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Melissa Benkert is the Director for Planning, Programs and Analysis (PPA) in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (A&S). PPA is the Department of Defense focal point for the authorization of international agreements for research, development, production, acquisition, and logistics support. Seeking to foster greater international cooperation, PPA administers the Coalition Warfare Program and the Defense Exportability Features Program. Ms. Benkert serves as the A&S lead for technology transfer and export control issues and is a member of the National Disclosure Policy Committee.

Previously, Ms. Benkert served as the Associate Director for International and Interagency Programs in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), where she provided oversight and management for a complex set of authorities and appropriations associated with the Department's international support programs, including the Afghan Security Forces Fund, support for Coalition Forces deployed in support of U.S. military operations, and partner capacity building.

From 2000-2010, Ms. Benkert served as a research analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), a Federally Funded Research and Development Center. She conducted research and analysis on issues ranging from DoD's Partnership for Peace programs to carrier air wing support for Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and served as CNA's deployed representative to the Commander, Enterprise Carrier Strike Group. In addition, Ms. Benkert served as the Special Assistant and Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Security Affairs and as the Director for Ministerial Development in the Defense Reconstruction Support Office.

Ms. Benkert's other experience includes work as an arms control analyst supporting program offices at the Departments of Defense and Energy and seven years at the Atlantic Council of the United States. She served as the Atlantic Council's Director for Planning and as the Deputy Director for Civil-Military Relations, leading a training program for senior officials in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Ms. Benkert was promoted to the Senior Executive Service in 2012. She is a recipient of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service. Ms. Benkert earned an M.A. in Security Policy Studies from the George Washington University and received her B.A. in Political Science and History from Creighton University.