July 13, 2017 Roundtable Summary

The Henry L. Stimson Center and Schar School of policy and Government, George Mason University

In Defense of Food Security

Understanding the Intersection of Food Security and National Security in a Turbulent World

Table of Contents

[Introduction 3](#_Toc507509497)

[Background 4](#_Toc507509498)

[Summary of the Roundtable 4](#_Toc507509499)

[Challenges to Improving Collaboration between Civilian and Military Agencies 7](#_Toc507509500)

[Interagency Communication 7](#_Toc507509501)

[Civilian-Military Coordination 8](#_Toc507509502)

[Technology 8](#_Toc507509503)

[Nutrition 9](#_Toc507509504)

[Budget 9](#_Toc507509505)

[Military vs. Civilian Assistance Delivery Mechanisms 9](#_Toc507509506)

[Outsized Perceptions of the Military’s Potential Impact 10](#_Toc507509507)

[Achieving Greater Civil-Military Integration 10](#_Toc507509508)

[Greater Consultation Across Agencies 10](#_Toc507509509)

[Greater Integration with Limited Resources 10](#_Toc507509510)

[Protecting Critical Programs 10](#_Toc507509511)

[Partnerships with Private Industry and Non-Governmental Organizations 11](#_Toc507509512)

[Looking Forward 11](#_Toc507509513)

[Closing Comments 12](#_Toc507509514)

[Conclusions 12](#_Toc507509515)

[Summary of Key Points Discussed 13](#_Toc507509516)

[Greater Consultation Across Agencies 13](#_Toc507509517)

[Create Transparency around the Availability and Allocation of Resources 13](#_Toc507509518)

[Improve Private and Non-Governmental Partnerships 13](#_Toc507509519)

[Protecting Crucial Programs 13](#_Toc507509520)

[Military Training 14](#_Toc507509521)

[Utilize the Media 14](#_Toc507509522)

[Improve Data Collection and Expanding the Use of Technology 14](#_Toc507509523)

[Enhance Methods for Civil-Military Engagement 14](#_Toc507509524)

[Short term 15](#_Toc507509525)

[Medium term 15](#_Toc507509526)

[Long term 15](#_Toc507509527)

[Next Steps 16](#_Toc507509528)

[Roundtable Partners and Acknowledgements 16](#_Toc507509529)

[The Stimson Center 16](#_Toc507509530)

[Schar School of Policy, George Mason University 17](#_Toc507509531)

# Introduction

On the eve of the first anniversary the Global Food Security Act (GFSA) of 2016, a group of over fifty experts representing the U.S. Department of State (DOS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Department of Commerce, and a range of non-governmental and academic institutions met at the Stimson Center in Washington, D.C. for a roundtable discussion on the nexus of food security and national security. The half-day roundtable was structured around a series of questions about the status and future of civil-military engagement across the U.S. government to meet the goals of GFSA.

The meeting came as coverage of the four famines wracking Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and South Sudan has grown in international media. These complex crises demonstrate how violent conflict exacerbates food insecurity. It has also required the support of the military alongside civilian agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help provide relief in war-torn environments. Dating back to World War II, the role of the U.S. military in global food assistance has been prominent, but these famines – a combination of conflict, weak or absent governance, and a range of environmental drivers such as drought – highlight the distinct role that the military can play in contributing to U.S. food assistance abroad, especially in unstable areas, and the continued need to integrate across agencies on the ground and in Washington, D.C.

There has been concern about the militarization of food security since the end of the Cold War. But the current global climate of ongoing conflicts and the recurrence of fighting have often engaged our military in new roles that go beyond traditional war-fighting capabilities. Moreover, the U.S. military has important resources for funding technologies that may eventually support new types of early warning systems for recognizing threats to agricultural production, or foreseeing which countries are at risk for droughts. Specific agencies within the Department of Defense also have the ability to track population movements from its network of geospatial observation systems. At a field level, thousands of U.S. military forces on the ground in conflict-prone regions are also front-line observers of war-affected populations who need assistance. If properly trained these troops can serve as an early warning system to report about actual conditions in insecure places. Military forces can also enter environments where development agencies cannot access for security reasons. Regional combatant commands also assess food and climate as part of their overall regional planning efforts in support of U.S. national security objectives. The opportunity to enhance the integration of U.S. national security and food security policies is even more compelling today.

