

ROBERT M. SCHER
FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
FOR STRATEGY, PLANS, AND CAPABILITIES



Mr. Robert Scher was appointed the Assistant Secretary of Defense for the new office of Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities in December 2014 and served in that position until January 2017. Mr. Scher was responsible for advising the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on national security and defense strategy; the forces and contingency plans necessary to implement defense strategy; global allocation and posture of the US military; nuclear deterrence and missile defense policy; and security cooperation plans and policies.

Mr. Scher previously served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Plans within the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Forces. In this role, he oversaw the development of guidance for military campaign and contingency plans, the processes for reviewing and assessing these plans, and the development and implementation of U.S. global defense posture. Prior to serving as DASD Plans, Mr. Scher was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Southeast Asia within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs. In this capacity, Mr. Scher served as the principal advisor to senior leadership within the Department of Defense for all South and Southeast Asia policy matters pertaining to strategies and plans, including international strategy development, and implementation. He was responsible for managing the bilateral security relationships with the nations of this region and spearheaded DoD participation in regional multilateral fora.

Prior to his first appointment in 2009, Mr. Scher was an associate at the consulting firm of Booz Allen Hamilton where he led efforts to assist Asian nations in improving their defense and national security decision-making processes. He also led analytical efforts supporting the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) on strategy development and Asia-related issues. Earlier, Mr. Scher worked for 15 years in the Departments of Defense and State, and held numerous posts covering Asian security and defense policy issues. He served as Chief-of-Staff to the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, overseeing the operation of the OSD office responsible for bilateral and multilateral security relations in Asia. Additionally, Mr. Scher helped develop the strategic basis for U.S. defense strategy, participating in the 1993 Bottom-Up Review and the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review. He co-authored Presidential Decision Directive-56 on conducting complex contingency operations, and was involved in planning for U.S. support to operations ranging from Iraqi election support to deploying U.S. forces to East Timor and the southern Philippines. While at the Department of State, he served on the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff providing advice on Asia, counterterrorism and political military affairs. Mr. Scher entered government service through the Presidential Management Fellowship Program.

Mr. Scher has a Bachelor of Arts from Swarthmore College, conferred with High Honors, and a Masters of International Affairs from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, where he was awarded a DuPont International Affairs Fellowship.