

Center for Strategic and International Studies

**Shifting the Burden Responsibly: Oversight and Accountability
in U.S. Security Sector Assistance**

Keynote Address

Speaker:

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Introduction and Moderator:

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MELISSA DALTON: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Melissa Dalton and I direct the Cooperative Defense Project here at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. And I'm delighted to welcome you to the launch of our project report, "Shifting the Burden Responsibly: Oversight and Accountability for U.S. Security Sector Assistance."

Today we are going to be engaging in a two-part event. First, I'm delighted to be welcoming assistant secretary of defense for strategy, plans and capabilities, Dr. James Anderson, who I will introduce in a moment. He will provide a keynote discussion on some of the reforms that the Department of Defense has been undertaking over the last two years in the security cooperation enterprise.

We will then engage with Dr. Anderson in a bit of question and answer period, and then we'll shift to the second part of our event today which will be an expert panel discussion with representatives from the Department of State, the Department of Defense, as well as experts from our own CSIS staff. So thank you for joining us today, and looking forward to an engaging discussion.

It's clear, given the U.S. strategic emphasis on increasing burden shifting to achieve common security objectives with allies and partners, that greater scrutiny of how we are accomplishing our strategic and political aims via our security sector assistance efforts is crucial, both from the executive and legislative branch perspective.

In the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress made some historic reforms to the Department of Defense side of the equation, and the department has been busily moving forward with those reforms with the Department of State in parallel undertaking its own steps forward. But I think, as today's discussion will illuminate, there is still much work to be done.

In our report, we attempted to provide an overview and an assessment of what the state of those reforms are along planning, operations, training, policy and doctrine lines of effort, if you will, and provides some recommendations on the way forward. This of course is not the end of the story – much more work to be done by the collective enterprise – but I know my research team and I were really struck by the level of commitment across the enterprise to accomplish these aims more concretely, more comprehensively, and with greater accountability. So we hope that the discussion here today, the findings and recommendations in our report will help further those ends.

Without further ado, I'm delighted to introduce Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans and Capabilities Dr. James Anderson. Dr. Anderson was actually my first supervisor in the Department of Defense when I worked there many years ago. Prior to his current appointment in the Department of Defense, Dr. Anderson served for three years as the vice president for academic affairs at the Marine Corps University. His previous positions include dean of Academics and deputy director at the Marine Corps War College, director of the program in Advanced Security Studies at the George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies, and director of Middle East policy in the International Security Affairs Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Dr. Anderson earned his doctorate in international relations and master of arts in law and diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University.

Dr. Anderson, we're so delighted to have you here at CSIS today. Thank you.

JAMES ANDERSON: Good afternoon. I want to start by thanking Melissa Dalton for the invitation to speak here today. I have had the pleasure of working with Melissa and am very appreciative of her research efforts and her team regarding security cooperation. It is an honor to speak here at CSIS where many of my current and former colleagues have come from.

This report could not be more timely. I have been briefed on the report's main findings, and I appreciate the thorough CSIS review of oversight and accountability in the U.S. security sector assistance. This report reminds me of the important role that our friends in the think tank community play, especially when the department is embracing a new approach to the topic.

I've had the pleasure to serve in my current capacity as assistant secretary of defense for strategy, plans and capabilities since last fall. Our SPC office casts a wide net to include policy oversight of security cooperation, our National Defense Strategy, the plans necessary to implement the strategy, as well as nuclear deterrence and missile defense.

Security sector assistance is a vast enterprise, and it one of the U.S. governments most effective tools in shaping U.S. foreign policy outcomes. At DOD we represent a key component of that effort that we call security cooperation: the authorities governed by Title 10 of the U.S. Code, which relate to engaging with allied and partner militaries to affect outcomes related to our mutual security.

I want to focus my remarks here today on how we are reforming security cooperation within the department and creating a more holistic, strategic security – (audio break) – major lines of efforts for DOD as we implement our National Defense Strategy. The security interests of the United States and allies are best addressed together cooperatively. The United States has a critical leadership role in encouraging allies to be more militarily capable, interoperable, and lethal.

With these principles in mind, I'd like to proceed along the following path. I'd like to talk about where we are coming from and how the FY '17 reforms, the security cooperation, and the National Defense Strategy are changing the way we are doing business. I would also like to talk about some of the gaps in our execution and highlight with some examples some places where we are successfully executing our mission and creating security through cooperation.

The United States has realized that the primary security challenge of our generation – great power competition – requires a strong network of allies and partners. At the same time, this administration feels strongly that allies and partners need to contribute their fair share towards common security interests.