Beyond the humanitarian role that the U.S. military supports, ongoing conflicts and reconstruction efforts have also pushed the military into new roles that sometimes overlap with those of the development community. New concerns about this intersection of national defense and global development have increased as these complex crises are now a part of the development landscape. Our roundtable examined several key questions around these concerns in light of the new realities of global security.

Johanna Mendelson Forman, Distinguished Fellow, Stimson Center.

# Background

Today, food security is widely recognized as a global security issue. Hunger and poverty leave communities vulnerable to violence, conflict, and instability. The Global Food Security Act (GFSA) states, “It is in the national interest of the United States to promote global food security, resilience, and nutrition, consistent with national food security investment plans…”[[1]](#footnote-2)

Feed the Future, the U.S. government’s global hunger and food security initiative—which was established in2010 and codified in the GFSA in 2016—supports a country-driven approach to addressing the root causes of hunger and poverty. The initiative is led by the U.S. Agency for International Development and draws on the expertise and resources of 11 federal agencies,[[2]](#footnote-3) targeting assistance in 19 focus countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. The current list of Feed the Future partner agencies does not include the DOD.

Two years before the establishment of Feed the Future, the U.S. government Accountability Office (GAO) found that the U.S. government’s global food security interagency process was fragmented, overlapping, and lacking in substantive coordination, collaboration, and integration.2 Concurrent with the 2007-2008 global food price crisis, the GAO had been evaluating U.S. global food security policy and programs, as well as those of other donors. U.S. international food aid programs represented the overwhelming majority of U.S. food security policy with a few agricultural assistance programs that were poorly funded. In response to these findings, the GAO recommended the development of an interagency U.S. global food security strategy and process to catalyze collaboration and integration of multiple U.S. government agencies.[[3]](#footnote-4)

# Summary of the Roundtable

The Stimson Center, the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University, and RTI International convened a roundtable of global food security practitioners and representatives from the U.S. military community in July 2017. The half-day roundtable was structured around a series of questions about the status and future of civil-military engagement across the U.S. government to meet the goals of GFSA.

1. What are the challenges thatboth civilian and military organizations confront in creating greater collaboration in terms of information sharing, knowledge and expertise, and resources to support new programs and improve capacity building on food security?
2. With the Department of Defense not part of the interagency working group tasked with implementing the Global Food Security Act of 2016, what do civilian agencies see as a way to create a more robust integration of civil-military efforts in the future?
3. The administration’s budget proposes cutting development funding and raising the defense budget. In this context, how can we maximize our impact with limited resources? What existing programs can be leveraged toward a more integrated response to food insecurity?
4. As we look to the future, what analytical tools are needed to inform both civilian and military organizations about the growing threats of food insecurity arising from conflict, but also the potential that collaboration on information and activities might have to prevent food insecurity or environmental conflicts that are on the rise in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and other areas of the globe?
5. Under the new U.S. government’s Global Food Security Strategy and the GFSA, how can we best integrate and align U.S. military and national security policy, resources, skills, and expertise?

The roundtable followed Chatham House rules. This report summarizes the discussion using the roundtable questions as section headers, and there is no attribution. The goal of the roundtable was to foster an open discussion between representatives of the various sectors—humanitarian, development, trade, and military—working on food security issues to develop innovative ideas and solutions to shared challenges.

There was consensus that the working relationship between the development and security communities has improved in recent decades. International efforts to stem food insecurity have also seen progress. One participant recalled the tremendous success in addressing food insecurity in India. In spite of progress, many places in the global south continue to experience food insecurity despite a long history of receiving development assistance.

The one year anniversary of the signing of the GFSA afforded an opportunity to reflect on what progress has been made since the law was passed, but also on the progress since the Feed the Future Initiative was launched seven years ago. One of its aims was to highlight global food security as a U.S. national security priority. However, participants noted that the absence of the DOD as a formal partner presents a potential obstacle to the implementation of a whole-of-government approach to food security.

