Statement before the

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Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

"Department of Defense's Security Cooperation and Assistance Programs and Authorities"

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Chairman Fischer, Ranking Member Nelson, and distinguished members of the sub-committee, I am honored to testify before you today on the Department of Defense's security cooperation programs and authorities. I will focus this written statement on an assessment of whether the Department uses security cooperation resources strategically, how the Department should be measuring effectiveness of its security cooperation programs, and whether the Department achieves an appropriate balance of security cooperation activities. I will end by emphasizing that security cooperation is central to meeting the challenges of the 21st century, which heightens the imperative of planning, managing, and resourcing security cooperation effectively.

Applying Resources Strategically

The United States pursues security cooperation around the world to develop partner nations' capabilities, build relationships and interoperability, and secure peacetime and contingency access to critical air, land, and sea nodes to protect U.S. national security interests.[1] Security cooperation can take the form of delivering training and equipment, conducting joint exercises and exchanges, and advising ministries of defense. In terms of scale, it can range from building a military from scratch, to providing niche capabilities, to advising partners engaged in a war fight.

Even on the low end of the spectrum, security cooperation can be difficult and imperfect; the complexity only grows with the greater scale of engagement—the U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan were the largest security cooperation undertakings of the last seventy years. The United States has a particularly mixed record of using security cooperation to attempt to stabilize fragile states. It makes these investments based on the premise that it will not have to fight as many wars directly if it builds the capabilities and capacity of indigenous security forces. However, security cooperation efforts in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen have yielded mixed to poor results.

The reality is, beyond building partnership capacity and capabilities in foreign militaries, security cooperation can advance U.S. national security objectives. U.S. security cooperation in Northeast Asia has largely deterred North Korea and assured allies in that region for seven decades, though not without incident. U.S. security partnerships in the Gulf and Israel have on balance deterred Iranian aggression and prevented Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon to date, although Iran continues to foment instability in the region. Of course, none of these security cooperation efforts work in isolation. Indeed, they have worked best when coupled with U.S. and international diplomatic and economic levers, and when the United States and its partner countries have strong political alignment on desired outcomes.

Security cooperation can yield force enabling and multiplying benefits through deepening relationships with allies and partners. It unlocks posture and access possibilities for U.S. forces in the event of crises and contingencies. Seven decades of security cooperation with Japan

[1] DoD Directive 5132.03, DoD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Cooperation, October 24, 2008, http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/513203p.pdf

enabled the United States and Japan to respond to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2011, given U.S. investments in Japan's humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, lift, and logistics capabilities. Security cooperation allows the United States to obtain intelligence and operational insights that would not otherwise be available, such as in the African Sahel. Perhaps most importantly, common security approaches build standards of trust and mutual responsibility in the international system. Trust and relationships solidified in the International Security Assistance Force coalition in Afghanistan enabled the United States to gradually rally and lead a coalition of allies and partners keen to combat the Islamic State's brutality.

Congress and the Department should strive for streamlining security cooperation authorities, where appropriate. However, changes in the security environment should prompt an examination of how the Department aligns its security cooperation resources, and inefficiencies in processes and roles and responsibilities should be corrected to ensure that the Department applies security cooperation resources strategically.

Adapting to a Changing Security Environment

The United States faces an increasingly complex security environment with interlinking challenges, from China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, to transnational threats including the Islamic State, al-Qaida, and their affiliates, as well as cyber. With this level of complexity, the United States rarely is able to address these challenges alone and must leverage its relationships with partners and allies around the globe to protect its interests. In addition, power in the international system is growing increasingly diffuse, prompting the United States to use a network of partnerships to achieve its objectives. Moreover, declining defense budgets have heightened the urgency of the United States and its security partners leveraging and synthesizing military capabilities where possible in support of shared interests, such as counterterrorism and the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction.[2]

In this context, hybrid and fragmented state conflicts may increasingly compel the United States to seek partnerships with non-state actors. The default is to use Title 50 authorities and funding in these situations, given the historical need to keep a low-profile while operating in sensitive environments. However, as the United States finds itself increasingly operating in hybrid areas, where adversaries deftly co-opt non-state actors to advance their objectives, Washington may want to publicly highlight partnerships with non-state entities for strategic purposes at times, or link those partnerships to military activities. Given the pervasiveness of hybrid operating environments in the 21st century, the sub-committee should consider new legal authorities to permit Title 10 security cooperation partnerships with non-state actors, in coordination with the Department of State, to give the President and the Department more options for dealing with hybrid challenges. A robust assessment, monitoring, and evaluation framework could help

[2] Federated Defense Concept, Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 16, 2013, http://csis.org/publication/federated-defense-project-concept-paper

mitigate the risks of partnerships with non-state actors, with established off-ramps for turning the assistance off if program objectives are not met.

