

# **Security Assistance Issues: Planning, Organization, and Legislation**

**By**

**Dr. Henry H. Gaffney  
Director, Plans  
Defense Security Assistance Agency**

[The following is a reprint of a panel report presented in September, 1987, during a Workshop on Security Assistance at the National Defense University, Washington, DC. The report, among others prepared during the Workshop, contributed to the work of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy.]

## **INTRODUCTION**

While security assistance is an essential element of U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy, and is often at the cutting edge of our strategic and other relations with countries, it is a relatively small function within the U.S. Government, and policy-making and implementation are widely dispersed throughout the agencies. The few dedicated personnel operate within a complex web of organizations, for one of the strengths of the program is that it draws on the efficiencies and expertise of the services on one hand, and is embedded in an Administration's foreign policy at the other end. It is a marginal function, but takes advantage of marginal resources.

Countries' defense capabilities are what the security assistance program is all about--both for their own defense and as they can contribute to coalition warfare. In the "low-intensity conflict" context, a country's own internal defense is the main issue, and cooperative contributions are less important. Countries are sovereign, and jealous of that fact. They tend to insist on setting their own defense missions, force structures, and force improvement priorities. Our basic interface on a day-to-day basis with countries is the overseas Security Assistance Organization (SAO), under the direction of the U.S. Ambassador. Their skills, backed by programs they can offer, are critical to building influence with the country. At the opposite end of the spectrum in the organizational scheme of things is the Congress, which seems just as difficult to penetrate as the countries. Congress must provide the funding and the legislative authorities under which the country programs unfold.

The amount of security assistance-related activity that can be done without reference to Congress or under other authorities seems slim, especially in this politically sensitive area. The Department of Defense as a whole has much more discretion for its own internal programs.

The organizational question is thus how to be effective at either end of the spectrum--with countries and with Congress--and how those in between can assist. Secondly is the question of how those in between can make the most efficient use of the resources and access that are available. Those in between include the services, the Unified Commands, and the Washington policy community, including the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA), which is DOD's focal point.

There are many who feel frustrated by the present organizational arrangements, at least as they perceive them. SAOs may feel frustrated by Washington's unresponsiveness and failure to provide sufficient resources. Unified Commands feel they have little control over the direction and implementation of programs. The Services feel restless about the management restrictions and

accountability under which they must function, and are wary of the constant pressure for the diversion of their assets. DSAA and Department of State middle managers feel the lack of attention of Administration political appointees except for critical cases. The Washington policy community as a whole feels restless under Congressional restrictions, especially country-specific restrictions. These situations for the various segments of the security assistance community are discussed further below.

Many of the organizational difficulties would be lessened if there were adequate and rising funds, with their concomitant expanded planning and opportunities for expanded dialogues with the countries. In a shrinking resource situation, the opposite happens: a scramble for turf and for control of limited resources, competitions as to who sets priorities, and a perceived loss of influence in countries. The rising trends of previous years propelled a number of additional U.S. actors into the scene, and retrenchment now leaves some without a sense of mission.

There are, however, some clear guidelines which can drive any reexamination of organizational arrangements. These can include the following:

- All those participating share a national mission, and must function as a community in pursuit of that national mission.
- Americans talking just to Americans rarely achieves much unless there is eventual program expression with countries.
- The mere piling up of plans, studies, analyses, and other papers is no substitute for action and communication, especially with the countries.
- Until the law is changed, one operates under the law.

The panel generally discussed matters of organization under the following headings: countries (and the roles of SAOs), CINCs, services, the Administration/policy community, and Congress. Each of these is covered below.

## COUNTRIES

The central elements in security assistance are country recipients and their respective political, economic, social, and military systems as related to their national goals, policies, and capabilities. Some meaningful level of understanding of these factors is essential before the U.S. can determine from its perspective the type and extent of security assistance appropriate for a given country and then make that assistance effective. Essential also is U.S. comprehension of its own goals, policies, and capabilities vis-a-vis a given country. This combined understanding is essential in that it establishes a point of departure for country-specific strategic planning with the country, designed so that the country can live or develop in peace with due regard for the rights of its people.

