

Once an Advisor: **How Security Force Assistance is Essential for the American Way of War and Deterrence in Strategic Competition**

by Michael Nilsen

Authoritarianism is on the global march, and we must join with like-minded allies and partners to revitalize democracy the world over ... America is back. Diplomacy is back. Alliances are back. We are looking irrevocably toward the future and all that we can achieve for the American people—together. Let's get to work.

— President Biden, Interim National Security Strategic Guidance

"America's military has no preordained right to victory on the battlefield."

— Secretary of Defense Mattis, National Defense Strategy 2018

The current liberal, U.S. led, rules-based world order is under siege as Russia invades Ukraine, and democratic nations awaken to a possible New Cold War.¹ Operating with a different paradigm for war, many state and non-state actors challenge the rules-based international system. COVID-19 and extremist organizations have stressed that system, causing many democracies and partners to focus internally. With these democracies focused on internal politics, states such as China and Russia exploit and undermine the international order to advance their position of power.² Despite COVID-19, non-state actors such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria also act as vectorless systems that destabilize nations around the world. Even though the U.S. Army will shift focus back to echelons above brigade multi-domain operations for large-scale combat operations this is not enough for effective deterrence against autocratic adversaries. Flowing below conventional and nuclear deterrence, these adversaries find asymmetric gray zone ways to counter the United States' hard power capability and credibility.³ To complicate matters, the U.S. faces mounting

Major Michael Nilsen is a U.S. Army infantry officer who has served in the XVIII Airborne Corps and the 2d Security Force Assistance Brigade. As a task force commander in Afghanistan, he directly supported Operation Resolute Support campaign objectives and strategic requirements. He holds a bachelor's degree from the U.S. Military Academy and a Master in Military Arts and Science from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Nilsen is level II Joint Qualified, a U.S. Army CGSC Master Tactician, and the current 2d Cavalry Regiment chief of plans.

debt and shrinking defense budgets for the next generation.

Historically, the American Way of War used a strategy of attrition known as containment against the Soviet Union with emphasis on gray zone activities to increase their relative position during strategic competition.⁴ With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the devastating conventional victory of Desert Storm, and a post 9/11 world, the U.S. and its allies have focused on other priorities, almost forgetting about the utility of the gray zone during the competition continuum. As will be demonstrated in this article, this becomes especially true for Phases 0 and 1. While the West has forgotten, adversaries like China and Russia learned from the American Way of War. Like chess or Go, their posturing will dramatically shape current and future potential conflicts in their favor, possibly negating Western conventional or nuclear deterrence. If the U.S. and its Allies do not also compete, our adversaries will dominate us before the first conventional military engagement. Given national bureaucratic limitations and a budget constrained environment, how does the U.S. Army deter state and non-state actors in the gray zone as part of an interagency effort to achieve a position of advantage?

Purpose

The purpose of the research in this article is threefold. First, the U.S. Army must clarify its role in Phases 0-1 as building partnership, posture, and position to prevent and shape conflict through integrated deterrence and campaigning. This requires the Army and larger Joint Force to shift its paradigm for Security Force Assistance (SFA), stability operations, and how a Theater Army can set an area of responsibility (AOR) besides through sustainment. Instead of viewing SFA as simply a way to support counter-insurgency operations in conflict, the Army must understand how to best employ SFA in the gray zone during Phases 0-1

for the competition continuum as demonstrated in the above figure. This requires a comprehensive approach using SFA/security cooperation to achieve national ends. With the U.S. and allies enabling a free and open world trade, the Army with partners and interagency can employ SFA proactively through campaigning to prevent and shape conflicts for the American Way of War and policy. To support this paradigm shift, this paper will also demonstrate how many of our peers, such as China, already operate in the gray zone to obtain a position of advantage. Like the *Byzantine Grand Strategy*, the result of choosing the right partners globally should be a *Force in Being*, or an already prepared, politically aligned coalition ready to counter threats throughout the competition continuum to support the U.S.-led international order.⁵

Historically, the American Way of War used a strategy of attrition known as containment against the Soviet Union with emphasis on gray zone activities...

Second, this article will demonstrate how SFA is an effective economy of force method for deterrence, American Way of War, and U.S. policy. Given the domestic political and economic environment, the Army must rely on more economy of forces means to achieve the same ways and ends. Ideally, the U.S. could field more Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCTs), but this is neither cost effective or a way to counter adversaries from exploiting the gray zone. By employing a whole-of-government approach and a smaller conventional footprint, the U.S. can go small and longer for a more holistic deterrence effect.

Finally, this article will demonstrate the limitations of SFA while outlining tailorable options for senior leaders. Like all elements of national power, SFA has limitations and is not

a ubiquitous solution to every problem. These limitations will also demonstrate how important choosing the right partner is for U.S. national interests and setting an AOR for a U.S. Theater Army. This research is valuable to the military enterprise because it outlines a tailorable, cost-effective grand strategy for the U.S. and its allies to prevent or shape current and future conflicts.

...this article focuses on ABCTs due to their more significant conventional deterrence effect compared to similar formations...