Contemporary security challenges also require close collaboration among DoD and its interagency partners, including USAID, not only in Washington but also critically, on the ground. In localities, countering terrorism and countering violent extremism are inseparable in working with partners. Yet, U.S. government agencies still encounter obstacles in collaborating to address this challenge. Congress and the Department should evaluate the risks and benefits of creating a transfer authority between the Department and USAID to enable, where appropriate, DoD to transfer funds to USAID. Such a mechanism could help Combatant Commands better link their partnered counterterrorism efforts to USAID countering violent extremism prevention programs. Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation efforts at both DoD and USAID could closely track the performance of these linked initiatives.

In addition, security cooperation will continue to be a tool of choice for policymakers to respond to contingencies. The Department has the authorities it needs to rapidly inject security cooperation to partners in crisis response situations. However, the Department's acquisition and delivery systems for security cooperation are often slow to prioritize these emerging requirements, and may not have the appropriate personnel or manpower to staff these crisis requirements, resulting in delays that present operational risks. DoD should be compelled by law to better link and resource security cooperation acquisition and delivery systems to respond to crises.

Within today's challenging security and fiscal environment, the United States must constantly make tradeoffs in where and how it allocates its forces. Security cooperation is a relatively cost-effective tool in the U.S. force posture kit. Because U.S. forces based overseas can combine their own training and activities with security cooperation with allies and partners, security cooperation incurs few costs to U.S. forces operating abroad. Under budgetary constraints, DoD leaders have stressed the need to reprioritize limited assets and develop innovative ways of maintaining a forward presence to project power as the U.S. military rebuilds its readiness. As the United States considers how to right-size its global posture, security cooperation through periodic and strategically targeted combined exercises with partners could provide a low-cost alternative to continued forward deployment of U.S. forces.

Aligning Resources through Process

The Department should take a number of policy steps to strategically align its security cooperation resources. Specifically, the Department should tighten the alignment from the defense strategy and the Guidance for the Employment of the Force (GEF) to Theater Campaign Plans (TCP) and specific security cooperation activities. For example, combined exercises with partners that clearly link to U.S. operational objectives should be prioritized, such that the United States is mostly exercising with partners with which it would actually respond to a contingency.

Exercises that simply seek to "build relationships," while important and which have ancillary benefits, should receive lower prioritization.

The Department should also work with the Department of State and the broader U.S. interagency to enact the security sector processes called for in Presidential Policy Directive 23 (PPD 23), to strengthen the linkage between U.S. strategic priorities and security cooperation investments.[3] PPD 23 calls for greater interagency coordination, the creation of integrated country strategies, and presses for linkage to TCP development. It will require an iterative process to allow for feedback from Embassy country teams as the situation on the ground and with the partner evolves, which is vital to ensuring that the United States can adapt its strategy and the application of security cooperation resources.

Adjusting Roles and Responsibilities

The management and oversight of DoD security cooperation programs are inefficiently spread throughout the organization. To increase efficiency, DoD should be compelled by law to adjust certain security cooperation roles and responsibilities. Specifically, the Department should move all program management and administrative implementation of security cooperation to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), under the oversight of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. This will require reforms within the DSCA workforce and management to ensure that leaders and staff with the appropriate skills are administering the programs. The Department should also consolidate all policy oversight of security cooperation programs, including counterterrorism and counter narcotics programs, to a single OSD-Policy office.

Reforming the Security Cooperation Workforce

Given that security cooperation is an operational activity anchored in the defense strategy, the Department should appropriately recruit, train, and staff a professional security cooperation workforce, as it does for all other lines of defense effort. Currently, the Military Services and Departments deprioritize security cooperation in resource allocation decisions, because the operational benefits are not clearly defined or linked to their strategic planning documents. Moreover, there is no security cooperation career track for military personnel. Services should be required to organize to meet security cooperation priorities that flow from the defense strategy, including maintaining dedicated units of trained personnel with expertise to deliver the full range of security cooperation activities. Contract and acquisition workforce within the Military Departments must be protected to retain the ability to transfer material to foreign partners in support of strategic objectives. Specific roles for Services in security cooperation, such as organizing and allocating personnel for security cooperation, should be specified in law.

