The Battles Ahead: U.S. Military Assistance and the "Global War on Terrorism"

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Abstract

On March 11, 2002, President Bush announced, "America's soldiers will not fight every battle, but America will prepare the soldiers of other nations for the battles ahead." Assistance to foreign militaries in the form of training, grants, and equipment sales has long been a pillar of U.S. security strategy. Since September 11, however, this brand of foreign aid has emerged as a focal point of U.S. counterterrorism (CT) strategy. The focus of this project is not to determine if military aid is linked to CT priorities: official government account descriptions include CT as a primary goal of this assistance. Instead, my goal was to understand how that linkage has changed the way America dispenses its military aid. Spatial analysis reveals that foreign military aid is used to pursue a variety of security objectives, not simply to wage the "global war on terror." I conclude that CT priorities have a definite, but not dominant, impact on U.S. allocation of military assistance.

Methodology

Data for total foreign military assistance for all nations from 1996 to 2005 was acquired online from the U.S. Agency for International Development's U.S. Overseas Grants and Loans ("Greenbook"). International Affairs (Function 150) Budget Requests provided comprehensive data for two military assistance accounts, International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Foreign Military Financing. The State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism 2006 designated twenty-three countries as "terrorist safe havens." I hypothesized that these states would attract high levels of military assistance directed at improving control of ungoverned territory. The same report lists groups recognized by the U.S. government as threats to national security. The RAND-MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base was used to chart the number of attacks in each country executed by these government-recognized groups. From this same database, all international and domestic incidents of terrorism from 2000 to 2005 occurring in India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan were recorded. This data was collected to help determine whether terrorist activity by groups not officially recognized by the U.S. government correlated to aid allocation levels. Additional research was conducted to determine non-CT factors that might influence aid allocation. A 2006 report from the Coalition for the International Criminal Court identified countries refusing to grant U.S. personnel immunity from the International Criminal Court via bilateral immunity agreements (BIAs). Spatial analysis was conducted and maps generated using ArcMap. Scatter plots were created in Excel. Egypt, Iraq, Israel, and Jordan were excluded from these scatter plots because their high levels of funding and/or terrorism distorted the scale of the charts without adding to their explanatory power

Sources

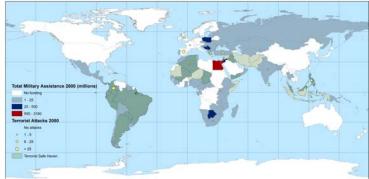
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- 3. RAND-MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, http://www.tkb.org/ 4. USAID. U.S. Overseas Grants and Loans. http://gesdb.usaid.gov/abk/

All maps obtained from ESRI and projected in UTM, WGS 1984.

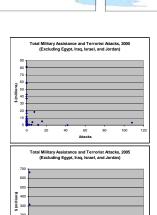
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Total Military Assistance and Terrorist Attacks (Domestic and International), South Asia, 2000 - 2005



International Military Education and Training Funding, 2003



Total Military Assistance, 2005, with Terrorist Safe Havens and Attacks



Results and Discussion

Spatial analysis of U.S. foreign military assistance from 2000 to 2005 reveals that although CT priorities permeate the military aid agenda, the accounts accommodate a variety of national security interests. CT priorities appear to have driven the largest individual increases in post-9/11 military aid. Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Pakistan, and the Philippines - all designated terrorist safe havens - saw sharp rises in both funding and terrorist attacks over this period. As the scatter plots demonstrate, a high number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by U.S. government-recognized groups did not guarantee a high level of funding. In fact, U.S. aid appears no more correlated to incidents of terrorism in 2005 than it was in 2000. While India endured terrorist attacks at rates comparable to those of Afghanistan and Pakistan, it received no military assistance. Poland, terrorism-free but a troop contributor to multi-national forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan, received consistently high levels of funding. On the other hand, nations of the West African Sahel region, although designated terrorist safe havens, did not enjoy substantial military assistance. This analysis did not capture CT funding (to internal security forces, for instance) provided through other aid accounts.

Some non-CT priorities are readily apparent. Most notably, military assistance to Egypt, Israel, and Jordan, which long preceded the U.S. focus on terrorism, aims at promoting stability and U.S. influence in the Middle East. Variations in IMET funding from 2003 to 2005 indicate that other foreign policy imperatives can shape military aid allocation. After passage of the American Service-Members' Protection Act in 2003 and the Nethercutt Amendment in 2004, the U.S. cut military funding to several South American and African nations as a penalty for refusing to grant U.S. personnel immunity from the International Criminal Court. NATO and "major non-NATO allies" were exempted from these reductions, which explains the steady funding levels for Mexico, Argentina, and European nations despite their refusal to sign BIAs. Examining U.S. foreign assistance on a global level yields general trends, but country specific nallysis is often necessary to fully understand aid allocations.

International Military Education and Training Funding, 2005, with BIA Refusals













