

AEI Scholars Propose a New Model for Building Security Partnerships

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Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States has launched a “Long War” on terrorism, a “global counterinsurgency” against a radical Islamist movement that seeks to overthrow legitimate states throughout the Muslim world. In the course of fighting this new enemy, the American government has painfully relearned some old lessons—that counterinsurgencies are won through the concerted application of political, economic, and military power; that American security depends on the stability of the “frontline states” that our enemies seek to topple; and that the United States can only defeat radical Islamists by engaging the populations among which they seek refuge.

These lessons are now shaping U.S. efforts to strengthen its allies and security partners, especially those states that are most threatened by jihadist movements. Such efforts, in turn, have revealed a consistent set of challenges as American policymakers attempt to foster governance without fueling dictatorships, support allies without becoming enmeshed in their internal feuds, and manage convoluted international partnerships from the confines of Washington. Overcoming these challenges requires a degree of cooperation between U.S. government agencies that is difficult to manage in peacetime, let alone in a time of war.

In their new report, [*The Frontline Country Team: A Model for Engagement*](#), AEI fellows [Christopher Griffin](#) and [Thomas Donnelly](#) argue that the United States should address this confusion at the point where the rubber of American foreign policy hits the road: the country team. They argue that by organizing U.S. security operations around the direction of the country team and the ambassador who leads it, the U.S. government can minimize waste and maximize the effectiveness of its partnerships. The authors propose several specific reforms to the current organization of American security cooperation programs:

- Build a “frontline country team”—an enhanced version of the United States embassy that incorporates a robust military assistance and advisory group designed to organize interagency cooperation, provide a permanent security presence, and promote greater cohesion in the management of America’s partnerships.
- Enhance the ambassador’s authority to manage U.S. security cooperation programs, providing him with a dedicated staff that can oversee and coordinate the efforts of the disparate government agencies responsible for these programs.
- Structure the frontline country team to serve as both a command post for directing security cooperation activities and a source of support for the combatant commander, should the United States conduct direct military operations in the country.

The Frontline Country Team provides a model for organizing the U.S. government to support its frontline security partners in the global counterinsurgency against radical Islamists and for bolstering American security throughout the world.

EVENT INFORMATION:

Griffin and Donnelly will discuss *The Frontline Country Team: A Model for Engagement* on Wednesday, July 16, 2008 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at AEI (1150 Seventeenth Street, NW, Twelfth Floor, Washington, DC). More information about the event can be found at www.aei.org/event1756/.

INTERVIEW REQUESTS:

If you would like to interview Christopher Griffin or Thomas Donnelly, please contact them at CGriffin@aei.org or 202.862.7176 and thomas.donnelly@aei.org or 202.862.7186.

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