Security cooperation is one of the best tools for our growing ally and partner capacity to contribute more militarily. With smart, limited investments in our partners, we can amplify military effects to deter aggression.

Today the United States is an exporter of security cooperation. However, as a young republic – or even before we became a republic, we were the recipient of security cooperation. For all the noble ideas the United States was founded upon, ideas cannot hope to make up for a shortage of gunpowder. The first thing that might be considered a foreign military sale the United States conducted was an important purchase: gunpowder covertly supplied by our friends, the French. And that arms transfer made a difference. Our first act of foreign military sale helped to win – helped us to win at Saratoga and turn the tide of the Revolutionary War.

Clearly things have changed greatly in the post-Cold-War environment. The reality is today that we are confronted by an array of emerging requirements and ever-present risks. Because of this, operating by, with, and through allies is not simply a goal; it is a necessity. It is the only path to sustainable progress in combating terrorism or countering any other international security threat including the reemergence of great power competition.

The release of the National Defense Strategy in 2018 marked a turning point for the whole of DOD. We live in an increasingly complex global security environment and, after many years without an update to our fundamental strategic guidance, the time had come to acknowledge changes in the international security environment and the priorities for the Department of Defense. The NDS emphasizes the need to shift the weight of our security cooperation resources from countering terrorism, which has of course been the primary focus of the department's efforts over the past – nearly the past two decades to a renewed focus on deterring and potentially responding to threats from near-peer competitors.

Security cooperation relates to all three lines of effort in the National Defense Strategy. One, building lethality. Security cooperation allows us to improve our effectiveness in coalition efforts, to cover down on gaps in our posture, and to ensure that our partners pack a punch in the first few hours of conflict, or days of conflict, if it comes to that.

Two, strengthening U.S. alliances and partnerships. Security cooperation is the primary tool for ensuring our alliances and partnerships are fruitful, meaningful, and that our relationships are a net security contributor, not a detractor.

Three, reforming how the department does business. Security cooperation is evolving with the department to become more strategic, more efficient, and more effective. In FY '19, we dedicated the greatest amount of funding – nearly 25 percent of the total funding in the security cooperation account – to challenges in the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility – nearly \$260 million. This is an increase of nearly 75 percent over what we notified in the year prior, and this does not include regional initiatives such as the Maritime Security Initiative, which I will say more about in a few minutes. Consistent with the NDS, we also increased EUCOM's allocation by nearly 25 percent from FY '18 to approximately 250 million (dollars).

While CENTCOM continues to rely on separate authorities, in particular the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund and the Afghan Security Forces Fund, we reduced its FY '19 Section 333 allocation by 30 percent from the FY '18 Level. AFRICOM, NORTHCOM, and SOUTHCOM, for their part, combined received about 30 percent of the total funding.

The NDS specifies clear priorities, and our security cooperation resource allocations reflect and will continue to reflect those priorities. All that said, I'd like to note at this point that Title 2 funding is still providing robust tools for engagement and financing of our partner militaries, even in those regions that are not prioritized in the NDS.

With all the changes in the last few years, the question arises, how do we explain security cooperation? How do we define it? I think a good way to look at security cooperation in terms of where we are going is to consider all activities conducted by the Department of Defense aimed at enhancing the capability and willingness of U.S. partners and allies to operate in coalition with – or in lieu of – U.S. forces in response to shared security challenges. This formulation is largely consistent with how we think Congress envisions our future role in security sector assistance.

DOD has always had a robust role in security sector assistance enterprise, but until FY '17 reforms, it was spread across the department. There were many purse holders, many different executors, and dozens of legal authorities scattered in a patchwork-like fashion across the U.S. Code that overlapped, sometimes acted independently, and weren't looked at holistically.

Sometime security cooperation doesn't get a lot of attention. Luckily, CSIS has some of the finest minds in the security cooperation business at work here, and I'm most grateful for the work of Melissa, Kath, Tommy, and others for their efforts on this topic.

Security cooperation is often behind the news we read at night but rarely the frontline story. Luckily we're also blessed with another influential group that cares deeply about security cooperation – the Congress. In FY '17 Congress undertook the largest, most sweeping, and most substantial reforms to security cooperation in our nation's history. The FY '17 NDAA consolidated dozens of authorities into a narrow band of activities in Chapter 16. It set up requirements for human rights vetting, institutional capacity building, and assessment monitoring and evaluation.

With lots of work in the trenches by both DOD and Congress, this all hit at once, and it was welcome. Implementing an ambitious vision remains a challenge, particularly for those activities that were funded out of service accounts or regional initiatives. Many security cooperation activities were not being looked at holistically across the spectrum. Programs were siloed and oversight sometimes limited.

