DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR AIR FORCE LEADERSHIP

SEP 2 8 2026

FROM: SAF/AQ

SUBJECT: Strategic Alignment of Security Cooperation and Exportability as a Core Acquisition Function

1. Effective immediately, Security Cooperation (SC), Security Assistance (SA), and Foreign Military Sales (FMS) are to be executed as primary, strategic missions of the Department of the Air Force (DAF) acquisition enterprise. Exportability can no longer be treated as a reactive, post-production afterthought. System designs must be "exportable-by-design" from inception.

2. Strategic Imperative: Recent global operations demonstrate that an interoperable coalition is foundational to integrated deterrence. The operational, industrial, and diplomatic fruits of well-executed SC are undeniable. However, historically, our acquisition community often relegated FMS to a secondary function. This reactive posture—waiting for a Letter of Request (LOR) before initiating exportability engineering—results in missed opportunities to stabilize our Defense Industrial Base (DIB), costly post-production retrofits, and delayed capability delivery to partners. We must shift to a proactive model synchronizing U.S. warfighter needs with coalition partnership opportunities directly into our baseline acquisition strategies.

3. Directives: To operationalize this shift, the following directives apply immediately to all active platforms, future development efforts, and personnel management frameworks.

a. Protection of Exportability Trade-Space: Exportability and Differential Capabilities (DC) constitute critical, restricted trade-space. Program Managers must not leverage exportability or DC as offsets for near-term cost or schedule pressures. Any proposed deviation from baseline exportability requirements mandates explicit approval from the applicable PAE in addition to Milestone Decision Authority (MDA). Exportability is a non-negotiable strategic asset, not a discretionary program feature.

b. Exportable-by-Design via Modular Open Systems Architecture (MOSA): All programs, except MDAPs with an MDA-approved exportability design waiver, will utilize MOSA to facilitate rapid, exportable configurations. Systems Engineering Plans (SEP) must account for coalition interoperability and foreign disclosure requirements during the initial Research and Development (R&D) and design phases.

c. Integrating SC into Core Operations: PAEs with substantial FMS activities will designate an SC Senior Functional, with parity in authority and responsibility to existing functional chiefs. To ensure continuous integration, personnel with SC experience and responsibility must be embedded with the core program team at standup and throughout the acquisition lifecycle.

d. Integrated Production Planning: PAEs will integrate anticipated FMS activities and international demand into core production planning. This includes identifying strategic block

buy opportunities, executing production leveling to shield sub-tier suppliers, and establishing robust Test & Evaluation (T&E) capacity for modified FMS weapon systems to maximize DIB stability.

e. Talent Management and Career Progression: Functional Managers for PM and Scientist and Engineering (S&E) functional areas shall update Career Development Roadmaps/Talent Management Frameworks to reflect potential opportunities and timing of SC/FMS centric assignments which will help guide a member's professional growth and development within the SC/FMS arena, while taking into account core functional area requirements expected for career progression within the acquisition enterprise. SC and FMS experience should be considered a desirable attribute and taken into account as part of the member's overall record of performance as they are being evaluated for consideration for ML/SML positions and associated candidacy boards. Memorandum of Instructions for relevant candidacy boards will include guidance to reflect this. In addition, individuals selected as an ML or SML must complete foundational SC courses via the Defense Security Cooperation University (such as INT 1110, TSFD 101, and FMS 151).

4. Implementation and Future Steps: This directive marks the initial phase of a comprehensive modernization of our SC enterprise. Within the next 60 to 120 days, my office will issue data calls to PAEs to identify high-yield industrial base opportunities. Simultaneously, we will convene strategic sessions with COCOMs and SAF/IA to designate empowered champions to drive interagency action plans.

5. Conclusion: We can no longer separate our domestic industrial and acquisition strategies from our foreign partner engagements. Building a lethal, interoperable coalition begins on the drawing board, continues through the lifecycle, and it requires our best leaders at the helm. I expect every member of the acquisition workforce supporting legacy or new programs to treat our allied capabilities with the same rigor and urgency as our domestic requirements—ensuring we actively strengthen our DIB and supply chains, split modernization costs, and achieve greater leverage for U.S. industry.

WILLIAM D. BAILEY
Performing the duties of the Assistant Secretary
of the Air Force (Acquisition, Technology, & Logistics)