

## Reforming Security Cooperation

By: Melissa Dalton

July 15, 2016



### BACKGROUND

Over the last 15 years, the Department of Defense (DoD) has increasingly sought to build relationships and the capacity and capabilities of allied and partner countries to address evolving requirements and threats. The United States provides security cooperation to international partners as a means to achieve its foreign policy and supporting defense objectives in [148 countries](#) globally. In addition, successive DoD strategic reviews in this period have underscored the importance of working through and with partners to achieve common security objectives. The complexity of global challenges ranging from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea to transnational terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and cyber threats will require the United States to work with allies and partners to achieve common security objectives. In support of this approach, partners will require assistance from the United States in building the capacity and capabilities of their security forces and in improving interoperability with U.S. forces. Through these relationships, U.S. forces gain peacetime access to key locations globally, some of which may be valuable in a contingency. Security cooperation also aims to deepen political and military relationships that can advance the U.S. foreign policy agenda. Security cooperation can take the form of U.S. forces providing training and equipment, military exercises and exchanges, institution building, advising, and planning to allies and partners. Military commanders have affirmed continually that operations conducted by local forces are more sustainable than those performed by U.S. forces.

As such, the number of authorities and associated funding provided to DoD to conduct security cooperation activities has expanded significantly since 2001, with DoD security cooperation funding [tripling](#) from 2008 to 2015. In contrast, the Department of State's

security assistance funding has increased by 23 percent in the same period. This build-up has led to a complex and unwieldy security cooperation enterprise that DoD and some outside experts argue undermine its ability to prioritize, plan, execute, oversee, and assess security cooperation activities. State Department officials, State's congressional authorizers and appropriators, and some outside commentators contend that the current approach has led to an imbalance between DoD and the Department of State over the direction of security sector assistance. The Senate Appropriations Committee's report on the FY2017 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill [faults](#) current and previous National Security Council staff for failing to adequately integrate and coordinate foreign and military policies, noting concern about parallel and competing foreign assistance programs within DoD.

**Table 1: Remarks from Congress and Administration**

SENATE	HOUSE	SECRETARY CARTER/ ADMINISTRATION
<p>Consolidates security cooperation authorities and funding, forges stronger connections to broader U.S. foreign policy objectives, enhances accountability via monitoring and evaluation, and professionalizes the security cooperation workforce.</p>	<p>[No corresponding provision.]</p>	<p><b>SAP:</b> The administration requested several security cooperation reforms adopted in the Senate draft bill, but it is concerned about potential ramifications for current security cooperation efforts, force readiness, and the State Department's lead role in foreign policy and security sector assistance.</p>
<p><b>Senate NDAA 2017</b> <b>S.2943, Title XII, Subtitle G</b> <b>(Quote from Bill Summary)</b></p> <p>"The bill consolidates security cooperation authorities from Title 10 and elsewhere in public law into a single chapter of U.S. code. It repeals numerous existing so-called 'train and equip' authorities and replaces them with one authority that incorporates all of the Department's existing 'train and equip' authorized activities. Additionally, the NDAA consolidates more than \$2.0 billion in associated security</p>	<p>[No action.]</p>	<p><b>SAP on Senate NDAA:</b></p> <p>"The Administration appreciates the Committee's efforts to reform DOD's security cooperation enterprise in subtitle G of Title XII, particularly certain Administration requested reform proposals. The bill also proposes far-reaching reforms in a number of areas to enhance the transparency and oversight of security sector resources, professionalize the workforce, and improve the alignment of authorities to defense strategy. While these proposed reforms seek to address a number of existing challenges in the current framework, they go beyond the Administration's request with potentially broad ramifications that need to be analyzed carefully. Any reforms ultimately must ensure that no harm is done to DOD's current security cooperation and force</p>

<p>cooperation funding into a new fund (Security Cooperation Enhancement Fund). The bill requires the Secretary of Defense to submit an annual consolidated budget justification for its security cooperation activities. The reform package also directs the Secretary of Defense to create a DOD security cooperation workforce program to oversee the development and management of a professional workforce supporting security cooperation programs of the DOD, as well as the execution of security assistance programs and activities under the Foreign Assistance Act and the Arms Control Act by the DOD."</p>		<p>readiness efforts, or to the State Department's lead role in foreign policy and security sector assistance, including by inappropriately codifying, expanding, limiting, or eliminating current authorities, resources, or mechanisms necessary to ensure that the United States pursues a coherent and consistent foreign policy through all assistance activities. In addition, this consolidation could undermine DOD's ability to support the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. Foreign policy and security cooperation authorities must continue to strike a balance between specific defense initiatives and broader foreign policy priorities. The bill's expansion of existing security cooperation authorities must continue to preserve or include requested mechanisms for ensuring State Department foreign policy direction, including joint formulation. The Administration is eager to work with the Committee, and with the Congress, to ensure the final legislation undertakes Administration-requested reforms in a carefully considered manner that avoids duplication of efforts and authorities, and unintended consequences for current DOD and State security sector assistance activities."</p>
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## ASSESSMENT

On balance, simplifying these authority and funding streams will reduce planning and execution time, enabling the United States to be more responsive and address critical needs.

