capability, Panama is investing in equipment for security forces and reforming its police, and Honduras approved a security tax and is working on procedures to facilitate the extradition of traffickers and gang members to the United States.

The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance calls for a "re-balance toward the Asia-Pacific region." The U.S. rebalance reflects a recognition that the United States must substantially increase its political, economic and defense investments in the Asia-Pacific given the region's fundamental importance to our future prosperity and security. Maintaining peace and security across the Asia-Pacific is central to broader U.S. strategic interests, including through halting proliferation in North Korea, maintaining freedom of navigation in the region's maritime spaces including the South and East China Seas, and promoting increased transparency in the region's military activities. As such, the Department's partnership efforts in the region are integrated within a broader whole-of-government approach. The Department's efforts are aimed at refreshing and reinvigorating our military to military relationships with established allies as well as other key existing and emerging regional partners in order to meet a range of 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. While empowering and working with (and within) indigenous multi-national forums such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, we must continue to demonstrate active military leadership and presence in the region to deter potential

adversaries, reassure our allies and partners in Asia, and reinforce international norms—including those that advance freedom of navigation and access to the global commons. Global commons are geographical areas that are outside the jurisdiction of any nation, and include the oceans outside territorial limits and Antarctica. Global commons do not include contiguous zones and fisheries zones of foreign nations.

Free and secure access to the commons is critical to ensure peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and globally, particularly in the vital sea lanes of communication in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean - areas of increased maritime congestion and resource contention. Regional partnerships with, and between, Southeast Asian countries, closer strategic cooperation with our allies, and a more sustained and systematic cooperation with emerging powers such as India will enhance regional stability and provide better prospects for peaceful, non-coercive resolution of disputes and fair access to the commons for all.

This rebalance to Asia represents a strategic adjustment that acknowledges the growing importance of this region with its increasingly significant share of the global economy and the emergence of new security challenges. However, it does not mean a departure from established alliances. While the Department will reduce its conventional Army presence in Europe to two Brigades, we will continue our partnership with NATO allies through participation and training with the NATO Response Force. In this way the Department can continue its time-honored relationships and reassure steadfast allies, yet with fewer U. S. forces deployed overseas.

African states and regional organizations are making significant progress in developing the ability to address security concerns and sources of instability on the continent. This dynamic is reflected in the robust role of the African Union Mission in Somalia, in the Africa Union's lead role in facilitating

negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, and in the Economic Community of West African States' efforts to facilitate a political settlement in response to the recent coup in Mali. Nonetheless, the United States' partners in Africa still lack important capabilities and the capacity to address all of the varying sources of instability across Africa.

Facing this reality, the Department of Defense, in conjunction with the Department of State, continues to assist partners on the African continent with building their capacity to respond to security threats, as this effort represents a measurable investment with significant return in the future. The Department's efforts in this respect take several forms, including security assistance, exercises, rotational presence, advisory efforts, and training and equipping, and they are tailored to the threats that are present. All of these efforts are implemented as low-cost and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives in Africa. By assisting capable and willing African partners to address threats like the Lord's Resistance Army, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, we help them to create the space necessary to continue developing, politically and economically, which benefits both Africa and the United States.

## **CONCLUSION**

As we face the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have many allies and partners who share an interest in helping advance a common security vision and shouldering the burden of global security. Building capacity is the long term solution to reduce our presence in protecting the territory of others, while defending our interests in a fiscally-constrained environment. Building Partner Capacity must therefore be given greater emphasis and be coordinated with other instruments of national power to meet current and future U.S. global objectives.

Whatever forms our Building Partner Capacity efforts may take over time, in the end they must be agile and flexible enough to respond to a rapidly changing world, be conducted steadily over the long term to instill partner confidence in the United States' commitment and reinforce State Department's role in leading U.S. foreign policy efforts.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and testify on the Department's efforts to build partner capacity. I also want to thank this committee for your continued support of our men and women in uniform.