A 2015 National Intelligence Council report concluded that food security is a U.S. national security concern. Countries that cannot feed their populations pose threats to national and regional security and stability, as well as U.S. interests.[[4]](#footnote-5) Numerous U.S. military leaders, former and current, have also recognized the connections between food security and peace and stability. The ongoing famines in Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen exemplify the destabilizing effects of natural and anthropogenic food crises. These four famines, unfolding in countries that require both short-term assistance and long-term development, also underscore the urgent need to bridge the humanitarian-military divide. They also suggest that connecting immediate life-saving assistance to the sustainable development needs remains a challenge for the both the development community and the affected countries.

An inconvenient truth at the heart of food insecurity is governance. While famines can be catalyzed or prolonged by environmental factors, they are most often compounded by poor governance. The failure of governments to enact policies that support strong food systems and distribution infrastructures and services fuels the vicious cycle of food insecurity and conflict. Moreover, crises of governance also impact the ability for private sector and foreign investment to support reconstruction. In this regard, speakers noted the important contributions made by the Feed the Future initiative to strengthen governance and agri-food system institutions and combat corruption, which undermines rule of law.

By codifying into law the tenants of Feed the Future, the GFSA secured the commitment of resources to this issue and institutionalized Feed the Future’s whole-of-government approach. Although DOD was not formally designated as a GFSA implementing agency, the military is playing an important role in humanitarian assistance and could also play a larger role in development assistance, particularly in terms of providing training, addressing conflict prevention in the field, and relaying on-the-ground intelligence from unstable areas to the other implementing agencies. These types of activities could have a significant impact in supporting agricultural development initiatives led by civilian agencies.

Participants identified some of the key challenges to a more inter-agency approach to food security:

* Turf-oriented operational policies and practices
* Internal cultural and operational differences within organizations
* Reluctance and unwillingness to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate
* Budgetary restrictions
* Perceptions of the militarization of international development

Participants suggested that a new framework for operational coordination, collaboration, and integration should be developed to mitigate these challenges. This would go beyond or amend the current global food security strategy that was crafted in 2016 to implement the GFSA.

The need to demonstrate that military and civilian agencies can work together in a complimentary manner without sacrificing institutional goals and objectives is essential to operational success and an effective and efficient whole-of-government approach. Participants agreed that there is a need for a substantive policy and program partnership between civilian and military organization.

Information sharing is inadequate. However, leadership and strategy in both civilian and military agencies need to prioritize cross-cutting efforts that would help overcome what some consider a gap in the understanding of interagency programs. Recommendations included the development of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tool and process to review joint activities.

# Challenges to Improving Collaboration between Civilian and Military Agencies

*What are the challenges that both civilian and military organizations confront in creating greater collaboration in terms of information sharing, knowledge and expertise, and resources to support new programs and improve capacity building on food security?*

## Interagency Communication

Participants identified stove-piped communication within and across federal agencies as a major obstacle to improved coordination. Often, individuals are isolated within their agencies and are unaware of their counterparts at other agencies or how to reach them. Similarly, participants noted that the operational mission of their agencies constrains their ability to diverge from their mission to address long-term threats or to engage in sustained interagency sharing or collaboration. For example, a representative from the military stated that the military’s central warfighting mission limits its ability to engage in activities not directly related to its mandate. However, while this is DOD’s primary mission, providing humanitarian support is an ongoing component of the Armed Forces’ engagement in many countries.

Several participants from different agencies emphasized that there is not a uniform definition of food security across the U.S. government. Inconsistent definitions have resulted in different agency-specific strategies aimed at solving different problem sets and have made collaboration across agencies more difficult. For example, resilience has been the driving force of USAID’s food security work recently and has been defined as “the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.”[[5]](#footnote-6) creating governance and community structures that can withstand shocks. In the Department of Defense, resilience has a more specific, operationally-focused definition.[[6]](#footnote-7) Participants highlighted an ongoing effort by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to compile a glossary of interagency terms as a potential partialsolution to this challenge.[[7]](#footnote-8)