[3] "Fact Sheet: U.S. Security Sector Assistance Policy," The White House Office of the Press Secretary, April 5, 2013, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/04/05/fact-sheet-us-security-sector-assistance-policy

Measuring Effectiveness

The Department lacks a system to assess, monitor, and evaluate the performance of its security cooperation efforts. It measures effectiveness either very tactically (e.g., marksmanship or number of strikes or KIA by a partner) or semi-qualitatively, based on judgments of a partner's satisfaction, compliance, and enabling U.S. policies and activities. However, in the absence of an assessment, monitoring and evaluation (AM&E) framework, these judgments lack consistency and rarely inform future security cooperation decisions. In short, the Department does not have a mechanism to determine return on investment for security cooperation. Developing an effective AM&E method for security cooperation resources could help the United States achieve stronger alignment with its strategic objectives.

Critically, in coordination with the Department of State and through integrated country strategies, the Department should identify not only objectives for security cooperation but also outcomes. It must also conduct a rigorous front end assessment of how security cooperation will affect a partner country, beyond the discrete military contact. Security cooperation serves military ends, but it also has "pin ball" effects on political, economic, and military structures and actors of the partner state, sometimes in unintended ways. With the Department of State and the Intelligence Community, the Department should conduct a front end assessment of short and long term effects of a security cooperation program in a country before deploying it.

The Combatant Commands should conduct programmatic AM&E for security cooperation. The Office of the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Department of State, should be tasked with developing an AM&E framework, to include Congressional reporting requirements. The framework could provide policy parameters for the COCOMs programmatic assessments, with feedback mechanisms to allow for policy and programmatic adjustments as security cooperation partnerships evolve.

Balancing Activities for a Coherent Program

Current DoD policy is to create a comprehensive package of security cooperation for partners, including institution building and sustainment. However, in practice, U.S. political imperatives and operational demands, as well as partner preferences and challenges, often hinder implementation of a coherent and enduring security cooperation program.

In coordination with the Department of State, DoD must improve its definition of desired outcomes for security cooperation and then determine the best tools to employ to achieve a balanced program. By law, the Department should be required to articulate the outcome for security cooperation programs when providing Congressional notification. There may be times when the Department contends that it wants to provide training and equipment to a partner for a shorter-term, contingency-linked purpose. U.S. political imperatives to do something in the near term in response to a crisis often press the Department to deploy train and equip measures without thinking through the consequences. However, the Department should not ascribe more to

this kind of "partnership" than there really is, that is narrow in purpose and perhaps also in duration, or it may expose itself to operational and political risk if the partner ultimately has a different outcome in mind. However, if the outcome sought by both the Department and the partner is a longer term relationship, then they should make a balanced investment of institution building, advising, exercises, education, training, and equipping, using the full security cooperation toolkit, informed and continually updated by AM&E.

This will not be easy. Even if the United States insists on a balanced security cooperation program, many partners will still want to primarily receive equipment. Frank dialogue between the United States and its security partners helps correct asymmetries of information and expectations, but gaps will remain and should be acknowledged. Whereas the United States views security cooperation as a tool to achieve broader U.S. objectives, a partner may view security cooperation as an entitlement. Other partners may fear the risk of empowering their militaries beyond elite units that they can personally control. Moreover, institutional corruption and lack of prioritization of institution building and sustainment within partner nations can slow their development of capable forces through security cooperation programs.

In its engagements with partners, the Department should stress that enduring partnerships and the ability of partners to act independently depends on institution building and sustainment. The DoD Directive on Defense Institution Building (DIB) is a promising start to defining and strategically orienting the Department's security cooperation efforts to include DIB.[4] However, DIB often rubs sensitivities of political and economic structures in partner country, affecting who is empowered and how planning and funding decisions are made, which the partner may view with suspicion and distrust and prompt questioning of U.S. motives. Even with a willing partner, it takes years for institution building efforts to solidify and yield results. While Congressional and policy oversight and AM&E of DIB will be important, Congress and the Department should moderate their expectations for improvement to account for long-term effects that are rarely evident in the short term.

Conclusion

The United States faces a daunting array of security challenges in the 21st century that only a network of partners can address together. Security cooperation enables these partnerships, but may falter without stronger strategic alignment, assessment, and management of resources. The Department continually reaches for security cooperation to address challenges and crises but does not give it the investments in training, personnel, and policy to sustain and strategically employ it, as it does for its hard power tools. Within the security cooperation enterprise, adapting to a changing security environment, aligning resources to priorities, adjusting roles and responsibilities, reforming the workforce, measuring effectiveness, and balancing activities for a

[4] DoD Directive 5205.82 Defense Institution Building (DIB), http://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/DoDD%20on%20DIB-SIGNED%20EFFECTIVE%2027%20Jan%202016.pdf

coherent program will enable the United States to better employ security cooperation as a strategic tool of national power.