

NEWS FROM THE FRONT



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**The Front of Military Education and Security Cooperation:
Defense Security Cooperation University**

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Executive Summary

The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act directed the Defense Security Cooperation Agency to manage the Department of Defense Security Cooperation Workforce Development Program training and education standards, as well as identify and define training and certification requirements. The Defense Security Cooperation University was established in September 2019 to meet these obligations.

Front Cover: Justified Accord 2019 field training exercise opening ceremony

Photo by SGT Aubry Buzek

345th Public Affairs Detachment

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Overview

Security cooperation is defined as “all Department of Defense (DOD) interactions with foreign security establishments to build security relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and partner-nation military and security capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to allied and partner nations.”¹ Security cooperation is a multifaceted effort that requires more than just planning to develop the skills of a foreign security force. In 2017, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) created the DOD Security Cooperation Workforce Development Program (SCWDP) to develop and manage supporting security programs, improve the quality of the security cooperation workforce, and ensure personnel have the appropriate level of expertise and experience to perform their missions.²

The 2017 NDAA directed the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) to manage the SCWDP’s training and education standards, as well as identify and define training and certification requirements. Specifically, DSCA was required to “establish and maintain a school to train, educate, and certify the security cooperation workforce” To meet this obligation, DSCA established the Defense Security Cooperation University (DSCU) in September 2019, to educate and certify 20,000 U.S. government employees’ security cooperation and standardize their training.

Purpose

This article provides a brief description of the threat environment security cooperation must work within, an overview of the new DSCU, a discussion of the legal requirements emplaced on the DSCU, and an example course from DSCU and how this course meets the legal requirements.

The Threat and Environment

The threats the U.S. faces worldwide are vast and at times, overwhelming. They include both irregular and major power threats. Prior to 11 September 2001, irregular threats such as terrorist activities, piracy, trafficking of illegal drugs and illegal arms, and human smuggling already endangered U.S. and international security. However, today these entities are major nonstate actors that can threaten free societies across entire regions and even present transcontinental threats. Irregular forces do not have borders, uniforms, or rules, and will take advantage of any weakness found in the global system. The 2018 National Military Strategy states that “transnational threat groups, from jihadist terrorists to transnational criminal organizations, are actively trying to harm Americans.”³ However, these numerous irregular threats are too vast for the U.S. to handle alone and require the help of allies and partners.

The reemergence of a great power competition with Russia and China has also added to the need for effective security cooperation, and, as stated in the 2018 National Military Strategy, “represents the most difficult challenges facing the Joint Force.”⁴

The hard reality is that major powers like Russia and China are very much involved in the effort to gain greater influence around the world while diminishing the U.S.'s position. The 2017 National Security Strategy states that "China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity."⁵ Threats like the Islamic Republic of Iran cannot be taken lightly either, and the situation with North Korea, despite peace talks, is still unpredictable. Both are "determined to destabilize regions, threaten Americans and our allies, and brutalize their own people."⁶ Major powers are trying to secure alliances, minerals, or bases of support with neutral territories in order to diminish U.S. influence in the region. Without robust security cooperation efforts to unify U.S. efforts with those of its allies and partners, adversaries could gain a position of relative advantage.

"... by strengthening the militaries of our allies and partners, you actually strengthen your own security."

LTG Charles Hooper
Director, DSCA
25 September 2019

Source: C. Todd Lopez, <https://www.defense.gov/explore/story/Article/1971845/new-defense-school-to-educate-certify-security-cooperation-professionals/>

Security cooperation builds the capacity of foreign security forces to meet today's challenges, supporting and advancing the interests of the U.S. and partner nations. Aside from long-term allies and cohorts, the U.S. has new partners in the global security system, many of which need assistance. Not only is Eastern Europe no longer a satellite of the old Soviet Union power, but many of its nations are now members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This has tipped the balance of power away from Russia. Russia has executed actions, such as in Ukraine and the Black Sea, to regain its position of power. In Asia, the U.S. has incorporated former adversaries, such as Vietnam, as part of the U.S.'s security cooperation efforts to keep China's aggressive expansion at bay. Security cooperation is a growing industry in the strategic efforts of the U.S., and this is not likely to change in the near future. Security cooperation is a necessary activity that helps the U.S. respond to irregular and conventional threats.

Finally, it is important to understand that no single solution can be applied within the realm of security cooperation. The environment is too complex and U.S. adversaries are too diverse. It will take a force that understands and is well-educated in the intricacies of security cooperation. This is the main mission of the DSCU.

Breaking New Ground: The Defense Security Cooperation University

DSCA, whose current director is LTG Charles Hooper, it is a vital organization in accomplishing U.S. national security cooperation goals. DSCA's mission is to advance U.S. national security and foreign policy interests by building the capacity of foreign security forces to respond to shared challenges, and leads the broader U.S. Security cooperation enterprise in its efforts to train, educate, advise, and equip foreign partners.⁷ This is no easy endeavor, and the DOD must educate its forces in security cooperation to accomplish this task. To assist in this undertaking, DSCA established the DSCU as a professional education and research institute to help advance U.S. foreign policy through cooperation. Today, under the leadership of DSCU President, Cara Abercrombie, DSCU is proactively moving forward by building its educational prowess to help the DOD meet the adversary of today.



Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, John Rood; DSCA Director, LTG Charles Hooper; and DSCU President, Cara Abercrombie, participate in a ribbon cutting at the DSCU at Arlington, VA. Photo Credit: Navy PO2 James K. Lee, DOD, <https://www.defense.gov/explore/story/Article/1971845/new-defense-school-to-educate-certify-security-cooperation-professionals/>

DSCU is a ground-breaking organization launched in September 2019, to bring education and certification to the 20,000 U.S. government employees working in the field of security cooperation. The intent of DSCU is to align the security cooperation workforce with DOD doctrine and overall strategic direction. DSCU's goal is to certify the security cooperation workforce at a basic level by 2022.⁸

The 2017 NDAA states that the SCWDP must develop and manage a professional security cooperation workforce responsible for actions such as planning, assessing, monitoring, evaluating, and supporting the execution and administration of Title 10 (DOD-funded) security cooperation programs and Title 22 (Department of State funded) security assistance programs. Key guidance to DSCA includes the following: ⁹

- A. Provide direction to the DOD on the establishment of professional career paths for the personnel of the security cooperation workforce, addressing training and education standards, promotion opportunities and requirements, retention policies, and scope of workforce demands.
- B. Provide a mechanism to identify and define training and certification requirements for security cooperation positions in the DOD and a means to track workforce skills and certifications.
- C. Provide a mechanism to establish a program of professional certification in DOD security cooperation for personnel of the security cooperation workforce in different career tracks and levels of competency based on requisite training and experience.
- D. Establish requirements for training and professional development associated with each level of certification, provided under subparagraph C.
- E. Establish and maintain a school to train, educate, and certify the security cooperation workforce according to standards developed for purposes of subparagraph C.
- F. Provide a mechanism for assigning appropriately certified personnel of the security cooperation workforce to assignments associated with key positions in connection with security cooperation programs and activities.
- G. Identify the appropriate composition of career and temporary personnel necessary to constitute the security cooperation workforce.
- H. Identify specific positions throughout the security cooperation workforce to be managed and assigned through the program.

The establishment of DCSU provides the U.S. government a tool to certify and track security cooperation personnel at all levels. Like many DOD occupations, security cooperation is a highly skilled profession that requires both training and experience. DSCA will soon require various areas of concentration for all personnel working security cooperation efforts that will require basic, intermediate, advanced and/or expert-level qualifications.

DSCU offers distance learning and resident courses at the campuses in Dayton, OH (previously known as the Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies); Arlington, VA (Crystal City); or at the home station of the combatant/component commands. Many of the basic courses are offered online and provide an opportunity for basic security cooperation education to the entire joint community. The Introduction to Security Cooperation course is one such example. However, many more advanced courses are offered only as resident courses. Resident courses may incorporate a distance learning portion to provide students with an opportunity to think through various scenarios and develop the needed skill base to be successful in the resident course. A list of courses currently offered by DSCU are available online at <https://www.discs.dsca.mil/pages/courses/courses.aspx>.

Nesting Education Into Higher Guidance and Policy: A Course Example

DSCU courses are designed to meet the intent of higher guidance and policy initiatives, some of which are new and not necessarily common knowledge in the rapidly expanding world of security cooperation. One example of this is the DSCU's Intermediate Security Cooperation Planning, Oversight, and Execution (POE)-201 course. POE-201 assists students in complying with DOD Instruction (DODI) 5132.14, *Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AM&E) Policy for Security Cooperation*. POE-201 helps reconcile differences between formal military planning processes and those used in academia or other government agencies such as directives to develop initiative design documents, logic frameworks, and theories of change. POE-201 explains these methods of planning and increases understanding through extensive exercises. The course also provides students with the information they need to plan for, oversee, and execute the many complex and interrelated aspects of security assistance and security cooperation at the intermediate level.

"Even people in the workforce for 20 years are not necessarily aware of new policy initiatives."

Ms. Cara Abercrombie
President, DSCU
25 September 2019

Source: C. Todd Lopez, <https://www.defense.gov/explore/story/Article/1971845/new-defense-school-to-educate-certify-security-cooperation-professionals/>



Ira Queen, DSCU Associate Professor, instructs students in the Planning, Assessing, Monitoring, and Evaluating for Security Cooperation course at the Crystal City campus. Photo Credit: Douglas Davids

POE-201 provides standard operating procedures for planning security cooperation. Students arrive from their respective units with various experiences and methods of planning. This course provides a unified method for planning and evaluation for all security cooperation planners, including a common language among DOD personnel, Department of State, and other agencies. This is vital because Title 10 and Title 22 funding have an important role in security cooperation activities and endeavors.

The Way Ahead

Speaking at the opening of DSCU, LTG Hooper said, “The security cooperation profession has not been truly complete until today.” He added that the school will serve as a “center of excellence” to make security cooperation a professional career field.¹¹

In the global system today, security cooperation plays a vital role in the fight against worldwide state and nonstate threat actors. DSCU will continue to help lead U.S. security cooperation efforts and deliver an education that conveys understanding and unity to the planner and practitioner of security cooperation, providing a unified effort to meet the perilous world created by our adversaries.

For more information on DSCU see <https://www.dscu.mil/>.

Endnotes

¹ Joint Publication 3-20, "Security Cooperation," 23 May 2017.

² "Chapter 16-Security Cooperation," National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). FY 2017, § 384(a) and (b), 30 November 2016.

³ Description of the National Military Strategy, The Joint Staff, 2018.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ National Security Strategy of the United States, White House, December 2017.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, accessed 25 October 2019, <https://www.dsca.mil/>.

⁸ C. Todd Lopez, Defense.gov, "New defense school to educate, certify security cooperation professionals," 26 September 2018,

https://www.army.mil/article/227705/new_defense_school_to_educate_certify_security_cooperation_professionals.

⁹ "Chapter 16-Security Cooperation," NDAA 2017, § 384(e)(3).

¹¹ Lopez, "New defense school."