## Civilian-Military Coordination

Representatives of the military stated that Combatant Commands are well informed about the issues affecting food security and are looking for concrete plans to provide assistance. They noted that there has been substantive civilian-military logistical coordination over the past two decades to provide humanitarian assistance in developing countries, especially where on-the-ground conditions are not conducive to aid workers. Entire offices, teams, and processes have been established within the military to work in this capacity. USAID’s Office of Civil Military Affairs was created to help connect the civilian and military communities. Similarly, USAID’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance also plays a significant role in integrating coordination among military actors, and international assistance communities in times of humanitarian emergencies and natural disaster relief. However, there is a need for long-term collaboration across civilian and military agencies for conflict prevention and continued on-the-ground intelligence gathering and sharing. This challenge underscores the humanitarian-development divide, which continues to demand attention in terms expanding of policy and operational capacity. Several participants suggested that USAID should formally include DOD in the interagency GFSA process. Others from USAID indicated the agency is already actively coordinating with DOD, albeit not through the formal interagency process. However, to the extent that this informal coordination exists, it risks inconsistencies and tends to compound confusion over the status of DOD’s involvement in the interagency process.

## Technology

Some participants point out that duplicative and unequal efforts across agencies to attract outside innovative ideas and technology should be reviewed to create efficiency and plan for long-term needs. The DOD has many programs that address food insecurity, such as utilizing satellite observation of potentially food-insecure geographies to analyzing migration flows as indicators of insecurity on-the-ground. There was also reference to DOD’s long-standing research and development arm, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). A representative of the army noted that more could be done to combine existing data and infrastructure across agencies to build a fuller understanding of food, water, and environmental systems to produce information and models. The challenge is how to ensure that information garnered from these activities are shared and integrated into ongoing assistance planning.

## Nutrition

Nutrition is a critical area at the center of Feed the Future’s focus. The initiative is developing ways to ensure that people are not only being fed but are also receiving the appropriate nutrition in their diets to sustain healthy and productive lives. Only within the past eight years has nutrition become a significant factor in U.S. and international food security strategies and initiatives. Other U.S. government agencies are also involved in global nutrition matters, especially the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The DOD does not work in this space except in the context of providing logistical support to the development agencies in times of emergency.

## Budget

In a 2010 report, the GAO concluded that inadequate budget data on government food security programs and activities caused by flawed agency food security information systems impact the availability of readily-available, accurate, reliable, and comprehensive budget and expenditure data on agency and government-wide food security-related programs, depriving strategists, policy makers, and program managers of critical information needed to make informed decisions.[[8]](#footnote-9) The roundtable discussion examined some of the legislative processes that constrain interagency collaboration, especially related to appropriation. During crises, funding restrictions limit the ability of civilian agencies to respond comprehensively or even sufficiently. Furthermore, mechanisms in place that could be utilized to transfer resources, such as the Commanders Emergency Response Program used in Iraq and Afghanistan, may be inadequate to replace the level of fiscal year 2018 (FY18) cuts currently being proposed by the new administration.

## Military vs. Civilian Assistance Delivery Mechanisms

The resources that DOD has earmarked for humanitarian assistance are lower than the other implementing agencies. A representative of the military noted that DOD commits around $100 million per year to humanitarian assistance, which is insufficient to meet the needs of some of the most food-insecure and vulnerable countries. This figure, however, was not broken down during the roundtable. In some regards, DOD’s limited humanitarian assistance funding underscores the fact that it falls outside of the agency’s warfighting mission. The 2010 GAO report on Feed the Future found that accurate, reliable, and complete data on the amount of money spent on food security related issues in DOD was not available and needed to be developed. In most cases, the military is not the best equipped or most efficient providers of humanitarian assistance. For example, delivering humanitarian assistance through military means is significantly costlier than when provided by an NGO or private contractor. Rather, a participant suggested there are other types of logistical support that DOD can provide to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance.

## Outsized Perceptions of the Military’s Potential Impact

Some military representatives at the roundtable suggested that those from other U.S. government agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions were overestimating the military’s impact on food security in on-the-ground situations where conflict is already underway. However, representatives from the military civil affairs and planning teams noted that with adequate training, military teams on the ground could provide civilian agencies with a better sense of the conditions of those living under threat of famines or other types of food emergencies.

