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BY THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES
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STATEMENT

OF

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BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON

SECURITY COOPERATION

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Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the House Armed Services Committee, it has been over three years since I last had the opportunity to appear before the distinguished members of this committee. I am honored to speak with you again and share my perspective of the value of security cooperation programs for the Department of Defense and our nation.

The Value of Security Cooperation

I am a proponent of continuing robust U.S. government and Department of Defense investment in security cooperation programs. I find that security cooperation programs are most successful when they are planned, funded, coordinated, executed, and evaluated in conjunction with Department of State security assistance and foreign assistance programs funded by the Congress. A coordinated interagency approach in foreign assistance enhances the security of the United States through a focused approach, approved by our friends and allies, helping them defend their sovereignty and maintain the security of their nations.

My comments today are based on my experience planning and executing security cooperation programs in two separate geographic combatant commands – United States Pacific Command and United States Southern Command. My comments also reflect my experience working with U.S Embassies, U.S. federal agencies, and our regional partners to build relations and improve their capacity to address national security concerns and our combined capacity to address international security

concerns. Finally, my comments focus on security cooperation programs conducted outside of combat zones.

Using this framework, I think security cooperation programs build enduring relationships, build trust through familiarity and awareness with one another's armed forces, foster cooperation for working together in crisis, help build the capacity of the armed forces of friendly nations, and help strengthen the positions of the armed forces within society. I found that Department of Defense security cooperation training, education, and exercise programs are good investments for the United States government.

What Security Cooperation Can Do

I think security cooperation programs provide three valuable contributions for the Department of Defense. They build understanding and relationships between the members of the armed forces of the U.S. and our partner nations. In conjunction with Department of State security assistance programs, they help build the capacity of partner nation armed forces to maintain security within their borders. And third, they grow the professional understanding of partner armed forces for adhering to international standards, including respect for human rights, the rule of law, and the role of elected civilian authorities. Let me expand on each of these points.

First, Department of Defense security cooperation programs build understanding and strengthen the relations between the members of two or more armed forces. These relationships are formed through the shared experience gained by participating together in training and education programs, either in the U.S. or their country. These shared experiences test the participants physically, mentally, and show them the importance of working together.

The following example illustrates my point. In the mid 1980s, a U.S. Army officer, Major Ken Keen, and a Brazilian Army Officer, Major Floriano Peixoto, attended parachute training together in the U.S., and later attended the Brazilian Army Command and Staff College. Years later, when an earthquake demolished parts of Haiti in 2010, Lieutenant General Keen and Major General Peixoto found themselves in Haiti commanding the two key military organizations supporting relief efforts in Haiti, Joint Task Force Haiti (commanded by Lieutenant General Keen) and the United Nations Mission for the Stabilization of Haiti (MINUSTAH)(commanded by Major General Peixoto). (Background -- While I served as the Commander of United States Southern Command, Lieutenant General Keen served as my Deputy Commander. He and his staff were visiting Haiti on January 12, 2010 when a magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck near Port au Prince. Following the earthquake, I put Lieutenant General Keen in charge of Joint Task Force Haiti, the DOD effort to provide relief assistance in Haiti. Major General Peixoto was in Haiti commanding MINUSTAH). In this time of crisis, because of the relationship they had formed twenty years prior and the trust they had build, the two generals quickly cemented a

plan for how their forces would work together to speed the recovery of the Haitian people from this devastating earthquake. The shared training and education experience of these two officers built a common understanding that benefited the United States, Brazil, Haiti, and the United Nations. Strong, trusting relationships require investment. DOD security cooperation programs help foster these relationships. The success of international efforts to respond to the earthquake in Haiti, the largest humanitarian crisis in the Western Hemisphere, serves as a good example of the value of these relationships.

Second, along with building relations between military personnel, security cooperation programs help build the capacity of our partner nations armed forces to defend their national sovereignty. Security cooperation programs provide training in small arms, small force tactics, intelligence cooperation, logistics, command and control, military assistance to law enforcement, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and command and control of multi-national forces, enhancing the armed forces ability to plan and conduct operations and command and control their forces. In addition, through Defense Institution Building (DIB), the Department of Defense provides assistance for improving ministerial, general and joint staff, and military service headquarters management practices and processes. Strong defense institutions build and sustain capable, professional defense forces who are better able to meet national defense requirements.

Combined with Department of State security assistance programs, security cooperation programs enhance the capability of armed forces to defend their nation. These programs also build a common understanding of the language and procedures used by different armed forces to speed their ability to work together in times of crisis.

For example, the international military response to the Government of Haiti's request for support following the 2010 earthquake was fast and came from nations around the world. Because many of the responding international military personnel had trained with U.S. military forces or attended education programs with U.S. military personnel at some point in their career, the coordination, cooperation, and focus of the international forces deployed to Haiti quickly formed an effective operating force. The speed and facility with which this cooperation happened was facilitated through U.S. security cooperation programs conducted around the globe.

Finally, Department of Defense security cooperation programs help grow the professional capacity of partner militaries to respect international standards – respect for human rights, the rule of law, and the role of elected civilian authority over the military. The Geographic Combatant Commands and the Services all conduct courses on these topics in their training and education programs. They discuss how strong adherence to international humanitarian standards is critical for responsible military forces to maintain the trust and confidence of their societies. While not perfect, the overwhelming majority of U.S. military men and women

exemplify these standards and demonstrate them in their interaction with other international military personnel.