Congress believed that the entire system needed oversight from a single executor with visibility across all the authorities and all the different pots of money. This is how we got the Title 10, Chapter 16, Section 382 in the U.S. Code. The notion that the secretary's designee, the undersecretary of defense for policy – my immediate boss – shall have, quote, “the responsibility for the oversight of strategic policy guidance and the responsibility of overall resource allocation for security cooperation programs and activities of the Department of Defense.” End quote.

This is where we are trying to go with security cooperation: a holistic DOD-wide enterprise with visibility across the spectrum of security cooperation activities, administered with policy oversight, and aligned tightly to strategy.

How we define security cooperation is changing as well. At one point security cooperation meant – basically meant train and equip programs. We're moving away from that. Security cooperation enterprise now encompasses everything from equipment, to training, to conventional arms sales, to exercises with both high-end and developing partners.

Meanwhile, we are prioritizing interoperability and making arms sales quicker and more efficient. In the last 10 years the department has reduced the average time to process foreign military sales by 30 percent. And I know our colleagues at DSCA are working hard to streamline things even more.

We are also trying to move off of year-to-year planning. My office has been involved in a push over the last two years to align security cooperation planning with planning, programming, budgeting, and execution cycle as well as the global force management cycle, planning two years out from the current fiscal year.

Further, we are trying to look at security cooperation programs as more life-cycle events, planning five years out from conception, evaluating them annually, and ensuring that security cooperation activities are built with specific achievable, measurable objectives in mind. We're also looking at how to make our investments sustainable and effective. A big part of this revolves around institutional capacity building using our experience as a department to help partners develop their defense ministry apparatus. We are still working on the best ways to do this, but this is critical to our mission. Merely transferring equipment or providing training is insufficient if the partner military lacks the professional and bureaucratic apparatus to effectively absorb and employ their capabilities.

One tool that has helped us cover down and provide engagement in this field has been our regional centers. We have five of them. The George C. Marshall Center in Germany is just one example. Last week they held an important and timely conference on Ukrainian defense reform efforts. Engagements such as these are valuable, and they're not very expensive. The regional centers provide an excellent example of how small investments can yield high returns over time.

The state partnership program has also proved a cost-effective, small-footprint tool for supporting security cooperation goals of the geographic combatant commands and our diplomatic community. Over the last 24 years, we have established 73 partnerships with 79 countries across all six geographic commands. These partnerships have brought diplomatic and military engagement via the national guard elements resulting in individual, professional, and institutional contacts and relationships, enhancing influence and trust on a worldwide basis.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. If you've ever packed your child a lunch for school you know one of the biggest challenges in regard to security cooperation: the peanut butter spread. For a long time the department believed that to compete in the world we had to compete most everywhere. Today we realize that with limited resources and specific strategic challenges, that just doesn't work. Being everywhere at once or nearly everywhere at once is simply not sustainable and not in line with our National Defense Strategy. We need to bolster our partners and allies that support our strategic objectives and draw down on partnerships that deliver limited effects.

Every security cooperation dollar should be spent strategically; otherwise we're not safeguarding the taxpayers' money, and we're missing opportunities to place resources where they are needed most, which brings me to assessment, monitoring and evaluation. Much of this is just getting off the ground, but now as we move forward in planning in FY '21, we are seeing increasing emphasis on how we evaluate potential programs, how we monitor ongoing programs, and how we evaluate the effectiveness of executed programs.

What began as a skeleton enterprise has developed into a global, forward deployed effort executed with spectrum-wide visibility with the aim of ensuring that resources are effectively utilized and waste is eliminated. That being said, we readily acknowledge that DOD has a ways to go in fully implementing AM&E reforms. My staff is working with DSCA, the combatant commands, and other security cooperation stakeholders to ensure that the AM&E requirements established by Section 383 and the DOD Instruction 5132.14 are implemented.

For assessment and monitoring, we have been working with the ground combatant commanders to develop partnership assessments which provide a baseline of DOD security cooperation planning as required by law. These are already being used in FY '21 planning. Monitoring will be a huge focus of our efforts early in the next fiscal year, and we are working with DSCA to appropriately align funding for this effort.

For the AM&E workforce, there is a clear need for dedicated expertise within the ground combatant commanders, geographic combatant commanders, and throughout DOD. My staff spearheaded a security cooperation future force study to develop manning requirements to implement AM&E and other security cooperation reforms. We are working to finalize this study and execute a contract vehicle to fill in immediate staffing gaps.