Scope/Proposed Methodology

This research judges the suitability, acceptability, feasibility, sustainability of synchronizing SFA means through Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs), National Guard Partnership Programs, and Special Operation Forces (SOF). Given a budget constraint environment and the multiple authorities for SFA, the Department of Defense (DoD) must take both whole-of-government and comprehensive approaches for employing SFA effectively for the right partner with other Allies and U.S. government agencies. Additionally, given a limited budget for the next decade, the sustainability criteria for setting a theater with a minimal footprint becomes critical. Finally, this article will assess the patterns between all findings to define the necessity and limitations of partnership for advancing the United States' position within an AOR.

This article applies a research strategy focused on qualitative case study analysis of SFA historical examples from SFABs, National Guard Partnership Programs, and SOF and its impacts on partner capacity and posturing within a region to allow the U.S. an advantageous position compared to adversaries. It uses a case study qualitative analysis to examine the cost-benefit analysis for using SFA as a method for deterrence

instead of historical means of U.S. Army hard power such as ABCTs and to understand how SFA affects a host nation's capability for national power through a diplomacy, information, military, and economic (DIME) model.

For conventional U.S. Army hard power forces, this article focuses on ABCTs due to their more significant conventional deterrence effect compared to similar formations such as Airborne Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCTs). Additionally, with the loss of tanks in the Marine Corps, ABCTs are the most distinct formations that the U.S. Army can bring to the joint fight. Finally, ABCTs are the costliest land maneuver formation to maintain and will bring the most economic and logistical strain on the U.S. Army.

ANALYSIS

Results and Overview

In the following sections of this article the case study methodology is analyzed using the instruments of national power as variables while a country received U.S. SFA/security cooperation. Organized into seven parts, this analysis includes four cases from different time periods and combatant commands: South Korea (1950-2020), Colombia (1980-2020), Lebanon (2007-2020), and Somalia (1990-2020).

Since there is no recognized quantitative measurement for DIME, these case studies will use various qualitative and quantitative data points to analyze trends to ascertain pertinent trends and themes. The results, listed on a descending DIME scale were: South Korea had an exponential DIME increase, Colombia and Lebanon had moderate to strong increases, and Somalia had a strong decrease.

Four major trends became apparent in the analysis: choosing the right partner, deterrence, unity of command, and setting the theater with a smaller footprint. Regardless of case study, the analysis reinforces themes found in background research that choosing the right partner is critical

and can be the most important factor for SFA. Conversely, SFA is not a magic pill and picking the wrong partner can be disastrous.⁶

INDOPACOM: South Korea (1950-2020)

Regarding SFA, South Korea is an improbable outlier, but outliers can change the world. Transformed from a corrupt and ineffective military to one of the best militaries in the world, South Korea experienced an exponential increase in DIME over 70 years. This could be for various reasons such as having the best OE for unity of effort, actively facing existential threats. Another possible reason for such an exponential increase is the consistent and massive U.S. commitment to South Korea compared to the other case studies.⁷ With over 70 years of U.S. commitment, South Korea has exponentially benefited from U.S. support, leading multiple partners to support the country.⁸

For South Korea's diplomatic and information instruments, it experienced strong growth from 1950 to 2021. At the beginning of the Korean War, South Korea was a corrupt government with little diplomatic and information capability. Bifurcated at the 38th parallel between the Communist North and the Democratic South, Korea had experienced several decades under the rule of the Japanese. With the division between north and south, South Korea's identity was relatively new, and the country had numerous internal problems when North Korea invaded in the summer of 1950. Though the U.S. backed South Korea, it had few allies in the region, very little diplomatic standing in the world community, and was a fragile and undeveloped democracy.⁹

Within 70 years, South Korea transformed into one of the top soft powers in the world. Today, there are numerous soft power rankings that consistently include South Korea in the top twenty countries. This includes the Portland Soft Power thirty, the Lowey Diplomacy, and the Brand Finance World Soft Power Indexes.

Additionally, South Korea continues to increase soft power. For instance, South Korea decreased its ranking from twenty-two to nineteen within the last four years for the Soft Power 30. Much of South Korea's current increase in soft power resulted from national policies to support the United States' partnerships around the world to deter adversaries. Over time, many South Korea's leaders attribute their exponential increase due to the massive U.S. whole-of-government commitment. This increase resulted in many consistently calling South Korea the "Miracle on the Han River" due to its rapid economic growth after the Korean War.¹⁰

With over 70 years of U.S. commitment, South Korea has exponentially benefited from U.S. support...

Despite its small size and being on a peninsula, South Korea has expanded its diplomatic network, provides its own SFA in support of U.N. mandates for fragile countries, and possesses a desired culture. Before the Korean War, South Korea had little to no diplomatic relations besides with the U.S. Today, South Korea has diplomatic relations with over 180 countries.¹¹ The country transformed from a corrupt, undeveloped country to one that regularly sends its military on diplomatic missions to assist with U.N. stability operations around this world. Poignantly, South Korean military forces regularly support U.N. SFA/security cooperation missions with Italy and other European Advisory units to train the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), one of the other case studies for this paper. As for its culture and information, the world constantly desires it. With several very successful pop culture events like the award-winning *Parasite*, *Train to Busan*, *Old Boy*, and *Gangnam Style* choreography, South Korea is a cultural powerhouse that has great

diplomatic and informational influence beyond its small, limited peninsula shores.¹²

Militarily, South Korea transformed from a weak, underdeveloped 100,000 Soldier strong military to one of the top militaries during the war. During the Korean War, the UNC established the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) with the mission of executing SFA to professionalize the Republic of Korea (ROK) Armed Forces. The KMAG was extremely successful as they trained over half a million South Koreans and increased the size of the ROK Army from 100,000 to over 200,000 while engaging with adversaries. Due to the KMAG's efforts, ROK forces bore the preponderance of fighting against communist forces by the end of the war, holding gains from 38th Parallel. Despite never having more than 2,000 advisors, the KMAG owed its success to making the ROK forces the best version of themselves and independent, not a mirror image of the U.S.¹³

Despite its small size and relatively obscure beginning, South Korea has transformed into an economic monster...

