

# CONCLUSION

## A Vision for the Future of Defense Institution Building

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**A**s the United States faces the increasingly complex security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it must be able to rely on its partners and allies to share the burden of preventing conflict, ensuring lasting peace, and maintaining long-term stability. Assisting partners in their efforts to develop sustainable defense capacity is therefore vital to U.S. national security interests. In the case of security cooperation, however, traditional approaches have proven insufficient to achieve sustainable reforms. Defense institution building (DIB) is an innovative approach to security cooperation, emphasizing the importance of governance and management to the sustainability of partner capacity.

DIB efforts are defined in the introduction of this book as activities that empower partner-nation defense institutions to establish or re-orient their policies and structures to make their defense sectors more transparent, accountable, effective, affordable, and responsive to civilian control.<sup>1</sup> As each chapter demonstrates, DIB ensures that efforts to build capacity are undergirded by solid institutional foundations, which increase the effectiveness and sustainability of U.S. assistance and investments. At the same time, DIB is a process of facilitation, not imposition; through its partner-centric approach, DIB ensures that the process of building institutional capacity stems from and remains rooted in the partner. In doing so, DIB increases the partner's ability to achieve its security priorities, maintain national and regional stability, and address shared security challenges with the United States and its allies.

This chapter considers the challenges that lie ahead for DIB and draws on insights from the book to discuss possible ways forward. It looks first at the chronological development of U.S. DIB in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, tracing its evolution from the early 2000s through to its current state in 2017. Returning to the themes laid out in the introduction, it considers some of the major findings from the volume's chapters and then looks in depth at some of the outstanding challenges that DIB practitioners are currently grappling with, including defining U.S. interests and goals for DIB, understanding partner incentives, improving DIB assessments, measuring progress and evaluating DIB outcomes, organizing for DIB in the U.S. system, and shaping the DIB workforce. These sections provide recommendations for U.S. policymakers and practitioners who will be involved in future DIB endeavors.

## An Evolving Concept

In the past 15 years, the role of DIB has expanded in the United States. While U.S. assistance at the ministerial level and the recognition of a need to foster strong institutions is not entirely new, it is only in the past decade or so that programs dedicated specifically to building institutional capacities in support of effective defense sector governance have been developed and established in the United States. This section traces DIB's evolution from its roots in security cooperation in the post-Cold War era through to recent developments in 2017.

As Kerr and Hanlon and Perito detail at the beginning of this volume, U.S. DIB emerged out of three related but distinct developments. First, the shifting security environment after the end of the Cold War set the backdrop for a need to revise the security assistance system. The fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar order ushered in a decade of instability, dominated by weak states and intrastate violence. Hanlon and Perito note that while there was recognition that U.S. security assistance tools were not equipped to handle the challenges of the post-Cold War global order, the conventional mindset remained dominant. As a result, the existing security assistance architecture was not fundamentally realigned to match the requirements of a transformed security environment.

Second, the emergence of the concept of security sector reform (SSR) during the 1990s, which championed the nexus between security and development, established the theoretical underpinnings of the DIB concept. SSR challenged traditional notions of the link between economic development and peace, arguing instead for the importance of effective oversight, accountability, and governance of defense establishments to the economic, social, and political development of weak states. While the U.S. defense establishment did not initially embrace SSR as thoroughly as did Europe, the United States was involved in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations to reform the security and defense sectors of NATO aspirants in Eastern and Central Europe. Through the Wales Initiative Fund, established in 1994 to support the new Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, the United States first experienced the advantages—and the challenges—of DIB in practice, laying the foundations for DIB as a fundamental tool in the U.S. security toolkit.

Third, the changes that took place after September 11, 2001 (9/11) led to increased spending and authorities for security cooperation and a shift toward building partner capacity. As the United States contended with the Global War on Terrorism after 2001, it became rapidly apparent that it could not achieve its strategic objectives without cooperation and collaboration with its allies and partners. With the goal of raising and mentoring partner security forces, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) began to focus its counterterrorism strategy on military training, education, exercises, and acquisition projects. Yet, as Kerr discusses, the security assistance system designed for the requirements of the Cold War proved insufficient in the post-9/11 context, and the

multitude of programs and authorities launched to make up for the shortfalls—including many focused on training and equipping partners to improve their ability to fight terrorists and insurgents—were not effective or sustainable on their own. In the wake of disintegrating security in high profile cases like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, it became increasingly evident that institutional development was not an automatic outgrowth of training and equipping, and a concerted effort to establish governance would be necessary.

Thus, post-Cold War and 9/11 shifts in the external security environment, coupled with lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, led to the creation of new programs and capabilities designed to rebalance the security assistance framework. DIB was increasingly acknowledged as a, if not the, missing component of security cooperation efforts, coming into its own as a distinct tool of national security over the past decade.

The first institutionalization of the DIB concept came from the 2004 NATO Istanbul Summit, during which the Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building (PAP-DIB) was launched. Boland notes that NATO's Partnership Action Plans were issue-specific, result-oriented, and functionally focused mechanisms to improve cooperation among NATO allies and PfP partners on specific reform areas. Through PAP-DIB, DOD incorporated DIB into its bilateral NATO partnership programming, particularly through the Wales Initiative Fund. PAP-DIB gave the United States an initial introduction to the idea of targeted defense institution reform activities and laid the groundwork for similar efforts outside of the NATO context.

In the years following the initial ground operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, it became increasingly evident that traditional security cooperation approaches were falling short. There was a shift toward emphasizing effectiveness and building sustainable capacity through security cooperation efforts, as reflected in defense guidance documents beginning around 2006. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, for instance, stated that “[w]henver advisable, the United States works with or through others: enabling allied and partner capabilities, building their capacity, and developing collaborative mechanisms to share the decisions, risks and responsibilities of today’s complex challenges.”<sup>2</sup> The 2008 Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF)—a document that provides comprehensive strategic guidance to the combatant commanders and their staffs—also indicated a shift in how security cooperation was conceived at the strategic level by the DOD. The GEF gave prominence to the role that security cooperation plays in achieving national security goals, making security cooperation operations a primary focus of theater planning; where contingency planning had previously been central, the 2008 GEF emphasized “continuous engagement, rather than contingency operations, as the principal military means to attain national objectives[,] acknowledge[ing] the relative economy of conflict prevention and the importance of partner relationships and capacity in an increasingly interconnected world.”<sup>3</sup> For DIB, the GEF was particularly important as it listed institutional capacity—i.e. activities that “Strengthen [a] Partner nation’s security sector [by building] long-term institutional capacity and capability”—as one of the main focus areas for security cooperation operations.<sup>4</sup>

By 2009, the DIB concept began to take hold in DOD. As Ross notes, the evidence of institutional gains in Eastern Europe, coupled with concerns about institutional failings in Iraq and Afghanistan, spurred an increased commitment to DIB from the Department of Defense. As Giraldo describes, U.S. DIB moved away from a gap-filling, donor-driven approach based on international best practices, toward a more holistic, partner-driven approach, based on iterative and flexible scoping and implementation in the short to medium term. In February of 2009, DOD, the State Department (DOS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development released a report arguing for a more holistic, interagency, “3D” (defense, diplomacy, and development) approach to security sector reform.<sup>5</sup> The report argued that “[t]he increasingly complex threats facing our partners and our own nation urgently require that we address the linkages among security, governance, development, and conflict in more comprehensive and sustainable ways.”<sup>6</sup> The report aimed to improve the U.S. approach to foreign assistance to ensure that “it promotes effective, legitimate, transparent, and accountable security sector development in partner states.”<sup>7</sup> One of the document’s guiding principles calls for U.S. practitioners and policymakers to balance operational support with institutional reform.<sup>8</sup>

