



State Partnership Program (SPP) -Increased Funding and Predictability

Call to Action Congress is urged to provide **full funding through Army and Air Force budgets** for the State Partnership Program (SPP) to address the growing number of partnerships and to **establish predictable funding mechanisms** that ensure the program's long-term effectiveness and stability. **Establish proportional funding increases** as new partner nations join the program.

Issue Overview Since its inception 30 years ago, the State Partnership Program has proven invaluable in fostering military and civilian relationships worldwide. **SPP now supports 107 partner nations.** Eight new partnerships are projected for 2025. However, funding has not kept pace with this growth, jeopardizing the program's ability to meet its mission requirements.

Key Concerns

- **Funding Disparities:** SPP continues to rely on Congressional Marks for new partner nation emerging requirements. Since 2022, SPP has grown from 95 partner nations to 107 in 2024. During this three-year period, funding levels remained relatively stagnant and even decreased during the greatest growth period in 2024. (see chart on back page)
- **Unpredictable Funding:** Without a fully committed SPP budget, the program continually relies on Congressional funding additions. During years of Continuing resolutions, SPP engagements are severely impacted without a predictable funding. Disruptions in funding cause execution rates to diminish due to canceled events exercises in the first and second quarter.

Proposed Actions

- **Proportional Funding Increases:** Increase SPP funding proportionally to support the number of growing partnerships ensuring sufficient resources for effective engagement and support.
- **Predictable Funding Mechanisms:** Transition from reliance on continuing resolutions to two-year appropriations, allowing for consistent planning and program execution.

Recommended Bill Language

- **Program Full Funding:**
"The Secretary of Defense shall program full funding of the State Partnership Program through Army and Air Force budgets to reflect the number of established partnerships, ensuring resources meet operational and engagement requirements."
- **Predictable Appropriations:**
"Congress directs the Department of Defense to provide two-year funding for the State Partnership Program to ensure stability and enhance planning capabilities."

Benefits of Reform

- **Stronger Global Relationships:** Adequate funding ensures SPP can continue building meaningful partnerships that enhance security cooperation and readiness.
- **Improved Resource Allocation:** Programmed, predictable, and proportional funding allows states to plan and execute engagements effectively, maximizing program impact.
- **Support for National Defense Strategy:** SPP plays a key role in strengthening alliances and partnerships, a cornerstone of the National Defense Strategy.

Background

- Engagements were reduced/canceled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions in 2021
- In the last five years, engagements have dramatically increased in number at the request of combatant commanders and partner nations.
- The Minnesota National Guard gained a second partner nation (Norway) in 2023 with no increased funding.
- Travel expenses (flights/hotels) and service member pay has increased in the last five years.

Fiscal Year	# SPP Partner Nations	NGB Programed Budget (\$M)	NGB Congressional Add (\$M)	Total Budget (\$M)	Executed/Obligation %
2021	93	19.8	24.2	44	60%
2022	95	20	19.1	39.1	94%
2023	99	16.4	26.5	42.9	89%
2024	107	18.9	22.2	41.2	91%
2025	Projected 115				

2024 USSOUTHCOM CDR- Gen. Laura Richardson “Since 2010, our program has completed 3,629 events with 426 events completed in FY23 and another 328 planned for FY24. Improving regional interoperability and the readiness of both Partner Nations and U.S. forces to respond to crises and threats, the *State Partnership Program* is instrumental in the conduct and success of not only our operation, but our enduring relationships throughout the region.”

2024 USCENTCOM CDR – Gen. Michael “Erik” Kurilla “With the region’s strategic location between Iran, Afghanistan, the PRC, and Russia, this momentum in our military-to-military relationships is invaluable to our national security but it also places constraints on our partners. We intend to continue cooperation, via programs like International Military Education and Training and the *State Partnership Program*, at a pace with which our Central Asian partners are individually comfortable.”

2024 NGB Strategic Plans and Policy and International Affairs Director - Maj. Gen. William Zana, “The SPP accounts for about 1% of the Defense Department’s security cooperation budget. That 1% results in somewhere between 20% and 30% of all geographic combatant command engagements – a number even more remarkable when you think in certain countries the predominance of engagements are driven by the SPP.”

2023 Ukraine Armed Forces Senior Enlisted Leader - Chief Master Sgt. Oleksandr Kosynskyi “In this war, it doesn’t matter which kind of technique or technology we use; people are still critical – crucial. We have a huge history of cooperation with the California National Guard, which has given us good help.”

- The Department of Defense (DoD) provides **multi-year funding** for certain programs to ensure stability, enhance planning capabilities, and optimize resource utilization. Examples are:
 - Major Defense Acquisition Programs
 - Military Construction Projects
 - Energy and Environmental Programs
 - Research and Development
 - Readiness and Training Programs
 - Healthcare Programs