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**Before the**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC)**  
**“Examining U.S. Security Cooperation and Assistance”**  
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**Introduction**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today on examining U.S. security cooperation and assistance. The United States is at a pivotal moment with our allies and partners as we work to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. Together, we confront unprecedented challenges to our security, including the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) global ambitions to rival the United States and Russian aggression that threatens the territorial integrity of Europe, while we also battle historic transnational threats.

One of the most important ways that we will rise to meet these challenges is by renewing a U.S. strategic advantage—our unmatched network of allies and partners. The forthcoming National Defense Strategy will emphasize how the Department will strengthen these alliances and partnerships to advance national security through integrated deterrence. As Secretary Austin underscores, integrated deterrence is incorporating our efforts across domains and the spectrum of conflict to ensure that the Department closely cooperates with the rest of the government and our allies and partners on the most critical security challenges. Security cooperation is an important tool that helps key allies and partners strengthen their defense and enhances our ability to rely on one another in a time of need.

Resilient partnerships thrive when values and deeds align; security cooperation aims to uphold that approach. Key planning assumptions, such as ensuring the technology and capability we provide can be absorbed, maintained, and sustained by the recipient are the basics; to fully realize our shared interests, assistance must align with our strategic objectives and include foundational aspects. On the last point, we aim to help allies and partners with not only specific capabilities, but also with institutional integrity and an ability to promote our shared values.

**The Department’s Approach to Security Cooperation**

Our relationships provide us with a reservoir of strength. They allow us to operate by, with, and through our allies and partners to meet shared security challenges. The degree of partnership should not be measured by the quantity of security cooperation programs, but rather by their quality. The Department of Defense has learned from large-scale assistance programs that for lasting impact, a comprehensive engagement plan involves more than training and equipping. Importantly, we are building a culture of learning and adaptation, drawing on lessons from program successes, as well as, from programs that did not have the desired impact. We are building a learning agenda and integrating it into decision processes, and measure program impact in a way that assesses real change, rather than counting our own inputs into programs as successes in themselves. We seek to learn lessons and avoid the fallacy of sunk costs by ruthlessly prioritizing programs that are strategic,

and setting appropriate expectations for programs that provide more of a tactical advantage. Through this approach, we can unlock the comparative advantages our allies and partners bring as we collectively work together to meet our shared objectives.

A key aspect of the success of the security cooperation enterprise is the collaboration among and within the Department, most notably DoD's close collaboration with the State Department ensures that programs are designed and executed with broader national security interests in mind. Internal to the Department of Defense, we recently reorganized – bringing the Defense Security Cooperation Agency under the umbrella of Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities in the Office of the Secretary of the Defense for Policy to facilitate better collaboration and coordination. Success requires teamwork, and I can assure you that our entire team is focused on embracing it.

### **Who and What We Invest In**

I'll begin with who and what we invest in. First, we focus our global assets and resources to safeguard the most pressing concerns held by allies and partners who play critical roles in our shared security. The Department's invigorated focus on tailored allied and partner roles is one of the hallmarks of our evolving approach.

The way we approach security cooperation with states on China and Russia's periphery fundamentally differs from how we employ security cooperation elsewhere. Here, our approach emphasizes building resilience and capability to counter coercive or revisionist activity.

By contrast, when we look to the rest of the world, the Department wants to cultivate select security partners who can appropriately and effectively be regional security anchors, especially during crises.

By leveraging these approaches, we are able to identify, export, and implement those capabilities that shape the strategic calculus and allow us increased operational flexibility. Whether the vehicle is Department of Defense security cooperation, foreign military sales, or co-development, we will work to provide critical capabilities with allies and partners in a way that makes a real difference. This requires employing the full security cooperation toolkit including engagement tools, capacity building, training, professional military education, and our regional centers in each area of responsibility.

Security sector assistance with the United States is not simply about training and equipping. It is based on a holistic concept of security sector reform and governance that seeks to shape partners' defense institutions to enshrine shared values. Our system of security sector assistance is premised on the rule of law, human rights, and transparency. This is not simply a box we check; it is a strategic advantage. Predatory activities by rival powers seek to win power and influence. The United States believes that these activities are shortsighted and in the long-run, they disadvantage those nations that accept what is sold as assistance from such powers. And many of these nations are coming to realize the costs of the compacts they have joined. The United States offers an alternative. By incorporating security sector reform into the security sector assistance process, our capacity building shapes ally and partner defense institutions in a way that foment long-term growth, development, and enshrinement of critical values.