While our trajectory is clear, we have now only just begun to identify and adapt some of the manpower requirements this level of optimization will require. We are finding some flaws in the process and issuing guidance to fix them. We are socializing these concepts from policy with a very large global workforce. Doing this requires buy-in and, broadly speaking, we think we are getting that.

We should also understand that security cooperation has its limits. There are some missions for which security cooperation is an effective tool for achieving outcomes – or is not an effective tool for security – achieving outcomes, but in other cases it certainly is. We saw this, for example, with our support of the Syrian Democratic Forces in their efforts to recapture ISIS-held territory.

But in some cases, security cooperation alone may not be enough to solve the larger problem of long-term stabilization. Security cooperation is addressing some of the pivotal challenges identified by the National Defense Strategy. The Maritime Security Initiative, which I alluded to earlier, in South and Southeast Asia, has in the last three years provided approximately \$175 million in training, equipment and related support to improve maritime security, domain awareness for Asian partners in their exclusive economic zones and strategic waters. We have and will continue to work with other partners in the region to contribute to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Consider also Niger, one of the poorest countries in Africa but also a willing partner. In 2014 the United States government recognized the need to work with Niger and other Lake Chad Region partners to degrade and ultimately defeat Boko Haram.

The United States government has decided to provide advisors, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance support, equipment, infantry battalion training to enable these partners to take on the terrorist group. In fact, they set up the nexus of some really big threats: from the terrorist group to a nascent ISIS West Africa. And out of mutual interest, Niger was positioned to contribute meaningfully to U.S. goals by containing violent extremist organizations.

We provided some Cessnas, which are versatile, effective aircraft that could allow them to conduct reconnaissance missions on their periphery. Four years later – five years later they have become a significant partner, making a major contribution to U.S. interests in the Lake Chad Region. By working with, by and through partners like Niger, it gives us more capacity and capability, more options at how we work toward shared goals than our limited force posture alone could provide.

Our strategic mandate is clear. The direction of security cooperation is in the law, and the reform necessary is understood. It is for us a matter of providing the necessary policy oversight to see a smooth transition to a new model of security sector assistance that maximizes enterprise visibility, prioritizes appropriately, and offers transparency and accountability to the taxpayers.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

MS. DALTON: OK. Well, thank you so much, Dr. Anderson for your terrific remarks and your candor on the state of the – (audio break) – use the moderator’s prerogative to ask you a first question. And also I’m very grateful for the support of Open Society Foundations for our project, as well as our prior year’s project on improving oversight and accountability for security sector assistance.

Dr. Anderson, you spoke about several concrete steps that DOD is taking to align security cooperation with the priorities of the U.S. defense strategy. Given that security cooperation has political effects in a partner country, what is DOD doing to ensure that security cooperation activities are in alignment with broader foreign policy objectives and tied to political outcomes? And as a – perhaps as a branch of that, is there perhaps a risk of moral hazard if the partner makes choices that don’t necessarily comport with U.S. values?

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you for that.

Alignment is kind of a central theme in everything that we do as I kind of referenced in my remarks. In terms of the big picture, there is the National Security Strategy that – signed, of course, by the president of the United States, and then when we crafted the National Defense Strategy, the NDS, we made sure that it was consistent with the broader National Security Strategy. And then as we go down into specific areas and documents for the department, big items like the Nuclear Posture Review, the Missile Defense Review, and all the security cooperation, we are constantly asking ourselves whether we are in fact in alignment with that higher level guidance.

So with respect to security cooperation, we look at those broader foreign policy considerations at the very front end, at the very outset, and we ask the geographic combatant commands, their staffs who are involved in security cooperation, to look up front at those dynamics and to make sure that, even before we embark upon detailed security planning that, you know, we’re taking into account things like human rights, the rule of law, and that we’re operating fully consistent with the law.

So the moral hazard issue that you mentioned – I mean, that’s not a new risk. That has always been with us. But I think with the appropriate oversight and the congressional mandates that we follow, you know, we are finally attuned to try to prevent those types of conflicts. There’s the Leahy vetting, and there are strict requirements for remediation – you know, those security institutions out there that may have violated something in the past. They have to be validated over time to make that that’s not going to happen again before we can consider assisting them at some point in the future. So those safeguards are in place, but it always – you know, it comes down to personnel being aware of the requirements and being vigilant.

MS. DALTON: OK, thank you so much, Dr. Anderson.

I’d like to open it up to audience Q&A. I will call on you if you would please raise your hand, and if you can please stand up, wait for a CSIS staff member to pass you a microphone. Please state your name and affiliation and your question in the form of a question.