# Achieving Greater Civil-Military Integration

*With the Department of Defense not included in the interagency working group tasked with implementing the Global Food Security Act, what can be done to create a more robust integration of civil-military efforts moving forward?*

## Greater Consultation Across Agencies

This roundtable was part of an ongoing effort to create opportunities for representatives from across the U.S. government and the non-governmental community to speak candidly and discuss solutions to crises and long-term development challenges would contribute to a more robust integration of civil-military efforts moving forward.

Across agencies, creating, sharing, and leveraging simulations and other models to develop strategies to address food insecurity – both short and long-term – would enhance U.S. government efforts toward global food security. Matrices that overlay a range of threats that contribute to food insecurity, including environmental drivers and social factors like gender disempowerment, could help identify geographies at risk.

# Greater Integration with Limited Resources

*The administration’s budget proposes cutting development funding and raising the defense budget. In this context, how can we maximize our impact with limited resources? What existing programs can be leveraged toward a more integrated response to food insecurity?*

## Protecting Critical Programs

One participant noted that if the Trump administration’s proposed budget⎯which includes a 31 percent cut to the Department of State and USAID⎯is passed, it will result in an increase in the inequality of resource allocation across the Federal Government. While the proposed cuts are significant for several agencies and across many functional areas relevant to food security, several participants noted that bipartisan support in Congress and within the Armed Forces for food security will likely result in less dramatic cuts. Nevertheless, the consensus of the group was that the food security community must work together to ensure that the most critical programs sustain funding. Moreover, leadership across the Federal Government should advocate for continued funding for robust monitoring & evaluation, which provides valuable data on the success of programs. This is essential information that must be shared and utilized among GFSA stakeholders.

## Partnerships with Private Industry and Non-Governmental Organizations

Moving forward, the relevant agencies must focus on threats to food security programs, but also on the achievements of those programs to date. The approach under GFSA has garnered bipartisan support in Congress. To sustain support from Congress, development and military practitioners of food security alike must continue to expand their relationships with the private sector. Already existing innovative public-private partnerships should be leveraged reduce demand on public resources. Land O’ Lakes, Inc., for example, has been a USAID partner since the late 1990s, dedicating resources and expertise for international development through their affiliated non-profit, Land O’ Lakes International Development. NGOs and faith-based organizations also assist in bringing attention to the prevalence of food insecurity and the achievements of programs aimed at reducing it. Organizations like Oxfam and Mercy Corps have been at the forefront of efforts to focus greater attention (and resources) on food insecurity around the world. Several participants noted that development practitioners may gain greater support from the current administration for food security by framing humanitarian and development assistance abroad in terms of advancing private-public partnerships designed to maximize the effectiveness, efficiency, and complementarity of government, private sector, and NGO food security collaboration.

# Looking Forward

*As we look to the future, what analytical tools are needed to inform both civilian and military organizations about the growing threats of food insecurity arising from conflict, but also the potential that collaboration on information and activities might have to prevent food insecurity or environmental conflicts that are on the rise in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and other areas of the globe?*

Participants indicated that data infrastructure is one way a collaborative presence can be developed. For example, having publicly available materials that incorporate the information collected by a wide variety of organizations would help provide a better starting point for analyzing the state of food security. The group did not discuss who would organize this database and where it would be housed, but they did indicate that it was something that could be of interest to various sectors: to the military as a potential threat detector; to civilian response teams for its early warning aspect; to the diplomatic community for informational purposes; to data and evaluation experts; and to development practitioners for modeling. In spite of the efforts by the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) which has made great progress in bringing diverse communities together around the collection of data, there is an immense lack of monitoring on agricultural production across Africa. No African country, with the exception of South Africa, produces timely and reliable production data. Literature indicates that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s foreign agriculture reporting impacts global markets. With the technology available today, there are vast capabilities to produce timely and reliable information, but the cost of and limited access to those systems limit their use across much of the developing world. As such, the U.S. government can play a critical role in maximizing agricultural production in vulnerable countries by providing monitoring assistance and supporting publicly accessible data so that those responding to development needs have baseline information for programming.

The U.S. government could provide incentives for and support the production of timely agricultural production data in focus countries. Near-real-time information would be helpful in building a clear and comprehensive picture of conditions on the ground. The Department of Defense, including DARPA, and the private sector have technologies and applications beyond what is available to the development community and that could be leveraged to focus efforts and resources where they are most needed.

