



Dr. Robert S. Pope

Director of Operations, Plans, and Programs



Dr. Rob Pope, a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES), is the Director of Operations, Plans, and Programs (J3/5/8) for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), serving in this position since September 2025. He leads DTRA's activities to maintain readiness, validate and prioritize requirements, and align resources to requirements, enabling DTRA's mission to provide cross-cutting solutions to deter strategic attacks against the United States and its allies, prevent and counter Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threats, and prevail against WMD-armed adversaries in crisis and conflict.

From November 2017 to August 2025, Dr. Pope was the Director of Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR). In this position, he worked with international partners in more than 35 countries to eliminate WMD and related materials and build partner capacity to secure, detect, and interdict nuclear, chemical, and biological materials.

Dr. Pope was promoted to the Senior Executive Service following 26 years of active military service in the U.S. Air Force. While in the military, he served in joint assignments at DTRA and U.S. Central Command, an interagency assignment, and Air Force assignments at the Pentagon, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, the Air Force Technical Applications Center, and others.

Dr. Pope holds a Bachelor of Science in Physics from Michigan State University, a Master of Science and Ph.D. in physics from the Air Force Institute of Technology, and a Master of Military Operational Art and Science from the Air Command and Staff College. He was also a National Defense Fellow in the International Security Program of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School.