The planning must be strategic in that it must be long-term (i.e., multi-year) and must give due consideration to the generally accepted central elements of power (i.e., political, economic, social, and military). But because almost all the recipients of funded U.S. security assistance are in the developing world, use of the military element of power in the strategic planning process is circumscribed. The main barrier to planning is sovereignty and the reluctance of countries to let the U.S. tell them what to do. Secondly, the U.S. is highly unreliable in funding programs on a continuing basis. Other barriers to planning include technological disparities or lack of formal relations.

Further impediments will exist if the recipient country finds itself engaged in hostilities (civil war, insurgency, cross-border incursions, etc.). Under such circumstances, the tendency will be to concentrate, almost exclusively, on short-term efforts to cure the immediate hostilities, but at the expense of long-term development planning that addresses all of the elements of society. For a variety of reasons, therefore, the conduct of strategic planning with countries is not an easy task. Yet it remains, nonetheless, an essential one, and it can only be done with the country, not as a distant abstraction on paper in Washington or at a Unified Command Headquarters.

There is some confusion as to who does strategic and detailed force planning with countries. There are theoretical ways to do it, and there are practical ways which have arisen from successful experiences; clearly the latter is preferred. The practical experience, however, shows differences from country to country and from situation to situation. In some cases, the SAO, with the backing of the ambassador, plans in detail with the country. In other cases, a Washington team, with the Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs (ASD/ISA) and the Director, DSAA, in the lead does the planning with the country. (The SAO and the CINC are of course included in the team.) General requirements surveys may also generate a country plan, and the survey teams are typically led by the CINC. These planning efforts may generate a comprehensive document, an agreed list for funding, or an Annual Integrated Assessment of Security Assistance (AIASA), as appropriate. The community has to stay flexible.

By any standard of definition, strategic planning is not being accomplished for many countries. The AIASA provides a significant input to the planning and budgeting process, but no instructions exist for it to be done with countries, and it does not contain the type and degree of comprehensive data analysis and recommendations that constitute comprehensive planning efforts. Moreover, while the Administration/policy community in Washington uses it frequently as a reference document, the community does not appear to use the AIASA as a major planning document, thus further questioning its security assistance planning utility.

Given deficiencies in strategic planning and especially given the unreliability of funding, uncertainty abounds, and as a consequence security assistance suffers from intermittent, crisis-oriented efforts, the net results of which are limited improvements in a host country's security, a lack of confidence in the U.S., and inefficient use of scarce U.S. resources.

### ***Recommendations***

- The Administration/Policy Community, CINCs, and Ambassadors should make explicit the requirement for the country team to conduct strategic planning in priority countries. Such planning is to be conducted with the specific country.
- The country team should use the AIASA as a key vehicle for strategic planning, but expand its terms to address all assistance programs in the country. The ultimate objective should be to establish a country specific national plan (e.g., the El Salvador National Campaign Plan) for priority countries.
- The whole community should conduct periodic reviews to assess program effectiveness and its impact on established objectives.
- Washington should designate priority countries for special AIASA efforts.

### ***SAOs***

The effectiveness of sound strategic planning with countries, if it is to be translated into adequately funded programs, depends in part on the effectiveness of SAO personnel, especially in their skills at establishing good relations with host countries. However, restrictions on manning

and funding, particularly when combined with a lack of career incentives for SAO personnel, raise serious questions about the efficacy of SAOs in the planning function.