The Senate draft defense bill proposes to reform the security cooperation enterprise in four areas. First, it aims to clarify and streamline security cooperation authorities and funding pots, particularly in the area of training and equipping partner militaries, which proliferated after September 11, 2001. Currently, the DoD has [123 Title 10 authorities](#) related to security cooperation, hindering the speed and efficiency of defense planners and policymakers attempting to determine which authority they should use to address a given partner requirement. Parochial interests in DoD may resist the collapse of individual funding or authority pots, such as for counternarcotics, that give them leverage in interagency decisionmaking. In addition, the administration has raised [concerns](#) that streamlining authorities and funding must not undermine DoD's current security cooperation or force readiness efforts or the Department of State (DoS)'s lead role in foreign policy.

Second, the draft bill calls for tighter coordination between DoD and DoS on security cooperation activities, particularly on capacity-building activities. It is less clear whether the

draft bill mandates DoD-DoS coordination across all areas of security cooperation, including military exercises and exchanges. Currently, although DoD and DoS coordinate in many areas of planning and execution of security cooperation, it is not always consistent. This provision rightly recognizes that security cooperation is a tool of U.S. foreign policy and requires DoD to obtain concurrence from and coordination with DoS on these activities to ensure that security cooperation efforts are clearly linked to foreign policy objectives. U.S. security cooperation is intended to improve the capability of a country's military and security instruments and, as such, cannot be separated from broader foreign policy objectives. Enhanced coordination could compel DoD and DoS to wrestle directly with tensions that may arise between U.S. security and governance and human rights objectives abroad, rather than allow DoD to bypass the State Department through authorities that do not require such coordination. Obviously requiring coordination and concurrence on security cooperation activities is likely to elevate tensions in the immediate, but once instituted in practice, it could also prompt an earlier and honest dialogue about ways to navigate potential tensions in U.S. foreign and security policy.

That said, the current legislation strengthens the requirements for coordination the other way, as well, mandating that the State Department receive concurrence from DoD for DoS-sponsored security assistance. Because DoD is the better-funded agency currently and probably indefinitely, this may create a level of influence at the interagency table that outsizes DoD's mission and mandate for security cooperation. Moreover, with some security assistance activities (e.g., military exchanges and exercises) that were previously defined as activities overseen by DoS categorized in the Senate bill as "security cooperation," DoD may be in a position to implement these activities outside the bounds of interagency guidance if DoD is not required to coordinate *all* of its security cooperation activities with DoS.

Third, the draft bill proposes to improve monitoring and evaluation of security cooperation activities. Today, although DoD and DoS implement end-use monitoring requirements on specific equipment, both departments lack a system to determine the overall return on investment for security cooperation. Such a system will increase accountability and transparency of security cooperation activities, will likely compel DoD and DoS to prioritize partners for targeted investments, and will encourage both agencies to collect lessons learned to adjust course. Monitoring and evaluation criteria should include not only tactical and operational metrics but also strategic effects that may be measured best over the long term. Planning, managing, and executing an effective monitoring and evaluation system is vital but may require new talent and skills among the security cooperation workforce when there are parallel budgetary pressures to reduce staff.

Finally, the draft NDAA provision seeks to increase professionalism of the security cooperation workforce. The U.S. military is one of the premiere professional organizations in the world. However, the military departments do not prioritize security cooperation as a career track, as they do for operational and war-fighting careers. Given the responsibility placed on service members to perform security cooperation on behalf of the United States, the services should require more rigorous standards for training, expertise, and capacity than currently exists. Creating pathways and incentives for careers that include security cooperation experience will help. Government civilians likewise need enhanced training and certification to ensure rigorous security cooperation policy oversight, evaluation, and execution. Institutional barriers in the services and the civilian bureaucracy may impede these reforms, but the current enterprise leaves DoD personnel ill-equipped to manage the challenges of planning and implementing security cooperation.

## RECOMMENDATION FOR WAY FORWARD

At a time when political acrimony is growing about the value of working with allies and partners in securing U.S. objectives abroad, shoring up how the United States conducts security cooperation and ensuring a strong return on investment is important. Improving the efficiency, oversight, and professionalism of the security cooperation enterprise will help prove to Americans that these investments are worth the price. Still, security cooperation reform pursued by the Senate Armed Services Committee should account for the administration's concerns, echoed by Senate appropriators, that the balance between DoD and DoS authority over security assistance be righted, given DoS' role as the lead for U.S. foreign policy. A viable pathway forward could include defense authorizers adjusting the Senate provisions during conference to allow for methodical and phased implementation of security cooperation reform and the administration thus instituting the following changes:

- Implementing fully the [requirements](#) of Presidential Policy Directive 23 on Security Sector Assistance to ensure that security cooperation and grant security assistance flow from strategic priorities set not only by DoD but also by the president and the secretary of state. For each partner country case, this will involve the development of integrated country strategies formulated at the embassy-level and coordinated with all arms of government, to include DoD and the relevant combatant command(s).
- Developing a coordinated and phased process between DoD and DoS for the prioritization, planning, execution, and assessment of DoD's security cooperation activities.
- Integrating monitoring and evaluation methods used in the development sector for security assistance, through a process that links top-down strategic and policy objectives defined by DoS and DoD and bottom-up assessment and analysis from the embassy country teams. This should involve implementing monitoring and evaluation through a phased approach, so that the DoD and DoS systems can adjust personnel and requirements more smoothly.
- Establishing military and civilian career pathways for a professional security cooperation workforce that include assignments at DoD, DoS, and at the country team level, building in incentives and training programs to encourage recruitment and retention.



***Melissa Dalton*** is a senior fellow and chief of staff in the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic & International Studies.