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America's Security Does Not Depend on Military Power Alone

Thomas C. Bruneau

The Trump Administration sent its proposed budget to the U.S. Congress on March 16. A key provision of the budget is an increase in the Department of Defense (DoD) budget by \$54 billion dollars, a 10% increase. At the same time, this proposal decreases the budget of the State Department by \$10.1 billion, or 28%. This ill-considered maneuver will only serve to increase our nation's insecurity. Of particular concern is that no strategy is attached to the DoD's increased funding. Rather than a strategy or plan, the basis for such important decisions appears to be political or even personal.

As the head of the U.S. Central Command, Marine General James Mattis, now Secretary of Defense, aptly stated: "if you don't fully fund the State Department, then I need to buy more ammunition." With a relatively modest sum of \$42.4 billion, (representing 1.02% of the total federal budget), the State Department seeks to maintain a global environment that secures the U.S. homeland, our representatives, businesses interests abroad, and allies. In the absence of economic crises or other large scale threats, it may be difficult to see the value of the current global system of preventive security.

In this essay I call attention to the examples of Colombia and Mongolia. Both cases illustrate how relatively small amounts of U.S. assistance helped these two countries strengthen their democracies and today contribute to global; and U.S. security. These two cases alone provide sufficient evidence to justify continued support for U.S. foreign aid or foreign cooperation.

In the late 1990s, Colombia was considered a "failed state" in that the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) controlled large sections of the country. The FARC also terrorized much of Colombia as they were able to launch terrorist attacks in major cities, destroy oil pipelines and other critical infrastructure. The FARC obtained its resources from the sale of cocaine and ransoms from their kidnapped victims. The Colombian Government appeared unable to stem the FARC and the other terrorist organizations that copied it or halt the export of illegal drugs.

The Colombian Government and the U.S began cooperation for security and development assistance through Plan Colombia. This arrangement provided \$10 billion dollars in assistance from 2000 to 2016 mainly through Department of State, DoD, and USAID. With the use of that money the Colombian government bolstered its military capabilities, its policing presence, and its institutional development in rural areas. The strengthening of the state undermined the FARC's arguments

against the government. In 2016 the FARC was forced to negotiate seriously, something they refused to do between their founding in the early 1960s and 2016, and disarm, and Colombia has now combined both security and democracy. Colombia turned the tide against narco-terrorism, communist insurgency, and criminal violence.

Colombian institutions have become so proficient in the areas of security, counterinsurgency, and counter-kidnapping operations that the country exports security expertise to other U.S. allies in fighting organized crime and the extremely violent gangs prevalent in Central America and Mexico. The funds provided by the U.S. are approximately 15% of the funds that Colombia itself raised, mainly by a war tax on its wealthier citizens, to expand and professionalize its armed forces to regain its sovereignty. In short, U.S. funds were in support of Colombian funds and their military and police forces to fight the terrorists. The example of Colombia demonstrates that building partner capacity works.

In the case of Mongolia, when the country became fully independent of the Soviet Union in the early 1990's, the U.S. provided various forms of security assistance, mainly in the form of low cost military education and training. Building on this support, Mongolia emerged as a vibrant democracy, located between two nuclear-armed authoritarian states, China and Russia. Mongolia became a model for other former Soviet satellites demonstrating that democracy is possible and is not determined by either geography or relative poverty. Mongolia has repaid the U.S. security and development assistance many times over by sending troops in support of the U.S. military and policy in Iraq and Afghanistan and as an active peacekeeper in conflict zones in Kosovo and throughout sub-Saharan Africa. With U.S. assistance, in 2003 Mongolia established a center of excellence for peacekeeping which became the only place on earth where American, Japanese, South Korean and NATO forces exercise together with Chinese Peoples Liberation Army units for peacekeeping.

The tremendous successes in Colombia and Mongolia, combining a mixture of relatively small U.S. programs, is the model of how our country leverages U.S. funds, along with American expertise, to assist other countries in providing their security and defense, which in turns increases our security and defense. Most of the programs and funding are built on models of shared responsibility of Department of State and the Department of Defense. Further, they all have multiple purposes. These programs deal with a huge variety of challenges or threats including countering illegal drugs, countering nuclear proliferation and global terrorism, assisting in the development of security and defense institutions, training peacekeepers from other countries, promoting the rule of law, preparing civilians for national security and defense leadership, and professionalizing other militaries. In sum, there are a huge variety of programs in play with an equally tremendous

overlap in roles and responsibilities, mainly involving the Department of State and Department of Defense.

The programs comprising the security assistance, or security cooperation, system has evolved under congressional guidance and oversight since the Second World War. It is virtually impossible to remove the Department of State component for the vast majority of these programs. Therefore, to decrease the funding of the Department of State by 28%, and diminish its personnel, puts these programs at risk. In simple terms, increasing the budget of the Department of Defense by cutting funding to the Department of State decreases our security.