SFA for South Korea continued for the next 70 years with a unified command between the U.S. and ROK. With the ceasefire between North and South Korea, the KMAG and other United Nations Command (UNC) elements dissolved into the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), a unified command between U.S. and ROK forces. To sustain unity of command and effort, the UNC and deputy commanders are U.S. and ROK leaders that have similar roles in both the UNC and USFK. For instance, the UNC and USFK commander is the same person. Since 1957, the USFK has supported the UNC through SFA with ROK Forces.¹⁴ This included not only deterring North Korean and Chinese conventional aggression to the North, but also

communist insurgencies within the country.¹⁵ It appears that SFA and security cooperation efforts had tremendous effect as the South Korea military size and spending grew to over half a million people and \$40 billion dollars.¹⁶ Through seventy years of training, advising, and assisting, ROK forces have become one of the most powerful militaries in the world and has taken the lead on most USFK and UNC security efforts on the peninsula.

South Korea has become an economic powerhouse. Despite being an underdeveloped country in 1950, South Korea became the “Miracle on the Han River” as it became a developed country with a strong economy within a decade after the Korean War.¹⁷ This trend continued through the next 60 years with South Korea. There are some decades in which South Korea had double-digit GDP growth for almost the entire decade.¹⁸ Despite its small size and relatively obscure beginning, South Korea has transformed into an economic monster with great economic influence in the INDOPACOM AOR.¹⁹

South Korea is an outlier case study, but such outliers can transform the host nation and the world. It is a case study example that demonstrates how SFA with other security cooperation activities can dramatically transform a host nation, resulting in the betterment of the nation and larger region. Even though a repeat of South Korea is improbable, it is not impossible. It will probably require several conditions like the host nation's Clausewitzian trinity being politically aligned with U.S. interests and facing both internal and external existential threats.

SOUTHCOM: Colombia (1980-2020)

Though not as strong as South Korea, Colombia had positive trends across DIME. It is also a case study that involved a country that faced its greatest challenges from internal non-state adversaries. Despite numerous non-state entities such as the Revolutionary Armed

Forces of Colombia (FARC) and Pablo Escobar causing instability within the region, Colombia transformed into a relatively stable, regional power. Through security cooperation, the U.S. helped with this transformation as the DOS took lead. It employed various U.S. agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and the DoD to achieve U.S. and Colombian shared political ends. Under the authority of the U.S. Ambassador, the DOS exercised an effective unity of effort to achieve U.S. objectives.

U.S. SFA efforts within Colombia faced many challenges such as the most powerful criminal in human history, Pablo Escobar, the drug trade that continued to degrade Colombia's legitimacy even after Escobar's death, and the FARC insurgency that attempted to overthrow the legitimate Colombian government.²⁰ Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Colombia was a place where a drug king in jail was more powerful than the Colombian President.²¹ Due to consistent U.S. commitment to the country over 40 years, Colombia has become a regional power.

Colombia's diplomatic and informational national power has seen a relatively modest increase, but it faced many challenges to get there. Due to its instability in the last quarter of the 20th Century, Colombia has been more focused on domestic politics than increasing its international diplomatic power. Aligning itself with the U.S. during the Cold War, Colombia has received decades of commitment from the U.S. and support from international organizations such as the UN and Organization of American States (OAS). Despite this support, Colombia essentially became a narco-democracy in the 1980s and 90s. During this time, Colombia was on the verge of becoming a failed state run by drug cartels such as the Medellin and Cali Cartels.²² Becoming the major suppliers of cocaine throughout the world, these cartels increased instability within the region and even

within the U.S., resulting in the number of deaths due to cocaine increasing sixfold over 30 years.²³

Escobar and the Drug Cartels were not the only non-state adversary that Colombia had to overcome to increase its diplomatic and informational power. During the 20th Century, the FARC executed an insurgency within Colombia, dramatically decreasing the Colombian government's instruments of national power and ability to govern its borders. With mostly civilians caught in the crossfire, over 220,000 people died in the decade-long conflict between the FARC and the Colombian government. Additionally, over 10,000 deaths or injuries occurred due to FARC IEDs and more than 17% of the Colombian population has officially registered as a victim because of Colombian Government and FARC engagements. With all this instability within the country and region from non-state adversaries, Colombia was very weak diplomatically and informationally, tarnishing its international standing.²⁴

U.S. SFA efforts within Colombia faced many challenges such as the most powerful criminal in human history, Pablo Escobar...

