

Does the United States Need a New Police Force for Stability Operations?

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Stability operations have become a prominent feature of the international landscape. Recent examples include U.S. and UN operations in Kosovo, Bosnia, Haiti, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Such operations involve military forces that often engage insurgent forces until indigenous forces can take over that role. But military forces are ill suited for some critical tasks in stability operations that might be described as high-end police tasks. High-end tasks fall into the gap between normal police and military forces and include such activities as riot control, criminal investigations, and SWAT activities. The police who engage in these activities do so with the intent of rooting out criminals or insurgents who have a vested interest in perpetuating chaos. Unlike some countries that have such police forces—notably Italy with its *Carabinieri* or France with its *Gendarmerie*—the United States does not have stability police. Given the likelihood of such operations in the future, the question arises whether the United States should develop such forces. A team of researchers from RAND Arroyo Center studied this issue, and they report their results in *A Stability Police Force for the United States: Justification and Options for Creating U.S. Capabilities*. The analysis focused on answering three questions:

- Should the United States have a Stability Police Force (SPF)?
- If so, how should it be organized and staffed?
- Where should it be located in the U.S. government?

Should the United States Have a Stability Police Force?

The question of whether the United States should have an SPF involves a number of issues and assumptions. Assumptions include the following: having SPF personnel with civilian police skills would be optimal; only SPF that work daily with

Abstract

The United States has increasingly become involved in operations that often require “high-end” police skills, e.g., crowd control or intelligence collection. Military units typically lack such skills, and thus the question arises whether the United States should develop such a force. The authors recommend creation of a 6,000-person force located in the U.S. Marshals Service. It should be a hybrid force composed of active and reserve personnel, and a battalion-sized element should be able to deploy within 30 days.

civilian populations can carry out the maximum number of SPF tasks; any new agency would be difficult to establish; and it is much easier to conduct stability operations in smaller countries.

Arroyo researchers conclude that an SPF is an important—even critical—capability for the United States. The paramount task in stability operations is establishing security. Military forces have a necessary role in security but generally cannot do it on their own. Establishing security requires some tasks best done by police, and military forces often lack the training, experience, and mindset for policing. Military force tends to be a rather blunt instrument, applying overwhelming force to secure victory rather than minimal force to prevent escalation. Military police have been trained in policing tasks, but they have little opportunity to hone those skills among civilian populations when not deployed. In past operations, the United States has drawn on allies to provide SPF, but it will not always be able to count on these countries to provide such forces. Finally, using military forces as police is not only less effective but also more expensive.

How Should the SPF Be Organized and Staffed?

Given that the United States needs an SPF, what should it look like? The research team identified two critical missions for the SPF that will shape its organization and structure. The first is to help establish a secure environment. The second is to help the host government develop its own high-end police capability so it can establish security on its own.

To gain insight into how large an SPF would be required, researchers analyzed three scenarios: Macedonia, Cuba, and the Ivory Coast, resulting in three sizing options for an SPF: 1,000, 4,000, and 6,000 police. They also concluded that an SPF should be able to deploy a battalion-sized force within 30 days. In terms of force composition, the team considered options ranging from a full-time force composed of either military or civilian personnel, to a reserve force that would be called up as needed, to a civilian force that included both active and reserve federal law enforcement personnel.

The cost of the SPF is a key consideration. When computing costs, the research team took into account the cost of personnel, training, facilities, equipment, operations and maintenance, and administration. Costs varied by the composition of the organization and are shown in Table 1. Annual costs range from a low of about \$93 million for a small (1,000-person) reserve force to just over \$900 million for a large (6,000-person) full-time military force.

Where Should an SPF Be Located in the U.S. Government?

The next issue is where in the U.S. government an SPF should reside. The research team considered a range of organizations that could plausibly house an SPF: the U.S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and the U.S. Army's Military Police. The team also examined other options, including the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the Central Intel-

ligence Agency, as well as several smaller agencies within the departments of Justice, State, and Homeland Security. Researchers evaluated each organization on its tactical suitability (i.e., could it do the job?) and its institutional suitability (i.e., do the institutional conditions allow it to develop requisite capabilities and to carry out the mission?). They also considered the possibility of establishing a new agency.

With regard to tactical suitability, all organizations analyzed can do some of the tasks required of an SPF, but none does all tasks. Thus, all would need to develop some additional capabilities. An assessment of the tactical and institutional capabilities of the organizations considered led the researchers to conclude that only two organizations—the U.S. Marshals Service and the U.S. Army's Military Police—could qualify to meet the requirements of an SPF. Both organizations would require additional capabilities or training.

Conclusions

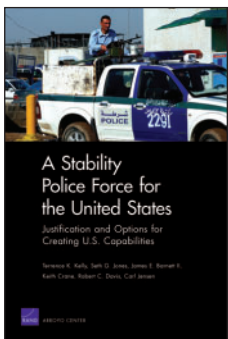
Weighing all considerations, the researchers concluded that the best option would be a 6,000-person hybrid force headquartered in the U.S. Marshals Service. The personnel in reserve status could be employed in state and local police forces so they would be able to exercise police functions in a civilian population daily and could be called up as needed. The Marshals Service was deemed to have many of the requisite skills. However, its training and management capabilities would need to be expanded to take on this large mission, and it would have to recruit additional personnel as well. The annual cost, \$637 million, is reasonable given the capability it buys. The cost savings in relieving military forces of these duties could be greater than required to create the SPF.

The Military Police option was attractive for a number of reasons, especially its capacity, training, and logistical capabilities, but its inability to engage in policing activities when not deployed was a major stumbling block. The *Posse Comitatus* Act precludes military personnel from exercising police functions in a civilian setting, and legislative relief might be difficult to get. Even if such relief were forthcoming, it is unclear where and how routine police skills might be honed.

Creation of a civilian SPF would not affect the roles that other elements of the U.S. government would play. Rather, it would complement other agencies such as the departments of Defense and State. But the SPF would provide a necessary capability, and the U.S. Army should support its creation. ■

Table 1
Total Cost Estimates (2007\$ million)

| | Military | Reserves | Full-Time Civilian | Hybrid Civilian |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Small | \$167.7 | \$93.3 | \$157.2 | \$116.0 |
| Medium | \$573.0 | \$278.6 | \$545.7 | \$410.2 |
| Large | \$906.8 | \$396.1 | \$870.0 | \$637.3 |



This research brief describes work done for RAND Arroyo Center and documented in *A Stability Police Force for the United States: Justification and Options for Creating U.S. Capabilities*, by Terrence K. Kelly, Seth G. Jones, James E. Barnett II, Keith Crane, Robert C. Davis, and Carl Jensen, MG-819-A (available at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG819/>), 2009, 212 pp., \$31.00, ISBN: 978-0-8330-4653-6. This research brief was written by Jerry M. Sollinger. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. RAND® is a registered trademark.

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