

INFORMATION PAPER

J5/J7
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SUBJECT: New York National Guard State Partnership Program

PURPOSE: Provide an update on the New York National Guard State Partnership Program

FACTS:

1. The State Partnership Program (SPP) began in 1993 in the Baltic Nations as a joint engagement effort between the United States European Command and the National Guard Bureau. Its goal was to provide assistance to former Warsaw Pact nations as they transitioned to democratic governance. The program's aim is centered on enhancement of the security cooperation objectives of the United States Government and Combatant Commands in the assigned Areas of Responsibility. These goals reflect an evolving International Affairs mission for the National Guard that uses the unique civil-military nature of the Guard to interact with both active and reserve forces of foreign countries. Soldiers and Airmen apply both military and civilian skills to foster democracy, encourage economic development, and promote regional cooperation and stability. Each State's National Guard Headquarters coordinates all SPP events and activities through the Theater Combatant Commander, the U.S. Ambassadors' country teams, and other agencies as appropriate, to ensure National Guard SPP support meets both U.S. and country objectives.

a. Currently 48 U.S. States, two territories, and the District of Columbia have established affiliations with 63 countries around the world. The New York National Guard (NYNG) is paired with the Republic of South Africa (RSA).

b. The African Continent has 53 countries. U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) is the Theater Combatant Commander responsible for military operations and military relations with all African nations except Egypt. Eight African countries are associated with the SPP.

c. The RSA geographic area is a little over 470 thousand square miles with a population of over 50 million people. The South African National Defense Force (SANDF) as it exists today was created in 1994, following South Africa's first post-apartheid national elections and the adoption of a new constitution. The SANDF replaced the old South African Defense Force (SADF) and incorporated personnel and equipment from the SADF, the former homelands forces, and former guerrilla forces. The SANDF has approximately 74,000 personnel and is subdivided into four branches, the South African Army, the South African Air Force (SAAF), the South African Navy (SAN), and the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS). The South African Special Forces Brigade is a separate unit under the direct command of the Joint Operations Division.

2. New York National Guard State Partnership Program.

a. New York State has actively participated in the SPP since its inception with countries such as Slovakia, Macedonia, and Romania and has planned events with Moldova and Sao Tome and Principe. In early 2001, New York participated in its first event as an associate partner (in cooperation with New Jersey (Primary)) with the Republic of Albania.

b. The NYNG established a partnership with South Africa on 22 August 2003. Then Adjutant General, Major General Thomas P. Maguire, Jr., and Lieutenant General Godfrey N. Ngwenya, South African National Defense Forces Chief of Joint Operations, exchanged flags and handshakes, formerly initiating the relationship. This was the first SPP association held on the African Continent and predated the establishment of USAFRICOM.

c. The NYNG is ideally suited to work with all branches of the SANDF. Like the NYNG, the SANDF is composed of light infantry units and both forces have C-130s and other fixed and rotary wing aircraft. Both forces are also responsible for providing assistance to state and local civilian authorities during emergencies. Over the years, The New York Air National Guard (NYANG), the South African National Sea Rescue Institute (SANSRI) and the South African Air Force have participated in several sea para-rescue training engagements where they shared rescue techniques, tactics, and procedures. Also, Service members from the SANDF have observed New York National Guard's domestic operations exercises such as "Vigilant Guard 2009". These exercises allowed the SANDF insight into the planning and execution methods used while conducting defense support to civilian authorities (DSCA) operations. In May 2010, then General Ngwenya, Chief of Defense, SANDF, visited the New York Joint Force Headquarters and the following September, the NYNG provided the largest U.S military contingent in support of the African Aerospace and Defence Exposition held in Cape Town, RSA. The NYNG has also participated in several small unit exchanges.

d. The NYNG SPP has primarily focused on Military-to-Military (Mil-Mil) exchanges since its inception. Mil-Mil exchanges have included the following: disaster response, battalion and small unit, senior NCO leader development, and senior level leader visits. Each exchange supports the Office of Secretary of Defense and the Combatant Commander's goals for security cooperation in the region. The NYNG SPP did briefly expand the program to Military-to-Civilian and Civilian-to-Civilian exchanges, but these efforts were suspended due to funding constraints.

e. The NYNG is prepared to expand the partnership as necessary to include Civilian Security Cooperation interactions that build on the success of Mil-Mil exchanges. The goal is to energize the "whole of New York" approach, which would include other state government agencies, universities, colleges, and private sector businesses that could collaborate with organizations in the RSA. This approach would contribute the substantial capabilities our state has to offer. Proposed Civilian Security Cooperation exchanges could focus on Education, Agriculture, Economic/Industry Development, and Law Enforcement. Each of these areas would strengthen our partnership with the RSA and improve both their regional stability and quality of life.