With 40 years of U.S. SFA and security cooperation commitment with various government agencies achieving unity of effort under the U.S. Ambassador, Colombia increased its diplomatic and informational power. As Colombia used to be a "narco democracy" run by the drug cartel while also fighting a civil war with the FARC, the country now enjoys relative peace and stability.²⁵ This internal stability allows it to increase its diplomatic and informational capabilities, becoming a regional power.²⁶ For instance, Colombia's soft power consistently has increased allowing it to be in the top 60 countries for soft power within the world. Regionally, it has become one of the top four

soft power states while also becoming one of the top Brand Finance Tier 2 Soft Power countries.²⁷ While doing all this, it has decreased the drug trade, almost cutting it in half and increased the appeal of Colombia's culture.²⁸ Another powerful example is Disney setting its new movie, *Encanto*, in Colombia as a sign more people embrace Colombian culture internationally and recognize Colombia's soft power progress.²⁹ This becomes even more evident as the movie's song *We Don't Talk about Bruno* has become the #1 most popular Disney song ever, influencing a global generation of children.³⁰

Somalia is a case study of a bad partner in which almost all aspects of its Clausewitzian trinity do not align with U.S. interests.

Colombia saw a strong increase in military power. Within 40 years, the military went from a relatively ineffective and corrupt organization to a very professional force.³¹ This is reflective of how the Colombia military has grown from 66,000 to over 450,000 within a 20 period while exponentially increasing its military spending from \$1 to over \$10 billion.³² With both monetary, training, and advising support through SFA, numerous U.S. agencies applied a whole-of-government approach that enabled the Colombian security forces to defeat the FARC insurgency, allowing the Colombian government to relatively reintegrate them back into society.³³ Additionally, the Colombia security forces became more effective against the drug trade, cutting the amount of cocaine production in half for almost a decade.³⁴ These actions not only brought stability and security to Colombia but to the larger Latin American region.³⁵

Colombia also saw a dramatic increase in its economic capability. Potentially due to the increased stability within the region, Colombia saw its GDP increase from \$33.4 billion to over

\$270 billion dollars due to consistent almost double-digit growth. Its GDP per capita also increased exponentially from approximately \$1,000 to over \$8,000 within the same time period, resulting in Colombia developing a middle class within the country.³⁶

**EUROCOM/AFRICOM:
Somalia (1990-2020)**

Somalia is a case study of a bad partner in which almost all aspects of its Clausewitzian trinity do not align with U.S. interests. Even though it did not have very strong diplomatic and informational power before 1990, Somalia has lost almost all its soft power influence due to its ongoing civil war. Before Somalia became a battleground between various tribes, VEOs, and the Somalian government, it was an autocrat that ruled with absolute control. With the end of the Cold War, Somalia lost a great deal of SFA/security cooperation from the Soviet Union, causing conditions for the central leadership to lose power with the various groups. This resulted in a humanitarian crisis of over 100,000 people persisting, forcing the U.S. to be involved. The U.S. shifted to a direct action (DA) approach with TF Ranger to support United Nations Missions in Somalia (UNSOM I and II). With the disastrous results of the Black Hawk Down, the U.S. has continued to oscillate between a security cooperation and DA approach with the attempt to contain the country's instability from completely spilling over in the region, which is in an essential global economic choke point.³⁷

Somalia has even less diplomatic or informational power today than what little it had in 1990. Compared to the other case studies, at least one of the many soft power indexes will rank each of them. The opposite appears true with Somalia as it is absent from all searchable soft power indexes.³⁸ Additionally, Somalia consistently ranks at the bottom of the USAID SFI, being in the top five most unstable countries in the world for more than a decade.³⁹ As

discussed with the Lebanon and Columbia case studies, there appears to demonstrate a strong relationship between stability and diplomatic and informational power. Since it has been in a state of civil war for almost two decades, Somalia lacks the institutional capacity to improve its soft power.⁴⁰

In a similar manner to soft power, Somalia experienced a strong decrease in military power. Before its Civil War, Somalia had an average military that could control its borders.⁴¹ Currently, it ranks well below average at 139 of 142 countries in the world according to the Global Firepower Index. It also continues to decrease based on Somalia's instability. Additionally, the Somali military cannot control its own borders. There are at least four other factions that claim sovereignty in Somalia besides the national government, various tribes, and VEOs within the region.⁴² These conditions reflect Somalia's military trends over twenty years. For instance, Somalia's 225,000 military dramatically decreased to approximately 20,000 and its military spending from 1990 to 2013 was completely dependent on foreign assistance.⁴³

Somalia's increase in economic power is an anomaly. Despite an ongoing civil war for almost two decades, Somalia's economy more than tripled from \$1 billion to almost \$5 billion.⁴⁴ There is little to nothing written about Somalia's economic growth despite numerous issues. Despite the hesitation to attribute Somalia's growth to a rising tide raises all boats argument, this paper cannot ascertain any other alternative to explain such an economic increase. This key location, the increase in globalization, and the capitalism effect on the world probably increased Somalia's GDP despite its instability.

Summary

Based on case studies, it appears there is a strong relationship between SFA, stability, and a host nation's national power. The most critical aspect of this relationship appears to be whether

the U.S. has chosen the right partner. This makes sense since SFA is about relationships and having the right partner is critical to maximize the effects of SFA for national power. DIME changes appear to be proportional to how good of a partner the host nation is in each case study. Again, a good partner appears to be one in which its Clausewitzian trinity aligns with U.S. interests and the rules-based international order's democratic values. As seen with Lebanon, Columbia, and South Korea, this host nation trinity can become more aligned with those interests and values. The lack of attraction in Somalia is probably one of the reasons why SFA had limited effect.

