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Public Summary

Department of Defense
Strategic Evaluation: Engaging Allies and Partners on Space
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

Title 10, U.S.C., Section 383, as amended, requires the U.S. Department of War (DoW) to maintain a monitoring and evaluation program for “conducting centralized independent and rigorous evaluations of significant security cooperation initiatives to examine their relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability.” In furtherance of this requirement, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Global Partnerships and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) contracted the RAND Corporation to conduct a strategic evaluation on space SC on Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.

Security cooperation (SC) in the space domain has emerged as a critical component of U.S. defense strategy and objectives. This is due to the increasing reliance on space, and the importance of having capable allies and partners (A&P) supporting mutually aligned priorities. RAND evaluated the nascent landscape of space-related SC in a formative evaluation to examine the context, challenges, and opportunities that emerge as the United States forges new, or enhances existing, space-centric relationships with A&P. RAND scoped the evaluation to focus on FY 2023 Significant Security Cooperation Initiatives (SSCIs) in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. Southern Command areas of responsibility (AORs). This evaluation addresses the following questions:

- What is (and is not) security cooperation in space?
- Who are the stakeholders? And what are their priorities?
- What do SC processes look like in this domain?
- What implementation challenges and opportunities exist?
- What recommendations could help to foster improved cooperation?

Objectives and Scope

The evaluation focused on emerging partnerships, defined as A&P that have relatively nascent space ambitions, capabilities, and infrastructure. RAND observed that SC engagements with emerging partners are less complex than U.S. collaboration with more developed nations in support of combined operations in space.

To determine how space SC investments aligned with strategic priorities, RAND evaluators developed an objective tree based on national-level guidance documents, campaign plans, and country level objectives. RAND then evaluated whether—and, if so, where—investments and priorities aligned. The purpose was to identify whether there are any existing gaps between space SC activities and objectives.

Space Security Cooperation Background

DoW efforts aim to build and/or enhance the capabilities and capacities of A&P militaries for the protection and defense of space, and to enable mutually beneficial partnerships in this field. The roles and responsibilities of the recently established United States Space Force (USSF) and the United States Space Command (USSPACECOM) are still being determined. The DoW enterprise continues to evaluate how space SC can be used to achieve objectives.

RAND's Key Findings and Recommendations

The following findings and recommendations highlight general themes.

- **The expansive nature of space security cooperation requires enhancements to the numbers and expertise of the involved personnel.** The enterprise struggles to keep up with the expanding nature of space SC. Evaluators recommended that DSCA, USSPACECOM, the Secretary of the Air Force/International Affairs, and USSF prioritize filling personnel vacancies and articulate additional needs to support their work. Personnel should also be provided relevant SC and space training.
- **Space SC would benefit from standardization across CCMDs.** The lack of a standardized method for identifying and facilitating partner engagements means that SC personnel may have difficulties developing processes. Evaluators recommended that USSPACECOM and USSF document innovative activities and processes for application by future personnel.
- **Expanding cooperation in this domain requires increased awareness and responsiveness to partner nation priorities, resources, organizational structures, and space objectives.**

Conclusion

The nascent field of space SC faces challenges. Clear guidance, refined definitions, and targeted training are crucial. While USSPACECOM has taken an independent approach, increased coordination with the broader SC community will be beneficial. Early successes, often driven by individual initiative, need to be institutionalized and sustained. Partner nations are eager for support, but the U.S. must tailor these approaches to align mutual interests, thereby striking a balance between standardized processes and individualized strategies.