The Foreign Assistance Act (Section 515) limits the size of SAOs to no more than six military personnel unless specifically authorized by Congress. The Director, DSAA, (on authority delegated from the President) may waive this limit with 30 days notice to Congress. The law further assigns the precise functions which SAO military personnel may be assigned to perform:

1. Equipment and services case management.
2. Training management.
3. Program monitoring.
4. Evaluation and planning of the host government's military capabilities and requirements.
5. Administrative support.
6. Promoting standardization and interoperability (in NATO countries, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand).
7. Liaison functions exclusive of advisory and training assistance. Advisory and training functions by permanent SAO personnel are to be kept to an absolute minimum, with most to be done by temporarily assigned personnel.

These functions are interpreted to mean that SAO personnel may only be justified and paid for by MAP of FMS administrative funds if they dedicate most of their time to Foreign Military Sales and security assistance administration. In practice, liaison functions (No. 7) not related to security assistance functions are not considered direct support of security assistance and cannot be used to justify additional manning to be paid for with security assistance funds. Function No. 6, the promotion of standardization and interoperability to achieve our overall national security objectives should be a guiding principle in all countries receiving security assistance, and the U.S. does exert much pressure for countries to buy FMS and to stay standard with U.S. forces. However, the special operations low intensity conflict (SOLIC) community has been pressing for non-standard and offshore acquisitions by countries.

There are additional conflicting parts of the law which result in requiring defense cooperation functions despite rigid personnel limitations. While the law also states that the SAO works directly for the U.S. Ambassador, supporting the Ambassador's aims does not exclusively entail the sale of military articles and services. In practice, SAO personnel spend a large amount of their time performing military liaison functions for the Ambassador, such as escort of U.S. VIPs, coordination of joint/combined exercises, and support for visits by U.S. military teams such as Medical Readiness Training Exercises (MEDRETES) and Deployments for Training (DFTs). Current regulations and practices do not allow the impact of these additional duties to be funded by security assistance. They are considered tasks appropriately assigned to other military service funded personnel who can be assigned to the SAO but not counted. Currently, the Security Assistance System is identifying non-security assistance SAO billets that should be funded by the military services. This plan envisions a system in which some personnel will be assigned to the SAO to perform Foreign Military Sales and others will be assigned and funded by their parent military service. There exists some concern, however, about services' funding and provision of spaces because of competing demands for resources. This seems farfetched, considering the disparity in the size of DOD programs vis-a-vis security assistance.

The manning problem is exacerbated further because the security assistance system, by law, must pay for those who administer it. The FAA (Section 515) requires that the entire cost of overseas management of security assistance programs be reimbursed from MAP and from surcharges added to the sales cases. In recent years, because of rising competition in the international arms market and the declining price of oil, among other factors, U.S. Foreign Military Sales have dropped dramatically. Sales have declined from as high as \$22 billion in 1982 to about

\$7 billion in 1987, with no indication of future recovery. In order to make ends meet under the existing financing scheme, the U.S. must either reduce the size of its foreign military representation at a time when it faces more competition in the international arms market and in the broader national and regional security arenas than at any time since World War II, or devote more MAP to overseas program management rather than to country purchases.

It is difficult to gauge the full impact of our limited security assistance representation. Much of the personal contact and planning that should be done in country is probably not being done well because there are so few personnel to accomplish these tasks. However, in critical countries, the SAO has not been left to do the planning, but has been augmented from Washington and by the CINCs.

In addition to the funding and function limitations, SAO effectiveness is limited further by the lack of career enhancement inducement in the SAOs. The services currently are providing some outstanding and highly dedicated personnel, but questions about promotion opportunities and Joint Duty Assignment status may well deter some outstanding officers from seeking SAO assignments.