...SFA is about relationships and having the right partner is critical to maximize the effects of SFA for national power.

Partnership leads to posture and a position of advantage for both the U.S. and the host nation. With the SFA supported by security cooperation helping to increase a host nation's stability and DIME, the host nation can become more of a regional or international power that supports the rules-based international order. Colombia is the best example which was fraught with numerous non-state adversaries. With the U.S. SFA, Colombia defeated most of them and helped increase democratic influence within the region. With this increase in influence, the U.S. and the rules-based international order increased its posture and position through partnership with minimal cost. SFA empowers a host nation's whole-of-government, not just security forces. In South Korea and Colombia, the SFA units had unity of command under different U.S. agencies, but also empowered the larger governmental institutions that supported those security forces. Diplomatically, informationally, and economically, the U.S. can deter both state and non-state adversaries

with supply chains connected to the Build Back Better Program (B3W). Who the U.S. partners with sends a message to the world about the rules-based international order's democratic values. Additionally, many nations do not have the same bureaucratic division between political and military entities like the U.S., leading to relationship building between SFA units and a host nation military to have local political effects as well. For instance, numerous Colombia and South Korean political leaders received U.S. SFA during their military service. These politicians and their supporters appear to act as a political counterweight to deter numerous state and non-state actors in the gray zone that attempt to coerce host nations to their agenda.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"The purpose of war is to make a better peace."

— Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart

It will not be easy, there will be costs... the darkness that drives autocracy is ultimately no match for the flame of liberty that lights the souls of free people everywhere.

***— President Biden, 2022
Warsaw Speech on Russia
Ukraine Conflict***

The American Way of War is still suitable but lost some of its efficacy because our adversaries have adapted to it. In response to the tremendous U.S. conventional and nuclear deterrence such as Desert Storm, state and non-state adversaries target host nations Will to Fight in the gray zone during competition to achieve advantageous positions that will shape future crises and conflicts. With the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the 31st Anniversary of Desert Storm ground campaign, the U.S. and rules-based international order awakened to a possible New Cold War between democracy and autocracy.⁴⁵ Given how

autocratic state and non-state adversaries employ a strategy of flow to undermine the rules-based international order, the U.S. must empower its current and potential allies while operating in a budget constraint environment. By using SFA and security cooperation as a strategy of flow to collision through Kilcullen's proposed Go Byzantine Strategy, the U.S. can empower a democratically aligned web of nations while deterring autocratic adversaries in terms of nuclear, conventional, and gray zone credibility and capability.⁴⁶ SFA and security cooperation will be essential to the American Way of War and strategic competition as partnership can lead to improved posture and position, but first the U.S. must choose the right partner. Using a case study methodology, it analyzed how SFA is essential to both deterrence but also how it applies to the American Way of War. First, the Western and Eastern ways of war are strategies of flow and collision respectively. Second, that there are national and international legal definitions of war that limit it to just conflict on the conflict continuum, but most actors act as if war is the entire continuum across DIME.

Conclusions

Security Force Assistance and Deterrence, Partnership, and Posture

There are four conclusions that align with the above research questions. The first and most critical conclusion is that choosing the right partner is essential for maximizing SFA effects. As described in Chapter 4, this paper observed a DIME increase for three of the four case studies with one being an exponential increase. Additionally, if it was not for the disastrous 2020 Beirut Port Explosion, all three of those case studies would have seen a strong or exponential increase in DIME. This demonstrates the first finding that choosing the right partner is critical for SFA and security cooperation. As depicted by Figure 20, the right partner is an actor who's

Clausewitzian trinity of society, government, and military are willing to embrace democratic values while also aligning with U.S. interests. Though an outlier, South Korea is an example of an outlier that can affect the world. With its Clausewitzian trinity aligning with U.S. interests while receiving over 70 years of security cooperation, South Korea transformed from an undeveloped country to an international powerhouse that influences the entire global. Though this paper originally assessed another outlier as improbable, Ukraine has become one as it represents democracy in the current conflict.

By picking the right partner, it appears the U.S. increases that partner's credibility and capability across the DIME spectrum. This also furthered the U.S.-led international order's position, allowing it to achieve a position of advantage through the DIME spectrum or denying adversaries one. As our adversaries employ a strategy of flow to degrade an actor's Will to Fight during competition, SFA can build capability and credibility essential for deterrence, American Way of War, and policy.

Second, Security force assistance and cooperation are not magic bullets. Though SFA and security cooperation are low cost compared to Regionally Aligned Forces deployments, CSGs, and other means, it does not preclude it from disastrous results. Picking a poor partner such as Somalia after the civil war began can result in a continuous sunk cost for the U.S. government and its allies. Despite almost 20 years of oscillating strategy for Somalia, the U.S. continues to struggle with the conflict. Somalia saw a dramatic decrease in DIME probably because it is not a good partner. At best, the U.S. and its allies have adopted a strategy of containment to prevent the Somali Civil War from destabilizing the region.

