

National Guard State Partnership Program

What is it? The National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) partners U.S. states with foreign nations to promote and enhance bilateral relations. It supports Homeland Defense by nurturing dependable collaborative partners for coalition operations in support of the Era of Persistent Conflict. 62 countries are currently linked to 48 states, 2 territories (Puerto Rico and Guam), and Washington D.C. (as listed in the graphic below). Within the EUCOM area of operations, 20 states help increase the capacity and capabilities of 21 partner countries.

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 Montana National Guard assisting Kyrgyzstan, the New Jersey National Guard working with Albania and Afghanistan, and the Maryland National Guard partnering with Estonia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. Some of the details of these partnerships and SPP accomplishments in general include:

- 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 23 SPP affiliates contributed to OIF and OEF
- 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.

- SPP partners have developed joint Operational Mentor Liaison Teams, which deployed to Afghanistan, where they embedded with Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police units.

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 State Partnership Program enables the National Guard to further define and fulfill its collective role as a goodwill ambassador around the world. 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 as well as the Army Strategic Planning Guidance.

For additional information [click here](#).

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

