

Department of Defense Strategic Evaluation
Synchronization of DoD and NATO Security Cooperation Programs and Activities (2016-2020)
Public Summary

The Department of Defense (DoD) sponsors strategic evaluations of security cooperation programs and activities pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 383 and DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5132.14, “Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy for the Security Cooperation Enterprise.”

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Partnerships (ODASD(GP)) and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) initiated a strategic evaluation of United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) security cooperation synchronization efforts (2016-2020). DoD commissioned Commonwealth Trading Partners, Inc. (CTP) to conduct this strategic evaluation.

This summary, developed by ODASD(GP), provides unclassified primary findings, conclusions, and recommendations relevant to DoD that are derived from the evaluation report.

The evaluation focused on three evaluation questions:

1. What are the current DoD and NATO processes for planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of security cooperation programs and activities? Where and how do these processes synchronize with each other?
2. To what extent does DoD and NATO collaboration lead to more effective security cooperation outcomes?
3. How could DoD and NATO planning and implementation processes be better synchronized to contribute effectively and efficiently to shared strategic objectives?

Evaluation Scope and Methodology. This evaluation focused on security cooperation activities from FY 2016 to FY 2020 and used document reviews, interviews, and three case studies (Georgia, Jordan, and Tunisia) to evaluate how DoD and NATO collaborated in support of PNs . The evaluation team defined synchronization as the alignment of intersection points to enable cooperative decisions and actions in security cooperation planning and design, implementation, and assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AM&E). The evaluation team conducted desk research, semi-structured stakeholder interviews, and group interviews with personnel from DoD (including DSCA, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), and U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM)), the Department of State, and NATO.

Findings and Conclusions:

- **Lack of clearly defined processes.** Approximately three quarters of interviewees reported that mechanisms for coordinating security cooperation planning, implementation, or AM&E processes between NATO and DoD Combatant Commands were not clearly defined during the evaluation period.
- **Indirect alignment of objectives.** Overwhelmingly, interviewees said that effective synchronization improved achieving program objectives. but Forty percent of interviewees indicated that DoD bilateral program objectives and NATO program objectives were generally aligned during the evaluation period.

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- **Lack of multilateral coordination among relevant stakeholders.** The majority of interviewees indicated that, during the evaluation period, coordination between stakeholders primarily occurred during the implementation phase; that the effectiveness of synchronization depended on stakeholder personalities; and that the level of coordination varied among specific countries and programs. According to these interviewees, coordination and synchronization happened mostly in bilateral security cooperation activities, not among U.S., NATO, and partner stakeholders working multilaterally together in a formal multilateral process.
- **Low duplication of activities.** The evaluation team found little evidence of duplication between DoD and NATO security cooperation activities during the evaluation period. In particular, interviewees reported long-standing efforts among all stakeholders in Georgia and Jordan to avoid duplication.
- **Inhibited DoD-NATO Communication.** A diverse set of factors, including legal, technical, and policy hurdles, appeared to inhibit timely communication during SC planning and implementation processes during the evaluation period. Interviewees reported that the lack of a common network for use by U.S., NATO, and PN stakeholders, along with the presence of network firewalls and the use of different classification systems, often prevented parties from effective communication.
- **High degree of transparency overall.** While a significant (29%) number of interviewees said they had experienced a lack of transparency between NATO Allies and partner nations about bilateral security cooperation activities, a majority (77%) of partner nation interviewees affirmed that they perceived their relationship to DoD and NATO as transparent and well understood during the evaluation period.
- **Gaps in the collection and sharing of AM&E data.** As AM&E was still a relatively new requirement during the time period of this study, stakeholders were relatively unfamiliar with emerging AM&E policies and processes during the evaluation period. That said, stakeholders did use performance management processes (e.g., after action reports, campaign plan assessments, and post-training reports). ~~Some~~ Only 27% of DoD interviewees were aware of the new AM&E requirements. Many did not have the necessary time, training, or knowledge to fully support and implement this activity during the evaluation period.

Recommendations. The evaluation team developed the following recommendations to inform future DoD decision making on security cooperation synchronization with NATO to ensure better alignment of DoD bilateral and NATO program objectives.

- Institutionalize annual security cooperation meetings with key U.S., NATO, and partner nation stakeholders, followed by more regular working level meetings and working groups, and produce reports of those meetings to enable the United States and NATO to

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initiate joint planning for new security cooperation efforts. NATO should also disseminate these reports to partner nations as appropriate.

- Increase U.S. officials' knowledge of NATO's security cooperation practices by incorporating courses on NATO's operations, history, work, and processes into DoD workforce training plans, including a potential online course. Collaborate with NATO to create a parallel online course to educate NATO personnel on how DoD advances and executes security cooperation activities to achieve strategic objectives. Consider developing a temporary duty staff exchange program to increase synchronization activities.
- Enhance leadership messaging to support synchronization efforts. Encourage senior DoD leadership to promote the importance of synchronization in DoD and NATO security cooperation activities. Explore how to inject security cooperation synchronization as a theme into the NATO Defense Planning Process.
- Locate/assign DSCA officials at NATO HQ to support synchronization between DoD and NATO regarding security cooperation.
- DoD agencies should better leverage relationships with NATO to amplify U.S. goal and objectives among partner nations. Clarify the United States' and NATO's respective program objectives and priorities with all stakeholders. Create a common framework for information sharing and regular coordination.
- Improve data systems, including Socium, to better support AM&E efforts. Create a taxonomy to name, define, and label procedures for data variables available to all users. Engage with NATO to encourage NATO to create a similar database, or if possible, request access to Socium.
- Streamline complex classification regulations and policies. Combatant commands should explore the benefit of producing unclassified security cooperation country plans that are releasable to both NATO and the partner nations.
- Encourage Security Cooperation Officers to make synchronization with NATO a part of their day-to-day responsibilities in planning, implementation, and AM&E.
- Continue to educate the security cooperation workforce on the importance of AM&E. Continue efforts to identify ways to collect more quantitative information for use as baseline data in all security cooperation program implementation. Create a repository of assessments where NATO, DoD, and partner nation stakeholders can share after-action reports on program implementation.

Evaluation Results. In accordance with DoDI 5132.14, "Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation Policy for the Security Cooperation Enterprise," the Department is considering recommendations and lessons learned from these evaluations as DoD evaluates potential adjustments to policy, programs, and resource allocation decisions, including the following:

- *Implementing Recommendations.* The Department is developing an internal action plan in coordination with primary stakeholder organizations to consider and implement useful recommendations from this and other evidence-building activities on similar topics.
- *Contributions to the SC Performance Management Framework.* DoD disseminated the evaluation teams' findings across the Department to support learning and process

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improvement. Content of the evaluation will be entered into a security cooperation activity database.

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