Setting a Theater with a Smaller Footprint

For the fourth conclusion, there is strong quantitative evidence that SFA enables a theater

army to set a theater by increasing host nation capability and credibility to either prevent conflict or shape an operational environment that is fortuitous for the American Way of War. As with picking the right partner in the right location being the most critical aspect of SFA, the U.S. can improve its posture within a region to achieve or maintain a decisive position with a small footprint. Regardless of the DIME result, all case studies eventually were able to employ a smaller footprint because of SFA units. This was especially true for ~~Lebanon and~~ Colombia. In those case studies, the U.S. only employed a small force over decades through numerous government agencies to improve the host nation. SFA units in these case studies allowed the U.S. increased access within the region that has and can continue to influence the respective

By picking the right partner, it appears the U.S. increases that partner's credibility and capability across the DIME spectrum.

COCOM's theater posture plans. Additionally, these small forces empowered their respective case studies to become more independent and act as a counterweight to adversarial influences within their respective regions. In a similar manner, Colombian security forces helped transform it from a narco democracy to defeating the FARC and reducing the cocaine trade. With the right partners, the U.S. can employ a small low-cost effective comprehensive approach to prevent conflicts or shape operational environments.

Summary

Our adversaries have adapted to the American Way of War, reducing its suitability in the 21st Century. Though SFA is not a magic bullet to everything, a proactive approach has the

potential to increase credibility and capability for current and potential democratic allies. As with every relationship, the U.S. must pick the right partner because our partners send a clear message to potential allies and adversaries. It also appears to help a Theater Army achieve an information advantage within the host nation and larger region as well. To counter this rise in authoritarianism and its coercive strategies, the U.S. can apply a strategy of flow to collision, or *Go Byzantine Strategy*, to augment the current U.S. DIME attritional strategy. In the past, the President signed a combined DOS and DOD security cooperation strategy. Due to security cooperation's importance for deterrence and American Way of War, perhaps it is time for that again. Through a comprehensive approach, the U.S. and its allies can employ SFA and security cooperation to build Will to Fight and capability that will prevent and shape conflicts to become fortuitous for the American Way of War. **IAJ**

Notes

- 1 White House, Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, March 2021, 6, 9-10; Aamer Madhani and Josh Boak, "7 Key Takeaways from Biden's 2022 State of the Union Speech," PBS (Public Broadcasting Service, March 2, 2022), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/7-key-takeaways-from-bidens-2022-state-of-the-union-speech>.
- 2 United States Congress, "Renewed Great Power Competition: Implications for Defense ..." Congressional Research Service., December 2, 2021. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R43838.pdf>; Liang, Qiao, and Wang Xiangsui. *Unrestricted Warfare*. Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House Arts, 1999.141-146; David Kilcullen. In *Dragons and the Snakes: How the Rest Learned to Fight the West*. S.I.: OXFORD UNIV PRESS U.S., 2022. 10-20; Brian Steed, "Narrative in Culture, Center of Gravity, and the Golden Azimuth." *Great Power Competition: The Changing Landscape of Global Politics*. US Army Command and General Staff College Press US Army Combined Arms Center. <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/great-power-competition-the-changing-landscape-of-global-geopolitics.pdf>; Robert M. Gates. "Helping Others Defend Themselves: The Future of U.S. Security Assistance." *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2010). <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/25680910>.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid. As discussed in the CRS report, the Biden administration replaced great power competition with strategic competition.
- 5 MAJ James Dawdy and I came up with the term Force in Being to describe the web of partners that would work together to deter adversaries. Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahon's concept, a fleet in being, in his book *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783* inspired the concept; David Kilcullen, 10-20, 67, 237-240.
- 6 "2022 Military Strength Ranking," Global Firepower - World Military Strength, accessed February 22, 2022, <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>.
- 7 "U.S. Security Cooperation with Korea - United States Department of State," U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, January 14, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-korea/>; "2022 South Korea Military Strength." Global Firepower - World Military Strength. Accessed February 22, 2022. https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=south-korea; "Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2020 - Brandirectory." Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://brandirectory.com/globalsoftpower/download/brand-finance-global-soft-power-index-2020.pdf>.