# Closing Comments

*Under the U.S. government’s Global Food Security Strategy and the GFSA, how can we best integrate and align U.S. military and national security policy, resources, skills, and expertise?*

One development representative who has worked closely with the Department of Defense suggested several ways to engage DOD over the short, medium, and long term. Those recommendations included involving representatives from civilian agencies in the strategic planning conducted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff’s directorates, Civil Affairs Units, and DOD’s Office for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. The representative also recommended involving non-traditional stakeholders in DOD’s war games on threats related to food security. In the short term, for example, the Civil Affairs Units, which consist of the Special Operations and Reserve Programs of the military, have agricultural expertise that is transferable and potentially useful to the other implementing agencies.

In the medium term, Combatant Commands often provide on-the-ground information related to food security to U.S. missions and posts. In the long term, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Futures Group⎯which uses a threat-based approach to evaluate long-term challenges⎯could work with the other implementing agencies to draft multi-decade strategies and plans that integrate U.S. national security.

# Conclusions

This unique gathering of experts from the security and development communities – who came together to have a candid discussion on how to enhance coordination, collaboration, and integration of food security efforts – committed themselves to improve the operating relationships across the implementing agencies. The reauthorization of the GFSA in 2018 presents an auspicious opportunity to reevaluate what is needed to achieve global food security, incorporate innovative strategies to address continued challenges, and formally include DOD in the interagency process.

Those gathered at this meeting spoke openly about the challenges of: agency culture and communication; lack of long-term civil-military collaboration; conflicting terminology; inadequate technology; need for greater focus on integrating nutritional needs with security efforts, and limited resources, and inadequate data on agency and government-wide food security programs and activities. The group identified the following set of recommendations which focus on fostering greater engagement between agencies, creating transparency regarding the availability and allocation of resources, improving private and non-governmental partnerships, enhancing efforts to build consensus and political will, and expanding the use of technology.

# Summary of Key Points Discussed

## Greater Consultation Across Agencies

* Establish spaces for representatives from across the Federal Government to speak candidly and debate solutions.
* Create and utilize simulations and other models to develop strategies to address global food insecurity.

## Create Transparency around the Availability and Allocation of Resources

* Produce accurate, reliable, and comprehensive data on food security related budget expenditures from DOD. Without complete budget and expenditure information, it is difficult to gauge achievements made by DOD related to food security. While the information collected by the other implementing agencies is far from complete and also requires improvement, these agencies have historically produced more accurate and complete food security information related to expenditures and outcomes.
* Establish a task force within DOD, potentially at the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) level, to define the department’s role in food security and identify the programs and funding related to food security threats.

## Improve Private and Non-Governmental Partnerships

* Given the new administration’s shift in focus away from food security, the development community should continue to highlight the achievements of food security programs to sustain congressional support for GFSA.
* Efforts to build political will in Congress should be expanded to focus on the private sector. A public-private partnership approach to food security could leverage additional, non-traditional support at a time when resources are becoming more limited.
* Position NGOs as equal partners with the governments and the private sector on issues of food security. Complementarities in approach is key to successful implementation of public-private partnerships. More research is needed on how for-profit companies and non-profit organizations can work together to enhance the integration of food security and national security.
* Frame food security provision as an opportunity for American businesses abroad.

## Protecting Crucial Programs

* While proposed budget cuts are significant in many geographies and functional areas, bipartisan support in Congress and across the military for food security programs suggest that they will be shielded from the strongest cuts. Yet, all groups engaged on these issues must coordinate to articulate the value and necessity of current programs.
* For the military, supporting programs that address food insecurity is an investment in conflict prevention and mitigation.

## Military Training

* New curriculum and training on food security is important to ensure that those who work in the field and in Washington can operationalize an understanding of global food security as an element of U.S. national security. A Special Area of Emphasis for Climate Change and Food Security training was approved in January 2017 by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The new program would allow courses related to food security and environmental challenges to be part of military training curricula.

## Utilize the Media

* More people in decision-making positions must gain a more comprehensive understanding of the connections between conflict and food insecurity. The media can play an important role in helping to provide the public with accurate materials related to food as a national security issue. Organizations and agencies dealing with food security should work to educate the media about this connection as part of the outreach needed to bring more people in decision making positions to understand the issues. The reauthorization of the Global Food Security Act in 2018 presents an opportunity to tell some of the success stories about food security.