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review further stressed the need for security cooperation to go beyond training and equipping partner forces, focusing instead on the institutional and human dimensions required to develop partner defense capacity and to sustain U.S. security investments: “the Department recognizes that in order to ensure that enhancements developed among security forces are sustained, the supporting institutions in partner nations must also function effectively.”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in 2010, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates gave a speech in which he said,

*We have made great strides in building up the operational capacity of our partners – training and equipping troops and mentoring them in the field. But there has not been enough commensurate attention paid to building the institutional capacity – such as defense ministries – and the human capital – leadership skills and attitudes – needed to sustain security over the long term. We have come to recognize that the security sector of at-risk countries is in reality, a system of systems tying together military, police, justice, and other governance and oversight mechanisms. As such, building a partner’s overall governance and security capacity is a shared responsibility across multiple agencies and departments of the U.S. national security apparatus – one that requires flexible, responsive tools that incentivize cooperation.*<sup>10</sup>

During this time, the security cooperation system began to undergo a series of changes, largely in response to the acknowledgement that, despite the magnitude of resources being dedicated to training and equipping, security cooperation activities had resulted in short-term and often failed outcomes. Iraq and Afghanistan were high profile examples, but Chalfin and Thomas-Greenfield note that where the United States also

invested significant amounts of money in sub-Saharan African militaries and police, the ability of these countries to address their security challenges remained insufficient. Based on years of security assistance delivery, the United States government concluded that if the aim was to develop sustained and effective capacity to tackle security and justice challenges, then the traditional approach for providing security cooperation was incomplete. This lack of success, paired with mounting Congressional frustration over the unclear objectives and opaque budgets surrounding many capacity building efforts, raised questions about the efficacy of existing security cooperation approaches.

Congress established a security cooperation reforms task force in 2010 to identify pain points across the security cooperation system. There was a growing recognition that the organizational structure of the security assistance and cooperation system, which operated along the 1960s model created to support security assistance in the Cold War security environment, had not been able to keep up with the evolving threats of the modern era. The findings of the task force would later lay the basis of new security cooperation planning guidance released by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) in 2012. The Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI) and the Ministry of Defense Advisors Program were also both established during this time to help partner nations build defense capacity at the institutional and ministerial level.<sup>11</sup> The establishment of such programs indicated that, through a bottom-up effort, DIB was increasingly accepted as an important national security tool. In 2013, Presidential Policy Directive 23 on security sector assistance was released, which (at least on paper) called for security cooperation efforts to focus on helping partners develop security sector capacity, while also promoting democratic principles of good governance and rule of law, echoing many of the same principles as SSR.<sup>12</sup> At this stage, DIB efforts were piecemeal at best; with no overarching strategy to guide a long-term systematic approach, and no coherent goals or outcomes, DIB was frequently approached as an add-on to existing train and equip programs, or as a gap-filling mechanism to plug holes in capacity.<sup>13</sup>

In 2014, amidst the reforms taking place around the security cooperation system, OSD created the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Security Cooperation, bringing a new level of leadership and centralized strategy to the security cooperation system. The same year, DOS established the Security Governance Initiative to improve the U.S. approach to building security capacity in Africa. Through the initiative, the United States partnered with six African countries to address the strategic and institutional reforms required for governments to tackle key security challenges, with an emphasis on enhancing the accountability, oversight, and transparency of their security and defense sectors, including through targeted DIB activities.

Since 2015, policy and process for DIB has been more formally institutionalized in the U.S. defense toolkit and seen for its standalone value. In October 2015, the Defense Governance Management Team (DGMT) was established as “an elite, leading defense governance and management organization providing the ideas, approaches, resources and capabilities necessary for DOD/USG [U.S. Government] to plan, implement, and

manage DIB projects, develop methodology and doctrine, and train and educate DIB and security cooperation personnel.”<sup>14</sup> DGMT manages and implements key programs, such as the DIRI, and supports the institutional and governance reform aspects of other DOD and interagency initiatives, such as the Security Governance Initiative (SGI), the NATO Defense Capacity Building Initiative, the Maritime Security Initiative, the Counter Terrorism Partnership Fund, and the Vertically Integrated Logistics Approach. It also serves as a knowledge management hub. Since its establishment, DGMT has more than doubled its in-country activities, from 137 activities in 27 countries in fiscal year (FY) 2015 to 284 in 52 countries in FY 2017.<sup>15</sup>

In 2016, the DOD released a directive on DIB, which formally defined the discipline and delineated the roles, aims, and responsibilities within the DOD.<sup>16</sup> This directive establishes DIB’s integral role in security cooperation efforts. More recently, DIB was codified in sections 332 and 333 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2017, which specifies that defense institution capacity building, as well as human rights training, should be an element of all foreign capacity building, including train and equip efforts.<sup>17</sup> The 2017 NDAA consolidated some of the old security cooperation authorities (of which there were over 120 by 2015) into new, simplified authorities and expanded the ability of the security cooperation workforce to engage with partners on capacity-building issues over extended periods of time, helping to move security cooperation efforts toward a clearer, more effective and integrated framework. It also helped reduce the risk of providing equipment and training to countries that cannot assimilate or sustain it, or indeed those that would misuse it, or let it fall into the hands of nefarious actors due to lack of governance capacity.

## Crosscutting Themes

As it becomes increasingly mainstreamed in U.S. defense strategy, those planning and implementing DIB can use the wealth of insights that the authors have provided throughout this volume to avoid pitfalls and improve future efforts. While this chapter cannot possibly summarize all of the book’s lessons, findings, and recommendations, the sections below draw out some of the main insights, starting with three crosscutting themes that are laid out in the Introduction and echoed throughout the chapters: first, the challenges posed by the extended timeframe of the DIB process; second, the importance of approaching each DIB case without a preset template; and third, the centrality of ownership in institution building, without which no DIB effort can succeed.

### *Time*

DIB is a long-term process aimed at long-term gains. It seeks to alter institutional behavior and norms in a partner’s existing defense culture, changes that can take decades or even generations to cultivate. As Milante and Bisca note, recent analysis suggests that it takes 15 to 25 years to improve institutions a single standard deviation, which is, in their words,

“not moving Haiti[’s institutions] to the level of Denmark—but rather moving them to something that is “good enough” to deliver basic government services.” This is echoed in Davis’s analysis of Oman, which shows that institution-building successes were due in large part to a sustained, long-term engagement, during which leadership positions were cultivated over 20 to 30 years. Thus, every element of a DIB process—from the commitment of staff and funding, to long-term planning and adaptation amidst changing political contexts, to determining effective parameters for assessments and evaluations—is set within a much longer time frame than other security cooperation activities, and the length of engagement and pace of change present an array of challenges.

First, for both the donor and the partner nation, DIB requires sustained staffing. As Kem describes, the high rate of turnover in U.S. military leadership in Afghanistan, coupled with a lack of clear long-term goals and post-conflict planning, led to multiple reinventions of the proverbial wheel. Boland notes that a similar lack of staff continuity plagued PfP DIB efforts in Kosovo. The turnover of staff is problematic for DIB efforts both in terms of disrupting the continuity of the process being implemented, as well as building and maintaining relationships, which are extremely important in gaining trust between the partner nation and the DIB team. Thus, the long-term nature of DIB requires that the United States and the partner develop a long-term strategy from the outset to provide consistency of goals and approaches for the DIB process in the long run, as well as to account for changes in staff in both the host and donor countries, to ensure that new teams are able to continue ongoing work, rather than starting from scratch.

