

## National Guard State Partnership Program: Global Engagements

**What is it?** The National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) is an innovative joint security cooperation program, managed by the National Guard Bureau, executed by the State Adjutant Generals in support of Combatant Commander Security Cooperation (SC) objectives under the authorities provided by the Department of Defense and Congress. The National Guard conducts high impact, low cost security engagements with partner countries establishing long-term SC relationships with US friends and allies around the world.

SPP establishes and maintains partnerships between U.S. states and foreign nations to promote and enhance bilateral relations, thus supporting Homeland Defense by nurturing dependable collaborative partners for coalition operations in support of the Era of Persistent Conflict. 65 countries are currently linked to 49 states, 2 territories (Puerto Rico and Guam), and Washington D.C. Within the EUCOM area of operations, 22 states help increase the capacity and capabilities of 21 partner countries. Within SOUTHCOM, 19 states assist 23 partner countries. AFRICOM has 8 partnerships; CENTCOM and PACOM have 7 partnerships each. In addition, NORTHCOM has one partnership. The newest Global Combatant Command (GCC), AFRICOM, has the following partnerships: South Africa and New York, Morocco and Utah, Ghana and North Dakota, Tunisia and Wyoming, Nigeria and California, Botswana and North Carolina, Senegal and Vermont, Liberia and Michigan.

Celebrating nearly 20 years of enduring relationships with 65 countries, the National Guard's SPP provides unique military-to-military activities with partner countries using National Guard (NG) expertise. Participation in SPP events is designed to enhance partner capabilities, advance defense reform efforts, and achieve greater military interoperability supporting U.S. security cooperation efforts.

The SPP is also a training venue providing NG personnel a mechanism to meet Universal Joint Task List (UJTLL) mission sets as well as to prepare for Joint Integrated Interagency Multinational (JIIM) operations. The SPP directly supports Theater Campaign Plans and provides years of history in implementing Building Partnerships (BP), Building Partner Capacity (BPC), and conducting Security Cooperation (SC) missions.

The SPP reflects an evolving international affairs mission for the National Guard. It promotes regional stability and civil-military relationships in support of U.S. policy objectives. State partners actively participate in numerous and varied engagement activities including bilateral familiarization and training events, exercises, leader mentorships, and support to other security cooperation activities. All activities are coordinated through the theater Combatant Commanders and the U.S. ambassadors' country teams, and other agencies as appropriate, to ensure that National Guard support meets both U.S. and partner country objectives. Military-to-military engagement is the primary focus of the SPP, promoting defense and security cooperation in emergency management, disaster response, border and port security, leadership and NCO development, medical capacity, and developing peacekeeping operations capability. The SPP supports combatant commanders' theater campaign plans and ambassadors' mission strategic resource plans.

**What has the Army done?** Accomplishments and activities are many and varied including the Alaska National Guard assisting their Mongolian partners and the Michigan National Guard training Liberian forces. Some of the details of these partnerships and other accomplishments include:

- The National Guard conducted more than 300 SPP events in FY11
- 22 SPP nations are providing 11,000 troops in Afghanistan

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- 40 SPP countries provide 31,300 troops and military experts for United Nations peacekeeping operations
- Working with their Mongolian partners, Alaska National Guard medical teams, army and air, provided dental care, eye exams and veterinary care to remote locations. Dubbed Operation Arctic Care, this partnership allowed the Mongolians to mirror the National Guard's processes and see firsthand the Guard's ability to support civilian authorities.
- The U.S. recently sent a detachment of troops to train the Liberian military as it recovers from 14 years of civil war. Michigan Army National Guard soldiers departed for Liberia as part of Operation Observant Liberty, which will "train Liberian forces on how to be an army". The training will cover everything from basic infantry tactics to drill and ceremony, another benefit of SPP.
- Albania estimates that about 30,000 residents (out of a population of 3 million) are drug users and about 40 die each year from overdoses. Marijuana, hashish, and hashish oil originate in Albania, and this Balkan country on the Adriatic Sea is also involved in the heroin and cocaine trade. The New Jersey National Guard assists Albania with counterdrug efforts.
- Over 38,000 partner personnel are directly contributing to UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) outside of coalition operation support.
- The Washington National Guard has worked with first responders from their partnership country, Thailand, to build on their skills in port security, fire fighting, search and rescue, and command and control. This success has now directly resulted in the Thai Border Security capability being able to export to other ports within the region directly supporting our international security and HLD/HLS missions.

**What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?** Partner countries are looking for more hands-on engagement events, unit exchanges, and exercises as well as working with their partner states during actual operations. The National Guard seeks to satisfy this desire for deeper relationships while increasing the number of partnerships.

**Why is this important to the Army?** The SPP enables the National Guard to further define and fulfill its collective role as a goodwill ambassador around the world. SPP reduces the pressure on U.S. forces worldwide and mitigates more direct, costly U.S. military involvement. Guard members apply both military and civilian skills to foster democracy, encourage economic development, and promote regional cooperation and stability. State and Country partnerships create long-term, friendly relationships. The result is greater security for all Americans. This program directly supports the Army Training Strategy and the Army Strategic Planning Guidance.

According to Adm. James A. Winnefeld, Jr., the SPP exemplifies President Obama's January 2012 strategy guidance.

"It's a very high-leverage program where individual states will partner with another nation in Europe or Africa or Asia," Winnefeld said. "It's proven to be a very, very valuable high-leverage tool for us, ... so we plan to build on things like that to help us on these innovative approaches to other parts of the world."

For additional information [click here](#).

<http://www.ng.mil/news/SPP/default.aspx>