## Improve Data Collection and Expanding the Use of Technology

* Data infrastructure is one way a collaborative presence can be developed. There is interest from various sectors: to the military as a potential threat detector; to civilian response teams for its early warning aspect; to the diplomatic community for informational purposes; to data and evaluation experts; and to development practitioners for modeling. In most instances, publicly available data is preferred across the board.
* There is immense lack of data on agricultural production monitoring in Africa. No country in Africa, besides South Africa, produces timely and reliable production statistics. We know from academic literature that USDA agricultural production reporting impacts global agricultural markets. With today’s technology, there is vast capability to produce timely and reliable statistics. The development and humanitarian community should provide incentives and support aid recipient countries production of timely agricultural production data. Near-real-time statistics are most desirable. It would be extremely helpful in building a coherent and clear picture of circumstances on the ground. We also need to consider how to use new technologies and innovations, both from the private sector and the DOD, which has the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), to help with the global need of these ongoing problems.

## Enhance Methods for Civil-Military Engagement

A development representative who has worked closely with the Department of Defense suggested a set of ways to engage the DOD in the short term, medium term, and in the long term:

### Short term

* The National Guard presents an area for partnership with development programs in the field. Agricultural states may be particularly inclined to have their guard troops be involved in agricultural development programming activities abroad. California’s National Guard, for example, is partnered with Nigeria’s armed forces to provide assistance and training.
* The Civil Affairs branches of the military offer another means for engagement. They conduct planning activities at a tactical level with the intent of trying to make strategic connections. There is an effort of trying to coordinate the U.S. Embassy country teams in ways that increase collaboration and effectiveness. Civil Affairs, which consists of both active duty and reserve officers, contains people with a wide range of agriculture experience, as demonstrated in the Farm Assessment and Evaluation Training (FEAT) program.
* Another avenue for engagement is the sustainment community within the Defense Department’s Office for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, which provides logistics and personnel services required to maintain prolonged operations until successful mission accomplishment. Their logistics responsibilities include transit and feeding the troops. As such, their focus is primarily on the joint force. However, they also have a responsibility to work with local partners to ensure effectiveness, which provides them unique relationships with partner governments and their militaries as well as private industry that USAID or other agencies may not have. They have experience building partner capacity and have access to geographic areas where USAID or others do not.

### Medium term

* The Unified Combatant Commands provide another area for civil-military engagement. These commands are organized either regionally or functionally and are composed of forces from two or more military departments. The regional organization of the combatant commands cultivates an environment that frequently evaluates trans-border threats such as food insecurity. Combatant Commanders have the capacity and resources to address national security needs outside the purview of the diplomatic community.
* The cluster system for humanitarian coordination within USAID has mirrored some of the organizational structure of the military’s coordinating efforts except that they do not have a chain of command. The cluster leads should be incorporated into the military’s planning efforts, but this will take time. This is an important part of interagency coordination that could build greater trust and better understanding of each organization’s respective mission.

### Long term

* Another suggestion related to engaging the Office of the Secretary of Defense Futures Group, an internal think tank that could address food security policy issues as they affect the mission of the Department of Defense. Better engagement of the civilian lead agencies with the Futures Branch of the Joint Concepts Division of the Joint Chiefs of Staff could inform long-term drafting of plans and policy recommendations to address threats to our national security. This division develops joint concepts and white papers to propose new approaches for addressing compelling challenges for which existing approaches and capabilities are insufficient or nonexistent.
* Joint Chiefs of Staff J7 Directorate for Joint Force Development also works to identify and develop future concepts that address emerging and future joint operational challenges and required capabilities. These are just examples of areas within the military that engage in long-term strategic planning.
* War games provide another avenue for engagement in the long term. Civilian organizations are often hesitant to participate in these games because of its association with war, but these games are essentially scenario-based planning often built around a particular threat or a set of threats.
* A strategy must be developed to communicate the importance of long-term human capacity building, especially as it relates to food security, so that we can empower leaders in these countries to help themselves and create self-sustainability. The DOD and civilian agencies should work together toward developing transferrable capacity building and infrastructure development projects that enhance the resilience of food-insecure countries in an efficient and effective manner.