Second, DIB’s extended time horizons can make political buy-in on both sides difficult to sustain. Giraldo suggests that DIB works best when practitioners are able to respond to politically urgent priorities to gain high-level support for the broader project. Aleman also notes that quick wins in the DIB process in Guatemala contributed significantly to its success by demonstrating the value of reform and generating additional momentum and commitment to change. Thus, longer time horizons for “North Star” goals should be married with a sense of urgency; shorter time horizons should be established for specific quick wins or losses.<sup>18</sup> That said, quick wins should not set up unrealistic notions about the timelines necessary to institute sustainable reforms. As Milante and Bisca explain, annotated timeframes put in place by the donor country, including for reporting reasons, can make the DIB process ineffective; the shortcuts taken to satisfy the timeline in the short term will set the institution up to fail in the medium to long term.

Finally, the pace of change presents challenges for the monitoring and evaluation of DIB efforts. While the section on assessment, monitoring, and evaluation below discusses these challenges in more detail, it is worth noting here that both recipient and donor policymakers will require evidence in the short to medium term that a program is working in order to justify committing additional resources. Yet evaluating DIB is inherently difficult because its ultimate aim—to instate professional defense institutions—often takes an extended period of time to materialize. Furthermore, even when a strong institution emerges to claim as a success, it is difficult to tie this overarching success to

one specific DIB activity or engagement. Compounding this issue is the fact that the United States is usually one donor among many that are working to improve elements of a country's defense establishment across the years and decades, so it is again challenging to prove that a specific activity or set of activities resulted in the improved governance of the overarching defense sector.

### *One Size Fits One*

No two DIB activities will ever be exactly alike. Success therefore hinges on DIB plans and activities being molded to the unique cultural, historical, and sociopolitical context of the partner at hand; finding the best fit for the partner nation's context, rather than finding the gaps in a preconceived template of best practice. Bisca and Milante note that, as solutions are endogenous to the system, the solution must be tailored to the system at hand. As Kem and Hoffman describe in their accounts of institution-building efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, where there is a failure to build institutions that are appropriate for the cultural context of the country, the results are dire. Conversely, in the case of Guatemala, the integrated defense governance system was produced in line with the partner's defense culture, capabilities, and resources and the results were significantly more successful.

To that end, Giraldo explains that a solution-driven approach, which entails conforming the partner's institution to a preset notion of what "good" should look like, is ineffective. Rather, DIB should take a problem-driven approach, whereby DIB teams identify a problem, conceptualize what an improved version of that function would look like for that country, and then bridge the current and future context by developing a theory of change, which sets in motion a plan that is flexible and adaptable. This approach helps to avoid the trap of isomorphic mimicry in which a nation adopts organizational structures that look like good institutions on paper, but lack all functionality and effectiveness in practice.

DIB plans must also be grounded in realistic expectations that account for each partner's unique limitations. DIB practitioners should not seek to build perfect institutions—they do not exist—but rather ones that will function effectively in the context of a given partner-nation. Overambitious visions can set a plan up for failure. For example, plans must be limited to what is feasible within the partner's available budget and based on what the partner's budget will be able to sustain in the long term. In the case of Guatemala, for instance, Aleman notes that the National Security Policy, which was produced with the support of the U.S. team, stressed the need to tie plans to existing resources in order to ensure changes to the defense sector would be realistically achievable and sustainable. Institutional reforms must also take the partner's existing capacity into account. Topic and Boomer point to the fact that many partners do not require or cannot assimilate the level of technological sophistication that the equivalent U.S. system uses; for example, some do not even have the capacity to generate electricity. Thus, practitioners must avoid seeing technology as a silver bullet to update partners'

systems, and should work instead to make incremental changes based on each partner's baseline capacity.

### *Ownership*

Virtually every author in this book emphasizes that institutions can only be built by those who use them; without this ownership, reforms will not be absorbed or sustained. Ownership is thus the most important element for the success of DIB—ownership not only of the implementation process, but also of assessments, planning, measures of effectiveness, and ultimate evaluations. Yet, one of the most common pitfalls that institution-building efforts face is missing ownership. While discussed in greater detail in the section below, two insights for ensuring ownership are worth mentioning here.

First, the donor country should not view DIB as a transfer of institutional culture, but rather the partner's existing culture should be the starting point from which the entire DIB process is derived. For example, in Chalfin and Thomas-Greenfield's analysis of the countries involved in the SGI in Africa, they note that taking the time to first understand the partner's defense priorities from their perspective allows DIB practitioners to understand the role that the leadership expects the defense institutions to play in meeting national priorities. Similarly, Leklem explains that understanding the partner's existing defense strategy and policies is important because they represent the translation of national interest into tangible elements of a nation's defense institutions and military. This is a good starting point for understanding the partner's defense priorities.

Second, many of the authors who have been involved in DIB on the ground pointed to the importance of high-level buy-in as critical to partner ownership. In the case of Guatemala, one of the key factors for success was the high-level buy-in going all the way up to the President. High-level buy-in is essential to determine priorities and objectives, link institutional reforms to those objectives, and create the support needed to drive change. Leonard's case studies demonstrate that gaining and keeping senior leader and political support is a non-negotiable element necessary to ensure that reforms are taken up throughout the entire defense system.

Such buy-in can be difficult to secure, particularly if the proposed institutional reforms will have a negative effect on power-holders benefiting from the existing system. Boland also notes that high-level buy-in requires particular effort during periods of political change, which can lead to less engagement, making it challenging to sustain the relationship and to demonstrate long-term commitment. Understanding the partner's defense priorities and existing policies is thus important for helping the DIB team to "sell" the reforms to high-level leadership by demonstrating how the DIB process will help the ministry to function more effectively and better align its resources to achieve defense priorities. Reforms that help the partner to achieve its priorities will be easier for the DIB team's counterparts to sell up the chain of command and more difficult to argue against for those who resist change for personal gain.

## Interests and Priorities

Strong defense institutions have always been necessary for the effective and legitimate use of force, yet the last 15 years have seen changes in both supply and demand for DIB. As detailed above, in the years after the 9/11 attacks, the United States found itself in major engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as many smaller engagements spanning the world. Yet the majority of U.S. security assistance took the form of traditional train and equip missions, leaving the underlying security sector institutions largely unchanged. Even though the United States has long worked with partner militaries at the institutional level, Ross explains that it was not until the shortcomings of traditional security cooperation measures appeared in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, that the United States began “concerted efforts” to help partners build and transform their defense institutions.

These conflicts also drive demand-side incentives for DIB. Intra-state war is far more common than inter-state war today—in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, civil wars have claimed nearly one million lives. Many of these wars are repeat conflicts that occur as countries become caught in cycles of violence. Rebuilding (and reforming) the armed forces is often a central component of stabilizing countries and preventing civil war relapse. Fragile institutions may not be able to sustain or deploy forces, and public trust in defense institutions is often low, prompting states to appeal to outside assistance.<sup>19</sup>

Defense institution building thus addresses both supply and demand-side interests. Its two primary objectives, according to Ross, are to help partners provide for their own security, including missions that meet shared U.S. and partner interests, and to undertake reforms that result in more effective, accountable, and legitimate armed forces. These broad objectives have been codified in U.S. policy and doctrine, as well as new legislative goals for building partner capacity.<sup>20</sup>

### *Benefits for the United States*

This volume explores the ways that DIB contributes to U.S. national security. First, strengthening partner defense institutions leads to more sustainable U.S. security investments. When partners have effective management and governance structures in place, capabilities are less likely to be misused, underused, or fail for lack of sustainment. Second, countries with effective governance and military forces are less likely to experience political instability. Moreover, DIB targets development of long-term defense capabilities, creating partners who can provide for their own security and work with the United States toward shared interests.

