



U.S. Helps Others and Self in Exporting Security

October 31, 2017

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IN REVIEW

Derek Reveron, *Exporting Security: International Engagement, Security Cooperation, and the Changing Face of the U.S. Military* 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2016)

The second edition of *Exporting Security* by Derek Reveron highlights again the growing role of the U.S. military in both security cooperation and security assistance as a core part of how the United States engages the world around it and seeks to secure its global national security goals. The book also has taken on increased timeliness as the Trump administration proposes extensive cuts to U.S. foreign assistance budgets, while simultaneously boosting military spending. Reveron's work helps us better understand the potential impacts of such a move, and suggests they could be extensive. Indeed, *Exporting Security* clearly shows that the United States already had been grappling with questions about how to square its global leadership and extensive national security interests with associated costs, well before Trump's rhetorical commitment to "America First."

The United States as Security Exporter

Most importantly, this book introduces readers to the world of contemporary security cooperation and international engagement. The U.S. involvement in training, cooperating with, assisting, and selling to other nations' armies in pursuit of strategic interests is, of course, long-standing. It was a key part of the strategic toolset in the Cold War, as the United States used security assistance to help support regimes who themselves supported U.S. interests, maintained the military edge of key allies, secured access and influence in key parts of the globe, and helped fight wars (including, less officially, irregulars fighting Soviet forces by proxy). Reveron argues that while much of this engagement remains important to U.S. national security, there has also been an important post-Cold War shift from security assistance to a much more expansive idea of security cooperation. This shift was

© 2017 Published for the Foreign Policy Research Institute by Elsevier Ltd.

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strengthened following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the lessons taken about the roots of those attacks. The author shows how U.S. military activities and interactions with “partner” militaries have both ballooned and evolved in their aims and underlying organizational structure. Reveron further ties this expansion to the United States’ broad—and broadening—view of its own national security in a threatening world that continues to globalize and change. Security cooperation, for Reveron, is becoming an integral part of U.S. national security strategy in the twenty-first century and changing the very nature of the U.S. military itself.

The book begins with several significant observations and claims. It defines security cooperation as a U.S. military mission encompassing all “interactions with foreign defense establishments” to *include* Department of Defense (DoD)-funded security assistance, Department of State (DoS)-funded but DoD-administered security assistance,¹ and a whole host of joint exercises, training and educational work, disaster management, and wider relationship building activities. The increase in security cooperation activities is clear—Reveron uses status of forces agreements (through which U.S. military personnel operate in foreign countries) as a proxy—in 15 years they have increased in use from 40 to 117 countries. Two recent reports from the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) underline that security cooperation is an increasingly used tool. WOLA found 107 currently active security assistance programs operating through the Department of State and Department of Defense. Of these programs, 50 have been established since the 9/11 terrorist attacks.² The GAO uses different criteria, associated with the U.S. strategic aim to “build partner capacity”³ in the security abilities of states around the globe, to highlight 194 DoD security cooperation efforts.⁴ These facts alone warrant attention. Reveron’s book remains among the few works to offer a dedicated focus on the clear, growing importance of security cooperation to U.S. foreign policy.

Reveron is lucid and detailed in presenting what can seem a Byzantine policy world, and the book offers a superb resource as an introduction to security cooperation. Importantly, however, Reveron makes consequential arguments about what security cooperation *does* for the United States on a strategic scale, and where its increasing use originates. Put simply, the book contends that the U.S.’ global national security interests, and increased concerns about the potential impacts of sub-

¹ Some of the key SA accounts within wider U.S. foreign assistance, such as Foreign Military Financing (FMF), are funded and directed through the State Department, but administered by the DoD, through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

² Adam Isacson and Sarah Kinoshian ‘Putting the Pieces Together: A Global Guide to U.S. Security Aid Programs’ Washington Office on Latin America (Washington D.C.: April 2017), pp. 3-4

³ Kathleen J. McInnes and Nathan J. Lucas ‘What Is “Building Partner Capacity?” Issues for Congress’ *Congressional Research Service* (Washington D.C.: Dec. 18, 2015).

⁴ U.S. Government Accountability Office ‘Building Partner Capacity: Inventory of Department of Defense Security Cooperation and Department of State Security Assistance Efforts’ (Washington D.C.: March 24, 2017), pp.3-5. It must be noted the DoD took issue with this GAO report and its working definitions, claiming some of the authorities identified were not strictly SC.

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