What Security Cooperation Cannot Do

I also want to discuss what Department of Defense security cooperation programs CANNOT do. First, by themselves, security cooperation programs cannot prevent political change. As stated earlier, security cooperation programs teach respect for the democratic process and the rule of law. They also teach that the role of the armed forces of a nation is to defend the rights of their citizens to decide their political future.

From my viewpoint, over the past three decades, Department of Defense security cooperation programs helped foster stronger standards of conduct within our partner militaries in Latin America. Despite a history of military coups in the region, many militaries witnessed significant political change occur in their country and did not get involved. So, while U.S. security cooperation programs may have influenced militaries to stay out of politics, the political change in these countries has not always been favorable to U.S. interests.

Just as security cooperation programs cannot prevent political change, they cannot change the cultural and social norms in a country. They also will not address poverty, income inequality, nor enhance poor social infrastructure. While these

problems impact the success of security cooperation, other U.S. federal agencies are tasked to help countries address these problems. Therefore, security cooperation programs must work hand in hand with U.S. foreign assistance programs in a “whole of government” approach to help countries address their problems.

Close Relationship Between Security Cooperation and Security Assistance

Mr. Chairman, while this hearing is focused on security cooperation, from my experience, I think it is important to acknowledge the close relationship between Department of Defense security cooperation programs and Department of State security assistance programs. During my time in U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Southern Command, both commands worked closely with the Department of State and the respective U.S. Embassies to coordinate security cooperation and security assistance programs. Training and exercise programs conducted through security cooperation meshed closely with the education and equipping programs conducted through security assistance programs. In fact, in many cases, more funding assistance to a country was provided through Department of State programs to enhance the capability of a nation’s armed forces, like Foreign Military Financing, than came from Department of Defense programs.

Improving Security Cooperation and Security Assistance Programs

I see two significant ways to improve security cooperation and security assistance programs. These recommendations are specifically based on my experience in U.S. Southern Command, a command with limited resources supporting poorly resourced partner nation armed forces.

First, U.S. government administrative, oversight, and coordination processes are slow and unresponsive for meeting the urgent needs of poorly resourced partner armed forces facing critical internal defense problems. Many of our partner military organizations are relatively small and operate limited numbers of vehicles, naval vessels, and aircraft. They lack of the institutional structure and knowledge to accurately forecast future needs and therefore ask for equipment and training when their need is immediate. As a result, when these militaries cannot get the help they need when they need it, the slow speed of the U.S process reduces the importance of security cooperation programs for these under-resourced militaries, hurts cooperation, and encourages these nations to seek other nations to address their needs.

Let me use the C-130 program to illustrate my point. The majority of countries who operate C-130s in Latin America own small fleets of aircraft. These aircraft fleets range in size from two to eight aircraft, are supported by personnel with limited logistics planning expertise, have a limited capacity to predict when parts will fail,

and have low priority for requisitioning parts in the U.S supply system. When a part breaks, to get a new part, our partner's request a new part from the DOD global logistics system and are often told it will take six to 18 months to receive a new part. But they have a hard time understanding why. The Department of Defense operates hundreds of C-130s, so our partner's don't understand why, with so many aircraft, the U.S. cannot support their immediate need. And when the DOD doesn't, they view the U.S. military logistics system as unresponsive and not interested in supporting their operational success. From my point of view, while U.S. military readiness should remain a high priority, the U.S. government must find a way to respond quickly to address the urgent needs of all our partners. Our partners must routinely see the benefit of partnering with the U.S.

Another challenge DOD security cooperation programs face is declining budgets. Fewer resources supporting the same mission requirements mean fewer people with less money trying to accomplish the same job. The impact on security cooperation is that the DOD will conduct fewer programs, take longer to plan and execute them, be slower at responding to partner nation needs, and leave the impression that the U.S. is not interested in supporting their partner's security. Declining budgets will diminish our partner nation's trust in the DOD as a reliable partner.

An Interagency Foreign Assistance Strategy

I want to add one final point to my statement about DOD security cooperation programs. In the FY16 NDAA, the Committee approved language directing the Department of Defense to develop and deliver to Congress a strategic framework for conducting security cooperation programs. When delivered, this strategy will help the committee understand the DOD approach to security cooperation, but these security cooperation programs are only one part of the overall U.S. foreign assistance program. I think the Congress can do more.

Successful security cooperation strategies support successful foreign assistance programs. For example, Plan Colombia, a foreign assistance strategy to help Colombia defeat the FARC, used coordinated security cooperation, security assistance, and other foreign assistance programs to support the Government of Colombia's strategy to reduce the influence of the FARC and encourage them to come to the peace table. Plan Colombia succeeded because it brought all the ingredients of foreign assistance together to support a committed partner -- a well structured and funded U.S. foreign assistance strategy supporting strong Colombian national leadership, a unified domestic strategy, and the full support of the Colombian people. While the U.S. helped Colombia, the Colombians deserve credit for their success to date.

Therefore, I think that a successful foreign assistance strategy starts here in the Congress. Mr. Chairman, I ask you and the distinguished members of this committee, working with other Congressional committees, consider directing the responsible federal agencies, led by the Department of State, to develop a foreign assistance strategy, involving all appropriate parts of the Federal government, to report the results to a joint session of the responsible committees in Congress. While the U.S. interagency process has matured significantly in recent years, more progress is needed in both the Congress and the federal government.

Mr. Chairman, the Committee's continued investment in Department of Defense security cooperation programs is important to the defense of the United States. They enable the armed forces of the U.S. to build relations, improve the ability to conduct combined military operations, enhance partner military capacity and capability, and build readiness for responding together in crisis. Militaries must train to be ready when called. Security cooperation programs are an important part of investing in the Department's overall readiness.