While these goals capture the overarching U.S. interest in DIB, specific goals vary by country. This volume describes DIB in settings ranging from wholesale rebuilding of governance institutions in places like Afghanistan, to reform in countries with higher levels of baseline capacity, such as Guatemala. In addition to questions of scale, the scope will vary by partner need. For example, logistics may be most pressing for countries combatting active insurgencies, such as Mali, while strategy and force planning may be

most important for a country reorienting its primary defense mission, such as Indonesia. Moreover, because DIB focuses on areas of *mutual* interest, U.S. security priorities will vary by country and region as well. The observation that priorities in one place may not be priorities in another place seems banal, but unclear or competing goals are a frequently cited source of confusion.

Even when there is a consensus on goals for DIB, the U.S. government is not a unitary actor, nor is it typically the only actor present in a given partner country. Actors from different agencies and levels of government often have divergent perspectives and priorities. This volume's chapters reflect a range of the potentially important players in any given context—from DOS, to the Combatant Commands, DOD policy community, DIB specialists, international development agencies, and NATO, to name a few. Clear goals can thus serve as coordination mechanisms within the U.S. government as well as with its allies and partners. Conversely, unclear or competing goals can limit the likelihood of success.

*Set clear, appropriate, and overlapping goals:* This volume points to an imperative that the United States begin each DIB partnership with the same thing it asks of its partners: clearly identified, leader-supported goals that are understood by practitioners across the U.S. security cooperation community. To do so, two separate but related processes must occur. First, U.S. security cooperation writ large needs improved coordination, better identification of available “tools,” and streamlined processes for joint decision-making. Establishing guidelines for prioritizing countries for engagement and integrating existing engagements will help to avoid competing efforts. Otherwise, the whole may be less than the sum of its parts when it comes to U.S. security cooperation investments.

However, these steps in and of themselves are insufficient for the type of well-identified goals that are prerequisites for success. The second process, then, is one whereby DOS, DOD, and DIB experts discuss high-level objectives and jointly assess the partner's context to arrive at shared, relevant, and realistic objectives. The diversity of DIB stakeholders and the demands for action militate against this kind of leader-driven, practitioner-centric, iterative coordination. Yet the stakes require the effort.

Once the United States has clear goals, the next step is to understand the partner's goals and identify which of these are mutual and feasible. Authors writing from both the DOS and DOD perspective stress the importance of taking time to understand the partner's defense priorities and to scope projects. Giraldo points out that the term “scoping” is intentional; trust often follows engagement rather than preceding it, and partners may be reluctant to open their institutions up for comprehensive assessment in the beginning of a partnership. Nonetheless, scoping exercises can identify what she calls “achievable” reforms: strategically relevant goals that the partner is interested in and are realistically attainable in the specific context.

Goals must overlap because DIB is designed to advance U.S. and partner national security objectives as well as governance goals. In theory, this is a powerful way to achieve

mutually beneficial ends at relatively low cost. In practice, this can be challenging, particularly in the countries where some argue that DIB will be the most needed. Countries with effective governance that distribute resources fairly are usually not the countries that end up facing internal conflict and political instability.<sup>21</sup> What then should the United States do when goals diverge? There is no easy answer to this question. In some cases, the answer might be to disengage and pursue a more beneficial partnership elsewhere; in other cases, continued engagement may be the best option. Moreover, the partner's claim that goals align does not necessarily mean that they do. Divergence of interests may not be apparent upfront, either because the partner hopes to obtain resources without undertaking real change in return, or because the partner's stakeholders fail to accurately anticipate how their interests will be affected. We explore the implications of partner incentives below.

### *Understanding Partner Incentives*

A common theme throughout this volume is that understanding partner incentives is a necessary condition for success. Indeed, this is one of the major points of consensus in the broader academic literature on external interventions to improve governance: "Even if external actors are focused on institutional change, they will not accomplish their objectives unless their goals are compatible with those of a set of political leaders in target states."<sup>22</sup> When local elite motives do not align with the outside actor's goals, institutional change will prove elusive at best and at worst, they will exploit attempts at assistance to acquire goods without complying with the conditions of reform.

DIB projects seek to enhance mutual security for all participants, but the possibility of conflicting interests remains. States have existential goals such as survival that always come first; similarly, fragile regimes will often prioritize their survival above all else. The U.S. stakes in DIB typically are not existential—it wants more stability in troubled regions, better governance, more capable partners to share security burdens, and so forth. Things can look very different from the partner's perspective. Gerspacher points out that institutional reforms can alter the status quo power structure in partner countries, "paradoxically threatening the very partners upon whom we depend for effective capacity building." Illustrating this point is Aleman's discussion of DIB efforts in Guatemala, where the United States helped the Ministry of Defense reform its budgetary process and tackle corruption. The partnership began at the invitation of the Minister of Defense and the newly elected President of Guatemala, Otto Perez-Molina. In 2015, Perez-Molina was arrested over allegations of embezzlement by an international anti-corruption body. Perez-Molina has blamed the United States for his fate from the jail cell where he remains held on graft charges.<sup>23</sup>

Many scholars and practitioners view the problem of divergent interests as *the* limiting factor in international influences on other states' compliance, particularly when it comes to how they govern.<sup>24</sup> Others are more optimistic, noting that sustained engagement coupled with the right inducements, can lead to "socialization" and changed preferences within the state.<sup>25</sup> The authors in this volume present a range of perspectives on how to

identify partner incentives, exploring the sources of institutional fragility and strength, and the social means of change. The importance of partner interests is self-evident; it is also incomplete. Interests alone are not a sufficient condition for success. Moreover, the process of institution building may shape interests themselves. The following insights highlight how practitioners can set up efforts for success by grounding them in local context and by prioritizing relationships with key stakeholders.

*Build institutions from the inside out:* The term “defense institution building” implies that the United States can create partners’ defense governance from the outside in. But institutions are social constructs that can only be built from the inside out. Bisca and Milante explore this point, drawing on the canonical definition of institutions as the “rules of the game,” or the “humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic, and social interaction.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, institutions are only meaningful insofar as the actors who are supposed to follow the rules understand what they are and agree to live by them. This presents a dilemma: the outside institution builder has the material and conceptual ways to shape institutions but only the partner country itself has the social means to change them. Because only the people who will use institutions can build them, as Bisca and Milante show, the role of outside actors is only ever to “support” institution building. Gerspacher also picks up on this theme, arguing that the idea that the United States—or any external provider—owns the change process can doom missions to failure.

Mistaking who owns the change process is one pitfall; another is failing to recognize how the current rules allocate resources and power among the partner stakeholders. Rules are more than just coordination mechanisms; they have distributive implications and determine, as Giraldo notes in her chapter, “who does what to whom and why and with what effect.” Giraldo explains that this is why DIB practitioners ought to begin with a political economic analysis of the existing formal and informal rules of the game in order to understand where change is both acceptable and possible. Changing the rules thus requires creating new ideas about winners and losers. In other words, building institutions involves politics.

*Avoid borrowed or co-opted institutions:* Building capacity requires understanding the existing level of capacity as well as the underlying institutional balance of power—who holds power and who benefits from the status quo. U.S. models of capacity building, particularly in conflict and post-conflict environments, have often privileged apolitical capacity building, yet this is the wrong approach.<sup>27</sup> Failure to take local capacity and interests into account can result in the twin perils of institutions that do not stick or are subject to hijack.

