GCMC Security Priorities

**Addressing challenges on Europe’s Eastern Flank, including Central Asia, as a result of a resurgent Russia.** On the Eastern Flank, Russia’s takeover in Crimea, aggressive actions in support of separatists and criminal organizations in Eastern Ukraine, and the existence of several Russian-made frozen conflicts present a significant challenge to NATO and the EU. European countries face increasing pressure from Moscow, with European energy dependency complicating the political environment. Additionally, Russia’s clear violation of the INF Treaty, rhetoric displaying a willingness to use nuclear weapons, involvement in multi-domain nefarious cyberspace activities and increased actions in the Arctic are of concern. The use of criminal organizations as elements of State power creates new challenges.

**Addressing challenges on Europe’s Southern Flank as a result of the complex security challenges from MENA region and their impact to the Eurasian region.** Civil war, terrorism, extremism, foreign fighters, criminal syndicates, and illicit trafficking emanating from or working in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) directly affect European countries and destabilize Europe as a whole. This complex threat requires a whole-of-government approach.

**Addressing challenges in the Balkans region as a result of ongoing sectarian and ethnic tensions as well as competing Russian and U.S.-NATO interests.** The Balkans region in many respects is the most dynamic and challenging in Europe. The complexity in the region consists of geopolitical and ethnic tensions, corruption, transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking, and evident Russian influence is problematic for both good governance and regional stability.

**Addressing challenges in the Arctic as a result of increased international competition in the region.** Diminishing sea ice will give rise to new economic opportunities in the Arctic while simultaneously increasing concerns about human safety and protection of a unique ecosystem that many indigenous communities rely on for subsistence. In the near term, the increasing rate of coastal erosion similarly will threaten DoD’s Arctic coastal infrastructure. In the mid- to far-term, as ice recedes and resource extraction technology improves, competition for economic advantage and a desire to exert influence over an area of increasing geostrategic importance could lead to increased tension. These economic and security concerns may increase the risk of disputes between Arctic and non-Arctic nations over access to Arctic shipping lanes and natural resources.

**Counterterrorism and Counter Narcotics/Countering Transnational Organized Crime.** The global threats of terrorism, narcotics and illicit trafficking require international approaches to develop and implement effective strategies. Security challenges become increasingly more complex with new developments in sophisticated technology, infiltration of legitimate commerce, penetration of government institutions, and convergence of criminal-terrorist networks.

**Cyber Security.** Cyber Security is a top global strategic challenge, which requires international cooperation in order to reduce risk and successfully attain an adequate level of cyber domain security globally. Threats against the availability, integrity and confidentiality of information affect the basic and key elements of our societies. Nations and citizens are dependent on information and communication systems. These systems underpin vital aspects of society, in particular the protection of critical infrastructures and essential information systems. Assisting partners developing informed national cyber security strategies and policies to address multidimensional cyber domain challenges is a United States and German high priority which requires worldwide action.
Building integrity and anti-corruption through good governance practices. Several nations in the region have exhibited that they are vulnerable to instability as a result of corruption. Increasing national-level governmental legitimacy greatly enhances regional security. Partners and targeted nations should strengthen integrity, transparency and accountability in order to reduce the risk of corruption in the defense and security sectors. Building integrity promotes good practices, processes and methodologies, and provides countries with tailored support to make defense and security institutions more effective.

Advancing awareness of the nexus between gender and security, and encouraging women’s role in the security sector. Efforts to resolve contemporary security challenges, including transnational and regional threats such as terrorism and transnational organized crime, will not be effective unless security sector practitioners are mindful of the nexus between gender and security and engage all members of society, including women, in the fight against these threats. In most of the world and especially in security sectors, knowledge of this critical gender-security nexus remains limited or poorly understood and the potential contributions of women misjudged. The Marshall Center has a unique opportunity to: sensitize participants to the nexus between gender and security; advance women’s role in the security sector; and encourage all participants to apply these concepts in their own countries as well as share lessons learned and best practices with each other.