- 8 “U.S. Security Cooperation with Korea - United States Department of State,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, January 14, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-korea/>; “South Korea Military Size 1985-2022,” MacroTrends, accessed February 22, 2022, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KOR/south-korea/military-army-size>; Sawyer, Robert K., and Walter G. Hermes. *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War*. Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2005.
- 9 Ibid.; “International Contributions.” United Nations Command & Organization & Contributors. <https://www.unc.mil/Organization/Contributors/>.
- 10 “Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2020 - Brandirectory.” Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://brandirectory.com/globalsoftpower/download/brand-finance-global-soft-power-index-2020.pdf>.
- 11 “Global Diplomacy Index,” <https://globaldiplomacyindex.lowyinstitute.org>, accessed February 25, 2022, <https://globaldiplomacyindex.lowyinstitute.org/#>.
- 12 “‘Gangnam’ Mania,” *The Wall Street Journal* (Dow Jones & Company, September 20, 2012), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10000872396390444620104578008230854641420>; “South Korea.” Soft Power. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://softpower30.com/country/south-korea/>; “Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2020 - Brandirectory.” Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://brandirectory.com/globalsoftpower/download/brand-finance-global-soft-power-index-2020.pdf>.
- 13 “U.S. Security Cooperation with Korea - United States Department of State,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, January 14, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-korea/>; Jeffrey Burroughs, 2010. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance in Countering Violent Extremist Organizations in Failed and Potentially Failing States.” Master of Military Arts and Science, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS; Sawyer, Robert K., and Walter G. Hermes. *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War*. Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2005.
- 14 Ibid.; Combined Forces Command. USFK Combined Forces Command. (n.d.). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.usfk.mil/About/Combined-Forces-Command/>; International contributions. United Nations Command & Organization & Contributors. (n.d.). <https://www.unc.mil/Organization/Contributors/>.
- 15 Ibid.; Burroughs. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance”.
- 16 “South Korea Military Spending/Defense Budget 1960-2022,” MacroTrends, accessed February 22, 2022, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KOR/south-korea/military-spending-defense-budget>.
- 17 “South Korea GDP 1960-2022,” MacroTrends, accessed February 22, 2022, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KOR/south-korea/gdp-gross-domestic-product>; Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS). (n.d.). Korea.net. The Korean Economy – the Miracle on the Hangang River : Korea.net : The official website of the Republic of Korea. Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.korea.net/AboutKorea/Economy/The-Miracle-on-The-Hangang>.
- 18 Ibid.; “South Korea Economic Growth 1960-2022,” MacroTrends, accessed February 22, 2022, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/KOR/south-korea/economic-growth-rate>.
- 19 Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS). (n.d.). Korea.net. The Korean Economy – the Miracle on the Hangang River : Korea.net : The official website of the Republic of Korea. Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.korea.net/AboutKorea/Economy/The-Miracle-on-The-Hangang>.
- 20 June S. Beittel, “Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations” (Congressional Research Service, December 16, 2021), <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R43813.pdf>; “U.S. Relations with Colombia - United

- States Department of State,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, July 19, 2021), [https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-colombia/#:~:text=Law%20Enforcement%20and%20Security%20Cooperation,the%20citizens%20of%20both%20countries;“Pablo Escobar,” Encyclopædia Britannica](https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-colombia/#:~:text=Law%20Enforcement%20and%20Security%20Cooperation,the%20citizens%20of%20both%20countries;“Pablo%20Escobar,”%20Encyclop%C3%A9dia%20Britannica) (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed March 1, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Pablo-Escobar>.
- 21 Steven Gutkin, “DEA Agent Attacks Colombia as ‘Narco-Democracy’,” The Washington Post (WP Company, October 1, 1994), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/10/01/dea-agent-attacks-colombia-as-narco-democracy/410189e6-0878-48b9-925a-127ce47148f1/>.
- 22 Beittel, “Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations”.
- 23 “Products - Data Briefs - Number 81 - December 2011,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 6, 2015), <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db81.htm>.
- 24 June S. Beittel, “Colombia: Background and U.S. Relations”.
- 25 Burroughs. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance”, 60-70.
- 26 Burroughs. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance”, 58-60.
- 27 “Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2021 - Brandirectory.” Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://brandirectory.com/globalsoftpower/download/brand-finance-global-soft-power-index-2020.pdf>.
- 28 “The Indigenous Approach: 1st SFC(A) and SFAC on Apple Podcasts.” The Indigenous Approach, February 11, 2021. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/1st-sfc-a-and-sfac/id1534621849?i=1000508753675>; Felix Richter, “Infographic: The Globe’s Top Cocaine Producers,” Statista Infographics, September 7, 2016, <https://www.statista.com/chart/5749/the-globes-top-cocaine-producers/>.
- 29 José María Luna, “Disney’s Encanto Isn’t Just about Representation - It’s an Act of Defiance,” Polygon (Polygon, December 27, 2021), <https://www.polygon.com/22851932/encanto-disney-latine-colombia-in-movies>.
- 30 Marisa Dellatto, “‘We Don’t Talk about Bruno’ Hits No. 1-Only the 2nd Song from Disney Animated Film to Hit The Top Spot,” Forbes (Forbes Magazine, February 1, 2022), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/marisadellatto/2022/01/31/we-dont-talk-about-bruno-hits-no-1-only-the-2nd-disney-song-to-hit-the-top-spot/?sh=aa3aaa268bfc>.
- 31 “The Indigenous Approach: 1st SFC(A) and SFAC on Apple Podcasts.” The Indigenous Approach, February 11, 2021. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/1st-sfc-a-and-sfac/id1534621849?i=1000508753675>.
- 32 Burroughs. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance”, 60-70.
- 33 Burroughs. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance”, 58-60.
- 34 Ibid.; Felix Richter, “Infographic: The Globe’s Top Cocaine Producers,” Statista Infographics, September 7, 2016, <https://www.statista.com/chart/5749/the-globes-top-cocaine-producers/>.
- 35 “U.S. Relations with Colombia - United States Department of State,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, July 19, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-colombia/#:~:text=Law%20>

Enforcement%20and%20Security%20Cooperation.the%20citizens%20of%20both%20countries; Jeffrey Burroughs, 2010. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance in Countering Violent Extremist Organizations in Failed and Potentially Failing States.” Master of Military Arts and Science, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 60-70.

36 “Colombia GDP 1960-2022,” MacroTrends. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/COL/colombia/gdp-gross-domestic-product>; “Colombia GDP Growth Rate 1961-2022,” MacroTrends. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/COL/colombia/gdp-growth-rate>.