Many of the authors describe the trap of “isomorphic mimicry” or institutional borrowing, where donors attempt to replicate their own institutions in the partner country without considering whether their “best practices” are the “best fit” for the current environment. This is a particularly pernicious problem in post-conflict environments where

the partner may have little say over the type of institution it gets. These situations are prone to local illegitimacy and colliding donor models, as Lecklem, Kem, and Giraldo describe in their accounts of the U.S. and allied experience in Afghanistan. Even if the imported models are appropriate for the scale and scope of the partner's needs—which they often are not—the bigger problem is failure to consider how they align with local power structures. The result may be to create “incongruence between rule writers and power holders”<sup>28</sup>—a recipe for institutional fragility.

Capacity-building efforts are often explicitly focused on increasing the size of the pie—more public goods in the form of better defense for the country, and so forth. Defense is in many ways a non-excludable public good, but it has private components. As Blair notes, big military budgets come with big incentives to control or co-opt resources. Acquisition and materiel flows as well as new organizational structures, promotions and demotions, control of people and budgets, all benefit some entities more than others. And even where private goods are not a temptation to hijack, collective action problems can undermine DIB solutions that would otherwise increase the size of the pie at stake.

As Clarke and Davies explain, understanding power structures and anticipating how interests will be affected by institutional changes is a tall order for DIB practitioners who are often “novices” in the partner's political context. The partner may not know either; in periods of flux or rapid institutional change, rule writers often struggle to correctly anticipate how they will be affected.<sup>29</sup> Yet as Giraldo and Clarke and Davies emphasize, early assessment of the key players and their motives followed by iterative reassessments will help DIB practitioners to better support partners in framing the problem, finding practicable solutions, and making timely adjustments when necessary.

### *Understanding Partner Interests*

Given the self-evident importance of partner interests, how do DIB providers gain this understanding and put it into action? The insights in this volume's chapters converge on several imperatives: DIB providers need to learn the local context, prioritize the right relationships, and find ways to make long-term changes palatable in the short term—for example, through incremental measures.

*Establish local context:* Virtually every author points to a fundamental requirement to understand each partner's sociopolitical and economic context, as well as the history of the partner's military and defense institutions. As Boomer and Topic underscore, evaluating the partner military's structure and systems may be more challenging than expected. Smaller states that have depended on great power donors, often since their independence, may have developed patchwork systems that they themselves do not fully understand. In cases of previous institutional borrowing, the formally documented process may be divorced from actual practice. Moreover, this scenario presumes a baseline level of institutional capacity—jury-rigged or not—whereas DIB may increasingly be called for in fragile countries with low- or non-existent capacity.

This type of context setting clarifies what the partner needs to achieve its goals and what it can absorb in pursuit of those ends. It also helps the DIB provider to differentiate between issues of technical capacity and issues of preference alignment. This does not diminish the problem of partner incentives, but serves to clarify it by distinguishing between political will and capacity. To identify the former, the country's sociopolitical context is critical. While DIB providers are subject matter experts in their respective fields, they typically are not experts on the broader context. Fortunately, these experts exist. For example, the U.S. Embassy teams can and should be a source of local knowledge as well as information on other security sector stakeholders, other U.S. assistance and programs, and broader U.S. interests. Yet this is only the initial solution; the enduring solution is developing the relationship with the partner and supporting their ownership.

*Prioritize relationships:* Relationships are a *sine qua non* for DIB. Ross notes that “regular, sustained engagements with a core of committed participants” sets DIB apart from other forms of security cooperation; similarly, Gerspacher calls partnership the “means” of DIB. Blair says that progress in DIB proceeds “at the speed of trust,” while Clarke and Davies caution that building trust takes time and is reversible—it must be fostered and maintained continuously.

Relationships can open or close doors—they are the catalysts of effective partnerships and when relationships fail, so may reform efforts. Aleman shows how successful reform efforts in Guatemala occurred at the request of Guatemala's Minister of Defense who personally opened the door for U.S. DIB practitioners to engage with the ministry. Conversely, Davis cites political fallout between the British and Zimbabwean governments as the reason for broken engagement at the defense sector level. These examples illustrate the importance of political leadership engagement and endorsement, yet individual relationships matter as well. Lower-level officials may lack the authority to initiate change projects, but they are often the implementers and the ones who engage over time with the DIB team. Even when political relationships are strained, this can leave the door open to continued interaction, as Boland illustrates with NATO's experience in Serbia.

*Make change attractive:* The third key insight from the experience of DIB practitioners across diverse environments is the need to make long-term beneficial changes more palatable in the short term. As scholars have argued, “[I]n weak institutional environments there may be an inherent trade-off between institutional scope and stability.”<sup>30</sup> The more sweeping the change sought, the more likely it is to engender resistance. Conversely, modest changes are less likely to provoke opposition but also less likely to address fundamental problems. There is no easy solution, however there are ways to make change more attractive such as incremental measures. Immediate benefits—“quick wins”—can provide tangible incentives to pursue longer-term, potentially difficult changes. Similarly, privileging the partner's political time horizons over formulaic timelines may create

buy-in for projects that would otherwise be lacking. As several authors suggest, partner preferences are not necessarily fixed; they may change as a result of the engagement itself.

## Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AM&E) are essential for the success of any DIB mission, ensuring learning and accountability both for the partner nation and for the donor country. The results of AM&E reporting are used to produce an appropriate implementation plan in a given country, to decide the corresponding goals of the donor and the partner nation, and to determine whether a given activity is achieving progress as planned toward the stated objectives. AM&E also play a significant role in the institution-building process: the integration of AM&E into DIB activities with the partner can help to build governance capacity, while institutionalizing norms of accountability and transparency. Despite its essential role, there is, as many of the authors note, room to significantly improve the existing AM&E elements of DIB.

Assessments play one of the most important roles in a DIB engagement. The 2017 DOD Instruction on AM&E defines assessments as “[s]ystematic analysis to provide an understanding of the context, conditions, partner capabilities, and requirements to inform . . . planning and implementation.”<sup>31</sup> Assessment is the first step in a DIB process and continues throughout the lifecycle of the engagement. The assessment (or “scoping”) phase allows practitioners to determine strategic alignment, levels of partner support and will, the partner’s absorptive capacity, and potential risks to the DIB process.<sup>32</sup> The information gathered through this assessment can help the team understand the partner nation’s goals and priorities, determine the partner’s capacity and resource availability, and to find common ground with those of the donor nation. On the donor side, assessments address what it wants the partner to be able to do and whether the donor has the right things in place to achieve that goal. Determining what the partner wants, why they want it, who within the government is asking for it, and where they fit within their system, can minimize the problem of plans skewed by individual or organizational biases. Assessments also help to determine if buy-in exists at higher levels and, if not, how to obtain it. They are central to understanding the partner nation’s perception of its existing capacity shortfalls, which can help the DIB practitioners to determine if a perceived gap is a symptom of a larger structural issue, and, in turn, to demonstrate to the partner where the real changes need to take place in the broader system in order for the reforms it seeks to be sustained in the long run.

The monitoring process is also continuous and helps to determine if the initial theory of change was accurate or if course corrections need to be taken. For example, as relationships are strengthened, practitioners may receive more insight into the partner’s capabilities or desires, which could in turn help to identify mid-course corrections based on updated analysis.<sup>33</sup> Monitoring efforts measure the near-term results of specific DIB activities in order to provide “regular feedback on the extent to which expected outputs and

outcomes are being achieved to inform decisions or corrective actions.”<sup>34</sup> Evaluation differs from monitoring in that it seeks to assess the long-term impact and outcomes of the DIB engagement as a whole, whereas monitoring tends to focus on the short-term results of specific activities and achievements of milestones along the way. Evaluations are undertaken to determine relevance, value, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of a DIB process. Evaluations comprise “a systematic collection and analysis of information and evidence about the characteristics and outcomes of an ongoing or completed initiative, and its design, implementation, and results.”<sup>35</sup> DIB practitioners, planners, and policy makers use evaluations to identify ways to improve cost-effectiveness, to provide evidence-based support for future DIB policy, legislation, and resource needs, and to identify lessons to improve future DIB engagements.