### *Recommendations*

- An additional source of funding of personnel in SAOs not administering security assistance programs must be found. The military services should fund spaces on a prorated basis for the time spent on service or CINC specific functions.
- The law provides the flexibility for CINCs to request additional SAO personnel to perform central (not field) advisory functions, such as support for the Ambassador, evaluation of the host country's military, and the conduct of strategic planning.
- Washington needs to clarify directives as to for whom the SAO works in the non-security assistance functions.
- Washington and the CINCs should encourage SAOs to place emphasis on the accomplishment of central advisory functions as appropriate.
- SAOs should be encouraged to continue the existing practice of requesting additional personnel from the CINC to conduct central advisory and planning functions.
- Washington should encourage country teams to enhance the effectiveness of U.S. assistance programs by the fullest possible integration of the U.S. political, socio-economic, and military programs for the host nation.
- Washington should demonstrate an increased recognition of the difficulty and importance of the SAO positions, primarily by institutionalizing incentives for SAO assignments. Three specific steps are essential to accomplish such an effort.
  - Carefully select the officers assigned to SAOs.
  - Prepare them properly through tailored education and training programs.
  - Promote those assigned to SAOs at a rate comparable to the officer corps in one's respective service by designating them as Joint Duty Assignments.
- The U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force should consider the establishment of Foreign Area Officer (FAO)-type programs, as in the U.S. Army.

- Ambassadors and other non-military U.S. personnel should receive training in security assistance.

## CINCs

Since the Unified Commanders carry out regional security missions, they should exercise a great deal of influence over programs intended to enhance that regional security. In reality, however, the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA) controls the programs within the DOD, under the policy direction of Administration officials. The DSAA Charter (DODD 5105.38 of 10 August 1978) assigns to DSAA virtually all coordinating, administering, and supervisory responsibilities that have to do with security assistance planning, international logistics, sales negotiations, liaison with U.S. industry, financing programs, regulations, accounting, reporting, SAO manning, and liaison with Congress. Despite its charter, however, DSAA is not solely responsible for evaluating country requests in terms of U.S. objectives.

The Unified Commanders' responsibilities for security assistance are limited. Country requests for security assistance cases go directly to the services in order to ensure U.S. responsiveness. CINCs are not allowed to approve the use of a nation's IMET funds for MTTs, DISAM training, or high cost training since these are inconsistent with the objectives of IMET as seen in Washington. Nor do they have the final say on the selection of SAO commanders. Unified Commanders are also not given the flexibility to approve the local hire of foreign nationals when the SAO is clearly in need of extra help (e.g., drivers, security, typists). These are very small frustrations, but they illustrate the lack of control the Unified Commander has over the implementation of security assistance.

The CINCs have functions and responsibilities for strategy and military relations with countries that go beyond security assistance as it is narrowly defined. Toward those ends, knowledge and pre-planning of U.S. security assistance efforts serve the CINC as an important source of information regarding allied or friendly countries' state of preparedness. The CINCs already have the war plans and intelligence at their disposal to aid them in security assistance planning and crisis response, though these are not particularly relevant to low intensity conflict (LIC) situations. Moreover, the CINCs have available exercise forces, TDY personnel, and strategic expertise which can be brought to bear in country relations and planning. They also are in a unique position to ensure interoperability and standardization with U.S. forces, including C3, though these requirements may not be appropriate to many LIC situations.

Notwithstanding the capability, responsibility, and influence of the CINCs, from time to time they are not included in all security assistance coordination efforts. Although the oversights are infrequent and inadvertent, they may result in adverse consequences for security assistance and the broader range of CINC-host country relations.

## *Recommendations*

- CINCs should take the initiative to assure accomplishment of country-specific strategic planning.
  - CINCs need to make their military advice and regional strategic objectives available to the country team and the Administration/policy community in timely fashion to aid security assistance program development.
  - The JCS, in coordination with DOD/State, should task Unified Commands to assist the SAO to develop realistic defense requirements with countries.