## **Sustainable Impact**

For each of these investments, we emphasize the tangible change that will happen as a result of our efforts, and keep our focus on a sustained impact that outlasts the particular investment. This requires robust assessment, monitoring, and evaluation. We are no longer satisfied with measuring inputs or outputs, but rather we are taking a longer view of the way our partners can sustain capabilities we provide. To this end, we are adopting rigorous learning, encouraging our workforce and partners to identify past pitfalls to draw out what success looks like in security cooperation and tailor it to the partner's context. This learning will be supported by objectives that ensure our efforts are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and anchored in a time frame, ensuring the sustainability of our programs.

The Department of Defense, in close collaboration with the Department of State, has also instituted a robust strategic evaluation agenda focused on making public key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. We are working every day to find ways to quantify, interpret, and evaluate return on investment with our security cooperation dollars. Currently, strategic evaluations span the effectiveness of maritime security, institutional capacity building, the State Partnership Program, the Counter-ISIL Train and Equip Fund (CTEF), and International Professional Military Education.

## **Integrated Approach to How We Do Business**

Third, we recognize that how we do business matters in achieving impact. We employ an integrated approach to partnership that includes longer-term thinking and a whole-of-government effort to achieve sustained and resilient partnership, consideration of the elements within our control and our partner's control that determine whether the investment is effective, and consideration of external threats and third parties that may compromise the investment.

Security cooperation programs often fall short when they do not take into account higher order questions of mission, organizational structure, and personnel. The President's *Strategy on Countering Corruption* highlights the need to integrate corruption considerations in our work as well, which includes our security cooperation programs. We are building our tools to address these issues with partners by improving our institutional capacity and our dialogue with partners, and making tough choices when partners are not willing or not able to make critical changes. This is especially relevant for sustainability, ensuring that our partnerships are resilient to shocks and stresses, and can endure well past the day when we are consistently investing in them.

We continue to invest in the professionalization of our security cooperation workforce by requiring increasingly rigorous training. We are investing in the concept of institutionalizing the defense diplomacy role the Department's representatives in embassies play, ensuring that the partnerships they promote are consistent with our national security interests and values.

What ultimately sets apart the United States in an environment of strategic competition are the values we represent. Our ability to maintain and continue to set a high bar for human rights, humanitarian affairs, and rule of law—including our civilian oversight of the military—is a critical tool we can

leverage to help our partners meet their goals and advance those shared values. Doing so is both a moral and strategic imperative.

We also take our responsibility in the humanitarian sector very seriously, as we play an important supporting role in the interagency in supporting civil authorities in countries facing crises. Whether it is managing crisis response capacity building under the Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, Assistance and Civic Aid (OHDACA) account, employing Foreign Disaster Relief, or maintaining Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA), the Department is committed to supporting our partners' efforts to provide humanitarian services to their civilian populace. During our recent reorganization within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Policy), we have merged the offices of Stability and Humanitarian Affairs and Security Cooperation to form a new Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Partnerships. This shift deliberately integrated humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and human rights with the existing processes related to security cooperation to emphasize the centrality of these areas of defense cooperation that benefit allies and partners in need. Women, Peace and Security; civilian protection; and respect for the rule of law also fall into this issue set. This integration will help us look more holistically at the needs and challenges our partners and their diverse populations face, particularly when those needs can spiral into crises that spill outside the country's borders.

Of course, none of this is possible without close collaboration with our interagency partners. We rely heavily on our colleagues at the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development to achieve the effects we need to achieve, whether through joint development and planning, supplementing and coordinating security programs through structured diplomatic and military engagement, or ensuring that security cooperation fits into broader foreign policy goals.

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, I began by sharing with you how the U.S. network of alliances and partnerships is a strategic advantage that competitors cannot match. I conclude by sharing that this advantage is not a given. It requires active involvement by the entire U.S. government, listening to partners' concerns and contexts, and taking a thoughtful and deliberate approach to how we employ our resources to meet our priorities. That is facilitated by good strategy, good policy, and close partnership among the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and Congress. I appreciate the Committee's leadership on this critical issue and thank you for the opportunity to share our vision for engagement with allies and partners through security cooperation.