### *Progress in Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation*

Historically, the monitoring of outputs (e.g., the quantity of resources provided, the number of hours spent teaching, etc.) in security cooperation activities has been decent, but the monitoring of outcomes (in the case of DIB, outcomes refer to institutional and behavioral changes in the partner nation’s defense establishment) has been lacking.

Each program and agency undertaking DIB activities has developed its own approach to AM&E.<sup>36</sup> The primary implementer, DIRI, initially developed a framework for AM&E based on the methodology of the NATO Wales Initiative Fund-Defense Institution Building (WIF-DIB) program. DIRI adapted its methodology to account for the fact that countries in which DIRI programs are implemented do not have the same motivation as PfP countries that are the recipients of WIF-DIB (i.e., that PfP countries have the added element of potential NATO membership, which influences their willingness to change and update any element of their defense institutions that NATO deems necessary). In 2012, a report from the DOD Inspector General called for DIRI to define more specific performance measures for its programs.<sup>37</sup> DIRI has since continued to develop a system of reporting that is flexible enough not to constrain teams from tailoring their engagements but specific enough to give Congress and policymakers the AM&E data required to track progress and see the impact of the DIB enterprise writ large. This includes (though is not limited to) daily reports from practitioners on the ground while they are in country; After Action Reports (AARs) that are disseminated to the DGMT, the regional Combatant Command, OSD regional desks, and so on; AAR conference calls to discuss what is in the report and ways forward; ad hoc briefings, papers, and updates as requested during the engagement; and an annual report to Congress on the entire DIB enterprise.

In January 2017, since Clarke and Davies completed chapter 9 on measuring and evaluation for this book, the DOD released an instruction on AM&E for the security cooperation enterprise writ large, which aims to establish policy and assign responsibilities for conducting AM&E for security cooperation activities, including DIB. The instruction reaffirms the importance of assessments, monitoring, and evaluation, to tracking, understanding, and improving returns on all security cooperation investments.<sup>38</sup> It notes

that U.S. AM&E efforts should be aligned with the AM&E efforts of the host country in order to reduce the burden on U.S. practitioners and to increase overall effectiveness of the security cooperation activity. The instruction acknowledges that the partner's ability and willingness to improve institutional capacity is a critical element to look for in the initial assessment of a partner country. This points to the fact that building the capacity of the partner's defense institutions is integral to the security cooperation enterprise.<sup>39</sup> It also calls for the DOD to ensure sufficient funding to carry out AM&E policy implementation, disseminate lessons learned from AM&E analysis, and train the appropriate workforce to conduct and support the technical AM&E functions.<sup>40</sup>

The instruction and the broader demand for better results from security cooperation activities, hold both promise and peril for DIB. Peril, if an approach that pushes for a formulaic standardization of best practices is taken, which could restrict the flexibility necessary for DIB activities to succeed in widely varying contexts. DIB requires a problem-driven and iterative approach that affords for the flexibility to adjust planning as assessments evolve with engagement and trial. It could also prove problematic if it restricts the ability of DIB implementers to "fail fast"; as Giraldo, and Clarke and Davies discuss, DIB implementers use trial approaches to rapidly determine if a given approach works or not, or to demonstrate to a partner why their proposed solution or approach is not viable. This is an important element of the process for implementers to determine a correct path for a particular country, to quickly divest from an approach that does not work in practice, and to make adjustments where necessary. The complexity inherent in building institutional systems requires an equal measure of agility. The instruction is promising, nevertheless, if security cooperation policymakers and planners are forced to grapple with identifying desired outcomes and the elements that are required to achieve those outcomes, which would inherently lead to wider understanding and acceptance of the necessity of DIB to the sustainability of all other forms of security cooperation and assistance.

### *AM&E Challenges and Recommendations*

Building defense institutions presents several challenges specific to implementing effective AM&E. For instance, Milante and Bisca note that often the metric of success is the "dog that didn't bark," meaning the absence of a negative behavior. This is a virtuous cycle for society, but poses a challenge for impact evaluation. As planners and policymakers continue to develop DIB in practice, the following recommendations could help to address some of the challenges and improve DIB AM&E.

*Tailor AM&E requirements for each country:* Because DIB activities are tailored for each host country in accordance with that country's particular capacity, institutional culture, and socioeconomic and political context, there are challenges inherent in establishing an AM&E framework that fits all DIB activities: the unique contexts and characteristics will determine much about the opportunities and risks to a specific DIB effort.<sup>41</sup> While the North Star goals of all DIB activities—e.g., establishing a functioning, professional, accountable,

and transparent defense institution—will be similar for every DIB engagement, the interim objectives will vary widely.

Thus, AM&E requirements should be flexible enough that teams can tailor them to the context of the country at hand. U.S. practitioners should receive training and guidance on how to conduct effective assessments and evaluations for DIB projects. While the type of reporting will change based on the project and country, developing a standard for training will help to develop AM&E solutions that work for DIB projects across the board, as well as identifying which elements of AM&E are not working in the field and why.

*Base AM&E frameworks on realistic expectations about existing capacity:* The collection of data proves challenging in the DIB context for several reasons. On the U.S. side, because DIB engagements are undertaken by U.S.-based practitioners, rather than regionally based personnel, the consistent collection of data is extremely difficult.<sup>42</sup> On the partner side, while partner ownership of the process is essential, many of the countries simply do not have the capabilities or resources to carry out effective AM&E. This lack of capacity can lead partners to provide inaccurate data in order to save face or to appear to have fulfilled a requirement in order to get “stuff” that they want from the donor. In either case, the provision of false or insufficient data can lead to isomorphic mimicry, where a partner’s institution looks viable on paper, but does not function in practice.

As Clarke and Davies note in chapter 9, DIB teams on the ground are “small footprint, high impact.” Those designing AM&E reporting requirements for DIB should take the limited capacity of DIB teams during engagements into account to ensure that AM&E reporting does not overburden the practitioners and detract from the effectiveness of the DIB activity. Equally, the AM&E requirements should account for the capacity of the partner and, where it is lacking, provide assistance in building AM&E skills. NATO, for example, provides partners with a “Building Integrity Self-Assessment Questionnaire and Peer Review Process” as part of its PAP-DIB, which simplifies the DIB assessment process for partners by providing clear guidance on data requirements, followed by a process to peer-review the assessment and to provide recommendations on ways forward.<sup>43</sup>

*Disaggregate short-, medium-, and long-term outputs and outcomes:* To address the challenge of measuring short-term successes and while achieving long-term goals, DIB practitioners should disaggregate short-, medium-, and long-term outputs and outcomes. This includes finding ways to measure short-term performance that are distinct from long-term outcomes, but can be aggregated or tracked over time in order to inform long-term evaluations of DIB’s effectiveness toward overarching goals. The ultimate outcomes of a DIB engagement will be improved by determining the baselines and milestones of the monitoring process during the assessment phase, as doing so will force DIB teams and partner-nation teams to think through theories of change and plan with specific, measurable goals in mind.

*Connect long-term goals with short-term funding cycles:* Resources for DIB are tied to Congressional budget cycles; with one to two years for obligations and five years for disbursements. Thus, DIB activities are generally episodic, with a few engagements a year that last for a few weeks at a time, while the overarching goals that measuring and evaluation aim to monitor are long-term.<sup>44</sup> Yet, the results of DIB engagement, particularly the overarching outcomes such as a functioning human resources system, often take much longer than one or even five years.