There is a gentleman in the back. Thank you.

Q: Thank you very much. My name is Mike Jayjeets (ph). I teach at George Mason University and also lecture to the MoDAs on corruption.

So my question has to do with accountability in a slightly different sense than it was discussed here in terms of eliminating waste. Yesterday the U.S. Institute of Peace released a report on preventing extremism in fragile states. And the diagnosis of the problem was that kleptocratic and repressive states drive youth into violent extremism. And one of the solutions was to deal with our own security assistance and provide accountability for that so we don't dig the hole deeper. Paul Biya in Cameroon is an example.

So my two questions: when you talk about assessment, monitoring and evaluation – assessment particularly – does the Department of Defense do a risk assessment of corruption before we engage in a major undertaking in terms of security cooperation?

And second, the 2018 NDAA I think mandated that there be an anti-corruption strategy for, quote, “contingency operations,” which were not defined. It was really aimed at Afghanistan, but what was done was a generic strategy. Is the generic anti-corruption strategy being applied anywhere? And is there any intention to apply it in Afghanistan, which was really the purpose?

MS. DALTON: Great, thank you. And I commend to you the USIP report. We actually cite it in our report as well. It's terrific that so many folks are engaged on these critical issues.

Please.

MR. ANDERSON: So I haven't had the chance to read that report yet, but it certainly – when we think about assisting partner countries and partner militaries, we do think in terms of, you know, their institutions and how healthy they are. And certainly corruption is one of the variables where you don't want to – we don't want to waste taxpayer money, obviously, and we don't want to fuel any abuses. So this is something that we are certainly mindful of – ensuring that our assistance to, you know, defense institutions are appropriate, and in alignment, and consistent with the law.

And we do think this is the right approach. You know, the term nation-building really doesn't capture what we're trying to get at. It's more institution building, and in my world in the Pentagon, it's really defense institution building. So that's absolutely in the forefront of our minds making sure that our dollars are targeted and well-spent.

MS. DALTON: Great.

Right here in the front, Jacob?

Q: Thank you, Dr. Anderson. And thanks, Melissa, for a great report.

As you may know, the SIGAR report on child sexual abuse in Afghanistan recommended extending Leahy reporting requirements to DOD contractors, and in its response, DOD said it was studying the issue. I was wondering if you could update us on where DOD stands at this time on DOD contractors reporting gross violations of human rights to the department as far as Leahy vetting is concerned. Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: So I can't comment specifically on that particular report because I haven't seen it, but I can certainly reaffirm, as I mentioned in the remarks, you know, the department takes very seriously the human rights reporting requirements, and the vetting, and all the rest. It takes any

allegations of impropriety, or violence, or abuse extremely seriously, so – but beyond that I cannot comment on that particular report.

MS. DALTON: We probably have time for one more – the gentleman in the front.

Thank you.

Q: Thank you. Bill Veel (ph). I'm retired Foreign Service.

I have a question. I'm not sure it's really in the ballpark, but I wanted to try it. This is about the EU and the kind of dysfunctional defense industry problem that Europe has in terms of making their defense dollars go further. You mentioned several things which touch on that, but I'm wondering whether your office or any other part of the U.S. government is aiming at doing anything to put pressure so that our emphasis on increased defense spending by our NATO allies is money that's going to be wisely spent on division of labor and other types of things that need to be done in that European market. Is that any kind of thing that your office is grappling with?

MR. ANDERSON: So my office does not directly engage in kind of the industrial competition part of it, but my office is a functional office. We do have equities in NATO, and in particular, in burden sharing. So some of my team are absolutely involved in those discussions and in efforts to ensure that we do get fair burden sharing and that our allies and partners – in particular in the European theater, our NATO allies are pulling their fair share.

So you may have heard of the 20 and the 2, a formula that we use. We want to get our partners – our NATO partners to spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense matters and then 20 percent of that towards really meaningful capabilities.

We're not there yet when we talk about the group of 29, but the good news is there is a positive trajectory, and I think the number of countries that are hitting that 2 percent now has increased quite a bit, and we expect that to increase even further in the coming next couple of years.

This was a tremendous emphasis under then-Secretary Mattis, and I can assure you it continues to be a similar effort and priority for acting Secretary of Defense Shanahan. In fact, there's a defense ministerial coming up, I believe in June, and the topic of burden sharing, as well as other important topics, will no doubt be on the agenda yet again.

MS. DALTON: Terrific. Well, Dr. Anderson, thanks so much for joining us today, for your time and candor.

Please join me in thanking Dr. Anderson. (Applause.)

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

(END)