### Next Steps

This roundtable was the first in a series that will examine the relationship between security and development agencies as it relates to global food security. The second roundtable will focus on ways to enhance U.S. military training and curricula to develop an understanding of food security as a component of U.S. national security. The third roundtable will focus on the technical capacity that the DOD brings to U.S. food security assistance. The recommendations of the roundtables will be presented at the Annual Global Food Security Summit at George Mason University on November 15, 2017.

# Roundtable Partners and Acknowledgements

## The Stimson Center

A non-partisan policy research center, the Stimson Center has been examining the security and development dimensions of national security for more than three decades. Today, threats to peace and prosperity are borderless: arms, drug, and human trafficking; the flows of displaced populations into neighboring countries; the impacts of environmental catastrophes, like droughts, and of environmental degradation, like pollution. The Food Security Program, headed by Johanna Mendelson Forman, explores these threats in the context of food security and assistance. The program researches and analyzes governance, innovative technology, and public-private partnerships to offer innovative solutions to the transnational challenges posed by food insecurity. Food security is a critical element of national security; this connection provides an opportunity to discuss with government, non-governmental, and academic representatives, a way to advance the conversation about civil-military cooperation in addressing food security in dynamic and volatile environments.

## Schar School of Policy, George Mason University

George Mason University (GMU) established its Global Food Security Project in August 2013 under the leadership of Research Fellow and Affiliate Faculty Member, Phil Thomas. The project operates under the Centers on the Public Service in GMU’s Schar School of Policy and Government. The project’s key objectives are: increasing consciousness and visibility of food security issues within the University, the wider academic community, and the Washington, D.C. area; developing cross-cutting food security research projects involving multiple GMU departments and schools; collaborating with other institutions in the Washington, D.C. area and nationally on a variety of critical global food security issues; sponsoring global food security conferences and workshops on emerging food security issues; and expanding food security curricula and related educational opportunities within the University. GMU’s Global Food Security project completed a major research study on the impacts of food aid reform on the global shipping industry in June 2015; convened three annual University-sponsored global food security summits; developed food security curricula and presented global food security courses and seminars throughout the University; collaborated with multiple research institutions on key food security research topics including food security in Africa, the efficacy of private-public partnerships in food security, and the interrelationship between national security and food security issues. GMU’s Fourth Annual Global Food Security Summit will be held on November 15, 2017, focusing on opportunities to enhance the integration of national security and food security policy and operations.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Wilton Pichardo of American University with editorial assistance from Emma Xavier Myers of the Stimson Center. We would like to thank RTI International for its input on this event and its generous support for this series.

1. U.S. Congress, “House Rpt. 114-482: Global Food Security Act of 2015,”(Washington, DC: U.S. Congress, 2016), Sec. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Peace Corps, the Department of the Treasury, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the U.S. African Development Foundation, and the U.S. Geological Survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. U. S. Government Accountability Office. “International Food Security: Insufficient Efforts by Host Governments and Donors Threaten Progress to Halve Hunger in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2015,” (Washington, DC: U.S. GAO, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. National Intelligence Council, “Global Food Security: Intelligence Community Assessment,” (Washington DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2015), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. “Resilience,” USAID and Resilience, last modified November 17, 2017, accessed July 14, 2017, https://www.usaid.gov/resilience. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms defines resilience as “the ability of an architecture to support the functions necessary for mission success with higher probability, shorter periods of reduced capability, and across a wider range of scenarios, conditions, and threats, in spite of hostile action or adverse conditions. Resilience may leverage cross-domain or alternative government, commercial, or international capabilities.”: U.S. Department of Defense, “DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 2017), 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The Joint Electronic Library at <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/> and their JP 3-08 Doctrine on Inter-Organizational Cooperation were noted as a guideline for embarking in inter-agency collaboration and for providing a common set of terminology. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. # U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Global Food Security: U.S. Agencies Progressing on Governmentwide Strategy, but Approach Faces Several Vulnerabilities,” (Washington DC: U.S. GAO, 2010), 4.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-9)