DIB practitioners and policymakers should use strategic planning to connect long-term goals with short-term funding cycles in order to address the issue of short-term funding for programs or activities that tend to be multi-year in scope and goals that tend to take multiple decades to come to fruition. This means identifying a theory of change that includes milestones predicated on the shorter budget cycles in order to show progress at intervals of one to five years.

*AM&E requirements should reflect that outcomes are primarily the responsibility of the partner:* DIB is a collaborative process and the United States is not the only, nor the main, actor with an influence over outputs and outcomes. The partner nation will also have structural, capacity-related restrictions on their ability to carry out or contribute to AM&E, for example their own funding cycles or policymakers that want to see quick returns on their DIB investments despite the long-term nature of the overarching objectives. Due to the partner-led process that DIB embraces, the outcomes of many DIB engagements will rely on the partner's work, not the U.S. practitioners' inputs. This is compounded by the fact that the United States is not always the only donor nation working with the partner, and often the partners struggle to meet milestones because they are engaged in similar but different capacity-building activities with other donors.

Holding U.S. DIB practitioners responsible for outcomes can prove problematic, if it results in perverse incentives for U.S. practitioners to do the work of the partner, for the partner. This goes directly against the operating principle of partner ownership in DIB, which is the key to institutionalized and sustainable change. Thus, AM&E requirements should be predicated on the understanding that outcomes (institutionalized changes) are primarily the responsibility of the partner. As Milante and Bisca note, the institution-builder has the material and conceptual ways to shape institutions, but only the country itself has the social means to actually change them. Analysis should focus on why a partner has not achieved a given output, whether it is because of a flaw in the initial theory of change, a lack of will to implement change, or a misperception of the capacity of the partner to achieve a given milestone.

## **Organizing for Defense Institution Building**

Key leaders and officials in the DOD and in the U.S. Congress are increasingly concerned with the ability of partner nations to maintain and sustain equipment provided by the

United States, and for the civilian structures in those nations to maintain adequate oversight of armed forces in their nations. The Congress and the DOD now clearly recognize the need to build institutional capacity in partner nations alongside, or even in lieu of, train and equip programs, to achieve a more balanced approach to DOD security cooperation. To do this well, the Department must organize to conduct DIB activities, and train key personnel in the DOD workforce for a variety of DIB tasks with which they are currently unfamiliar.

The advent of DIB has revealed numerous disconnects throughout the broader security cooperation community and highlighted the extent to which the Department is not yet adequately organized to design and implement DIB programs. Most of the current DOD security cooperation architecture was created and grown years ago to support security assistance tasks: selling equipment or providing partner nations access to U.S. military education and training. In an era when DOD held “nation building” at arm’s length, providing access to defense articles and services the Department already had on the shelf, as it were, seemed a perfectly acceptable means of capacity building.

Differences in supply and demand drive variation in organizational functions for security assistance and DIB. While there is significant international competition for sales, especially for major military hardware, security assistance starts with a partner’s desire for U.S. military equipment and training. Coordination and competition may be involved, but the “sale” is made as a first step; potential purchasers generally want U.S. equipment. On the supply side, the “product” typically already exists and is readily available.

For DIB, as a key element of “non-material” security cooperation, both the up-front demand, and the design and availability of the product, are much less clear. The key organizational challenge is to adapt organizational constructs and personnel skills designed for security assistance (generally “material” cooperation) to the requirements of institution building, and non-material security cooperation more broadly.

While many observers note that the DOD has historical experience building institutional capacity, the current approach to DIB only began in the early 2000s, when OSD began to tailor military engagements to support NATO PfP countries as they worked to reform their defense institutions and become more interoperable with NATO. There was no clear, top-down direction; no comprehensive study of demand with recommendations for organization, process, and personnel changes. As such, from its NATO-oriented start, DIB has grown in a decentralized manner, rather than as the fully staffed and funded undertaking that might have resulted from clear, top-down guidance. The bottom-up approach has been effective, but current demands for DIB make clear the urgent need to remedy organizational and personnel shortfalls.

Doctrine and guidance for DIB are beginning to appear. As noted above, in the last two years the Department has updated much of its guidance for security cooperation and published three new documents that provide direction needed to guide the evolution of DIB and security cooperation writ large: a “directive” on DIB, Department-wide guidance on security cooperation, and an “instruction” on AM&E for DOD security cooperation. These

enhancements are both influenced and supported by the FY2017 NDAA, which introduces sweeping reforms to DOD security cooperation, and clearly provides the opportunity to properly organize and train DOD personnel for current security cooperation challenges, including DIB.

### *Roles and Responsibilities*

Setting Afghanistan aside, most DIB planning for partner nations relies on collaboration between OSD, the Joint Staff, DOD's DIB programs, geographic Combatant Command (GCC) staff and Security Cooperation Officers (SCOs). As DIB is relatively new, assignment of roles and responsibilities, matched with requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities, have not yet been determined. One fundamental challenge for DOD will be determining the roles of the respective GCCs and the broader "fourth estate," including the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA).

Recent history has made clear that GCCs, as operational war-fighting organizations, lack the requisite preparation and staff to properly plan and guide DIB over the full range of country challenges. Operational-level entities are inherently oriented toward different missions. Assignment of roles and responsibilities for DIB must account for this and establish processes to provide additional support to GCCs to reduce risk.

Roles and responsibilities for planning and conducting DIB by the DOD must reflect a balance between responsibility and capability. GCCs serve at the center of DOD security cooperation, but lack experience and assigned staff for DIB. OSD Policy has grown DIB as a functional capability over the last decade, providing oversight of DIB and broader security cooperation from a regional perspective. DSCA has recognized the need to increase management capacity for DIB, but this will take time as DSCA addresses a range of requirements contained in the FY2017 NDAA. The Joint Staff has little experience addressing DIB issues in partner countries, though more robust engagement by the Joint Staff with GCCs would be welcome.

As the DOD seeks to better organize for DIB, one key question to resolve is how to strengthen and grow the core of the DIB enterprise: is it at the "center," aligned to DSCA? Is it distributed to the GCCs? Or is it something in between? Key security cooperation organizations will have to be involved, but determining the mix of responsibilities will have resource implications among those organizations.

Staffing GCCs to plan DIB would ensure DIB expertise is present where the detailed planning happens. But covering the range of institutional requirements experienced by developing (and more advanced) countries will always require a large number of functional experts and planners. To ensure that successful approaches to DIB in one region inform efforts in other regions, DOD would need to maintain a core capability at some level; a distributed system does not negate the need for a "center." Future proposals for organizational changes to improve the conduct of DIB must address the planning functions and capabilities necessary to ensure that both horizontal and vertical connections are made and reflected in DIB planning.

Organizing to ensure these connections are made must lead to questions about which command or agency should perform these functions, both in the near and longer terms. Are the vertical and horizontal connections made at the SCO or GCC level, or is this a function performed more centrally for the entire department? With the proper education, training, and guidance, these functions could be performed in a number of ways. Both GCCs and DSCA, or perhaps another agency selected by DSCA, could do this. While SCO training is enhanced over the next few years, it may make more sense to grow the expert cadre more closely aligned to DSCA. This would avoid the significant staffing increases that the GCCs would require to cover the broad range of functions partner ministries should perform, and would increase the likelihood that lessons in any region can be applied in others. As more SCOs with better preparation and training arrive in the field, the balance among all entities could be reviewed.

One way to empower a central agency to guide DIB department-wide would be for DSCA to establish a Defense Field Activity to serve as a Center for Defense Governance. This center would provide the core capability to support SCOs and GCCs with DIB planning expertise, scope challenges in any partner country with full knowledge of similar challenges globally, and to implement DIB with great consistency across the Department. The center could also serve as the nucleus of a security sector assistance (SSA) “hub,” an idea gaining traction among observers of and participants in U.S. SSA strategy development. This center or hub could be a field activity, or perhaps a global Joint Interagency Task Force for DIB, and could work to better connect the efforts of U.S. institution builders with those of international partners engaged in similar and related activities.