37 Burroughs. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance”, 10-21.

38 “Brand Values, Profiles & Global Rankings | Brandirectory.” Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://brandirectory.com/globalsoftpower/download/brand-finance-global-soft-power-index-2021.pdf>;

39 J. J. Messner, “Fragile States Index 2014: Somalia Displaced as Most-Fragile State,” Fragile States Index 2014: Somalia Displaced as Most-Fragile State | The Fund for Peace, accessed February 22, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150504035658/http://library.fundforpeace.org/fsi14-overview>.

40 Burroughs. “The Efficacy of Security Force Assistance”, 51-61; Knowles, Emily, and Jahara Matisek. “Western Security Force Assistance in Weak States.” The RU.S.I Journal 164, no. 3 (2019): 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2019.1643258>, 11-12.

41 Ibid.

42 Knowles, Emily, and Jahara Matisek. “Western Security Force Assistance in Weak States.” The RU.S.I Journal 164, no. 3 (2019): 10–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2019.1643258>. 11-12; “2022 Military Strength Ranking.” Global Firepower - World Military Strength. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>.

43 “Somalia Military Size 1985-2022.” MacroTrends. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/SOM/somalia/military-army-size>; “Somalia Military Spending/Defense Budget 1961-2022.” MacroTrends. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/SOM/somalia/military-spending-defense-budget>; “U.S. Relations with Somalia - United States Department of State,” U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State, April 15, 2021), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>.

44 “Somalia GDP 1960-2022,” MacroTrends. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/SOM/somalia/gdp-gross-domestic-product>; “Somalia GDP Growth Rate 1961-2022,” MacroTrends. Accessed February 22, 2022. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/SOM/somalia/gdp-growth-rate>.

45 This paper uses the term democracy to include all democratic constitutional republics and similar forms of government.

46 David Kilcullen. In *Dragons and the Snakes: How the Rest Learned to Fight the West*. S.I.: OXFORD UNIV PRESS U.S., 2022. 200-230. Kilcullen proposes in his book that the rules-based international order should adopt a Byzantine Grand Strategy. This paper proposed to call it a Go Byzantine Strategy because it follows Kilcullen’s proposal and it is a play on the game Go.

Contributors Wanted!

The Simons Center is looking for articles that involve contemporary interagency issues at both the conceptual and the application level.

The *InterAgency Journal* is a refereed national security studies journal providing a forum to inform a broad audience on matters pertaining to tactical and operational issues of cooperation, collaboration, and/or coordination among and between various governmental departments, agencies, and offices. Each issue contains a number of articles covering a variety of topics, including national security, counterterrorism, stabilization and reconstruction operations, and disaster preparation and response.

The *InterAgency Journal* has worldwide circulation and has received praise from various military, government, and non-government institutions, including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.



We're also looking for book reviews!

**Submit a book review or suggest a book to review to
editor@TheSimonsCenter.org.**



THE SIMONS CENTER

**Contact the Simons Center
for Ethical Leadership and Interagency Cooperation**

www.TheSimonsCenter.org • editor@TheSimonsCenter.org
www.facebook.com/TheSimonsCenter

Location: 655 Biddle Blvd., Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027

**Mailing Address: CGSC Foundation, 100 Stimson Ave., Suite 1149, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027
913-651-0624 - office • 913-651-4519 - fax**



The Simons Center is a major program of the CGSC Foundation, Inc.

The ***InterAgency Journal (IAJ)*** is published by the Command and General Staff College Foundation Press for the Simons Center for Ethical Leadership and Interagency Cooperation. The *InterAgency Journal* is a national security studies journal providing a forum for professional discussion and the exchange of information and ideas on matters pertaining to operational and tactical issues of interagency cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

The articles published in the *IAJ* represent the opinions of the authors and do not reflect the official views of any United States government agency, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, the Command and General Staff College Foundation, the Simons Center, or any other non-government, private, public or international organization.

Contributions:

The Simons Center encourages the submission of original articles based on research and/or which stem from lessons learned via personal experiences.

Copyright:

Publications released by the Simons Center are copyrighted. Please contact the Simons Center for use of its materials. *InterAgency Journal* should be acknowledged whenever material is quoted from or based on its content.

Copyright Transfer Agreement:

By virtue of submitting a manuscript, the author agrees to transfer to the Simons Center for the Study of Interagency Cooperation full ownership of all rights, titles, and interests, including the copyright in and to the work submitted.

Acceptance of this agreement further signifies the author represents and warrants that he/she is the sole author and sole proprietor of all rights in and to any portion of the work; that the work is original and not in the public domain; that it has not been previously published; that it does not violate or infringe on any personal or property rights of others; that it contains nothing libelous or contrary to law; and that he/she has full power to enter into this agreement.

For additional information visit the Simons Center website at

www.TheSimonsCenter.org/publications



The Simons Center
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027
ph: 913-651-0624
www.TheSimonsCenter.org
facebook.com/TheSimonsCenter



CGSC Foundation, Inc.
100 Stimson Avenue, Suite 1149
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027
ph: 913-651-0624
www.cgscfoundation.org
facebook.com/CGSCFoundation
twitter.com/CGSCFoundation
[LinkedIn.com >>CGSC Foundation, Inc.](https://LinkedIn.com/CGSCFoundation)

