



Melissa Dalton

Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, International Security Program, and Director, Cooperative Defense Project

Melissa Dalton is a senior fellow and deputy director of the CSIS [International Security Program](#) (ISP) and director of the [Cooperative Defense Project](#) (CDP). Her CDP research focuses on reinforcing the principled foundations of U.S. defense policy and military operations. She also frequently conducts research and writes on security cooperation with allies and partners and U.S. defense policy in the Middle East. As deputy director, she advises the ISP director on a broad range of strategic and management issues. She manages the daily operations of ISP, including a team of 50 resident staff and an extensive network of nonresident affiliates. Prior to joining CSIS in 2014, Ms. Dalton served in a number of positions at the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy from 2007 to 2014. She most recently was a senior adviser for force planning, where she contributed to the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review and DoD's planning guidance. Previously, she served as special assistant to the under secretary of defense for policy, as policy adviser to the commander of the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, Afghanistan, and as country director for Lebanon and Syria. In 2012, she was a visiting fellow at the Center for a New American Security. Prior to her DoD service, she taught English to middle and high school students in Damascus, Syria, in 2006. From 2003 to 2005, she served as an intelligence analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency. Ms. Dalton holds a B.A. in foreign affairs from the University of Virginia and an M.A. in international relations and international economics from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. She was a 2014–2015 Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow and a Council on Foreign Relations term member.