## **The DIB Workforce**

Adapting organizational structures, including strengthening and growing DIB providers and coordination capabilities, is only part of the answer for improving the DOD’s ability to conduct DIB. Improving DIB training and education for SCOs, made all the more urgent by Congressional direction in the FY2017 NDAA, is equally important.

There are a number of skills and abilities required to conduct DIB activities with partners. The two key requirements are broad technical expertise and the ability to employ functional knowledge in the context of the partner’s institutional development. Additionally, DIB practitioners should understand the relationship of their technical field to other institutional functions across a partner’s security sector, understand the human and organizational factors associated with implementing reforms, and be sensitive to challenges of managing change in any organization.

### ***Training Security Cooperation Officers***

To date, SCOs have been trained for security assistance tasks—the material side of security cooperation—with little attention to the non-material challenges faced by partner nations. DSCA’s schoolhouse for security cooperation has updated curricula in recent years to

reflect changes in authorities, but has received little guidance to look more broadly at non-material security cooperation, including DIB. To comply with the NDAA and to deliver high-quality security cooperation and DIB programming the DOD must improve the training provided to the security cooperation workforce. An important first step is to ensure that SCO training and education are aligned to the challenges SCOs actually face in the field rather than to the funding mechanisms the DOD executes.

While the DOD clearly has experts in institutional functions throughout the Department, they will typically lack the requisite breadth of experience for DIB unless they have served at a fairly high level *and* have experience working across interrelated functions. The additional challenge is to be able to see through to the fundamentals of their own discipline to mesh the key tenets of their field with the partner's environment and processes, all without imposing upon the partner a U.S. system or approach. It is a false premise to believe that personnel in the DOD with functional job descriptions are inherently capable of conducting DIB in developing countries. DIB requires specially educated and trained personnel.

The DOD has had the good fortune to be able to rely on the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) community to fill most SCO positions globally, though there is a little understood challenge that accompanies this practice. FAOs are superbly prepared to accomplish their primary tasks, which are principally to understand a region's culture, language, economics, etc., and to support U.S politico-military planning and interactions. Their education and training prepares them well for these tasks. Fifteen years ago (and earlier) the security assistance training provided to FAOs before embarking on SCO tours was probably adequate. With the numerous changes in DOD authorities since 9/11, and the added complexity of knitting together multiple authorities to achieve objectives, including the conduct of DIB, today's SCO training is no longer adequate.

Once again, organizing for DIB and SCO training and education must be considered together. As the DOD begins to improve SCO training it must grapple with the organizational issue of whether and where to create the nerve center for DIB. Is it possible to prepare every SCO and every GCC desk officer to be able to address every possible challenge? How much advanced training on DIB is required for an in-country SCO, a GCC desk officer, or for a strategist at DSCA? Tomorrow's security cooperation workforce should have enhanced skills to engage partners on a broader range of training and equipping issues, and have significantly greater capability to diagnose institutional and other non-material gaps to support nuanced and thoughtful design of security cooperation programs. Partner requests for equipment should be met with a rigorous but delicate assessment of the requirements driving the request, analysis of alternatives, a life-cycle costing exercise, and a focus on capabilities over individual platforms. Partners may request, but more likely SCOs will have to initiate, a discussion on the partner nation's ability to afford, sustain, and employ equipment that may be desired. To that end the following recommendations could serve to improve the role of SCOs in DIB.

*Broaden the SCO selection pool:* Tomorrow's DIB workforce should be shaped according to the challenges actually found in the field. No doubt some of these revolve around equipment sales and scheduling of training slots in U.S. defense schoolhouses. In the future, though, more SCOs could (and should) be selected based on their qualifications in functions and capabilities the United States seeks to strengthen in a partner nation. Logisticians could be selected for nations with maintenance and sustainment challenges; strategists for nations conducting strategic defense reviews; finance and budget specialists and human resource managers could be selected for nations grappling with those issues. The DOD should also broaden the pool from which it selects SCOs to include civilians. Civilians on five-year overseas tours would significantly enhance continuity of DIB programs and could be better prepared than their military counterparts for service in countries where institutional challenges abound.

*Train SCOs to identify institutional gaps:* The main objectives of DIB training for SCOs are to better prepare them to identify the gaps and shortfalls in the partner's institutions, increase their awareness that the DOD can craft programs to address those gaps, and ensure that others receive their insights for possible action. Far too many significant opportunities have been missed because the SCO was not equipped to do one of these three things.

### ***Four Tiers of Training***

Improvements to education and training for DIB should be tailored to the various levels of the DOD security cooperation enterprise, with the greatest emphasis on those positions that call for the most interaction with the partner nation, and those where key U.S. planning decisions for security cooperation are made. Training should first be enhanced for those who directly interact with partner nation officials, or who plan security cooperation at GCCs, in DSCA, and in OSD Policy, and perhaps in Service headquarters. The DOD should consider tiered training to enhance competencies broadly throughout front-line positions and provide more advanced DIB preparation for positions in all relevant DOD entities.

- *“Level 1” Add a two week DIB training program to the security assistance-focused training SCOs receive now:* This introduction to DIB would expose SCOs to the fundamentals of defense and security governance and management. It would cover all of the DOD programs that conduct DIB and provide examples of successful DIB projects globally. Its principal goal would be to increase SCO awareness of institutional gaps in the defense and security establishments of the nations in which they serve to support development of stronger and more targeted DIB proposals.
- *“Level 2” Provide an additional three weeks of education and training on DIB, principally to GCC staff:* This training would provide them greater depth and breadth in DIB to allow them better to support SCOs in the GCC's area of responsibility.

This level would examine global DIB and SSR approaches and provide trainees with a more substantial knowledge base from which to craft programs. Level 2-trained staff would serve as guides and mentors to SCOs in the field and validate initial SCO proposals before submission to DSCA and OSD Policy for approval.

- “Level 3” Provide training for approvers of DIB plans from GCCs: These staff would be selected based on a superior understanding of DIB and SSR principles and practices, and their connections to DOD and international security cooperation.
- “Level 4” Provide DIB training and education to senior officers, political appointees, and OSD and Service regional and functional desk officers: General and Flag officers reporting to GCC leadership positions receive very little, if any, exposure to security cooperation and DIB. A two-day executive program would significantly enhance their ability to provide oversight of the GCC’s DIB responsibilities, and serve to ensure that DIB is integrated into GCC plans. The DOD’s “Capstone” program could be adapted to this purpose.

## In Conclusion

Defense institution building is difficult and complex, and much work remains to be done to improve the process. DIB can be crippled by overambitious goals, inadequate budgets, unrealistic timeframes, lack of coordination or clear goals, the wrong workforce, or a lack of cultural appropriateness. Yet, DIB offers a strategic solution to some of the major shortcomings of one of the most important tools in the U.S. defense tool kit: security cooperation. This book is being published at a time when insecurity is widespread. The World Economic Forum Global Risk Report for 2017 ranked “failure of National Governance,” “State Collapse or Crisis,” and “interstate conflict” as leading global risks.<sup>45</sup> The number of refugees has not been as high since the Second World War. Geopolitical tensions are once again rearing their heads. Proxy conflict is flourishing. Democracy is threatened. While DIB is not a silver bullet for this evolving security landscape, it can help to establish partners with the capacity to maintain their own security, improve regional stability, and take on a share of the burdens of global security that the United States cannot address alone.

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## Notes

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