- The Administration/policy community should assure that CINCs are totally informed. In this regard, the Administration should consider requiring DSAA to provide periodic reports to the CINCs, including, for instance, quarterly updates on MAP, IMET, FMS Credit, ESF, Developmental Assistance, and Public Law-480 funding.
- Washington should encourage CINCs to augment the SAO with component personnel on TDY to satisfy high priority planning requirements and surges.
- CINC policies and procedures should permit the use of all available resources to augment limited security assistance resources.
- CINCs should increase, through O&M funding, the number and frequency of combined exercises in selected countries, providing the countries are willing.
- Washington should require CINCs to identify strategic issues of concern (e.g., interoperability and standardization problems) to DSAA, the services, and the country team.
- CINCs should provide comments to DSAA and JCS on all significant country requests for training and equipment.
- Washington should continue the practice of including Unified Command representation on survey and planning teams and should, under appropriate circumstances, invite Unified Command representatives to lead the teams.
- CINCs should include more country strategy discussions in their annual security assistance conferences.

## SERVICES

The services are a key part of the complex organizational structure that administers, manages, and executes both service procurement and security assistance. They do the bulk of the work and they provide the personnel. The strength of the U.S. security assistance system in efficiency and standardization lies in its close integration with the service systems. However, their inherently different organizational structures have resulted in differing procedures and practices. Fortunately, over the past several years significant steps have been taken to standardize security assistance practices. The Joint Security Assistance Training (JSAT) regulation and the Standardized Training List (STL) are two good examples of areas in which the services have reached accommodation with each other. DSAA, meanwhile, has been engaged with the services in the FMS streamlining project, and there has been some success in establishing greater uniformity in FMS procedures.

The recent standardization notwithstanding, there remains a clear separation between what is considered technically "security assistance" programs and service funded "non-security assistance" functions. These other programs include combined exercises, intelligence sharing, joint security consultations, exchange programs, orientation tours, official visits, service academy attendance, etc. These military service-funded programs accomplish the same goals, are administered by many of the same military organizations, and require coordination with security assistance activities to be carried out effectively. However, due to the nature of the system, these programs are not standardized and are scattered throughout the military bureaucracies with little coordination and little reporting provided to the Administration/policy community to permit coordination with overall objectives for the country. They are, moreover, far smaller as measured in dollars.

To a significant extent, these difficulties exist because the services treat security assistance peripherally. They resist the shifting of any SA funding into the DOD budget. With regard to

force structure and weapon systems/equipment issues, the services focus almost exclusively on mid-intensity and high-intensity conflict. While recognizing that LIC has the highest probability of occurrence, the services believe that their procurement practices will provide sufficient force structure and weapon systems/equipment flexibility to satisfy the demands of LIC. Although such a rationale possesses a measure of validity, it clearly begs the question of force structure and weapon systems/equipment requirements for LIC and security assistance.

### ***Recommendations***

The services:

- Are providing good people but need to demonstrate increased recognition of the difficulty and importance of the SAO job; and should institutionalize incentives for SAO assignments.
- Should agree that SAO positions are Joint Duty Assignments.
- Should be prepared to expand funding for Title 10 authorities (i.e., exercises, humanitarian and civic actions, opportune airlifts, etc.).
- Should make every effort to continue to streamline security assistance procedures, to reduce leadtimes, and to cover emergencies from service stocks as necessary.
- Should make personnel available to countries for O&M functions and TDY personnel for surveys, planning, etc.
- Should develop and procure LIC-appropriate equipment.

### **ADMINISTRATION/POLICY COMMUNITY**

The White House 1987 document, *National Security Strategy of the United States*, describes security assistance as a "productive investment in our own security." SA contributes to deterrence, promotes regional stability, helps to ensure access to vital overseas military facilities, and lessens our own military requirements. Resolute use of this valuable foreign policy tool directly promotes our security interests.

This stated policy notwithstanding, there is little evidence of consistent and persistent attention to the overall security assistance program among some of the most important highest-level political appointees. The system functions by consensus among key offices; when consensus is not reached, the issues are sent for resolution to the Secretary of State. Coordinating mechanisms exist for well-established programs, but not for new ones. For example, one does not see in the anti-drug trafficking and terrorism counteraction efforts the degree of coordination found in the overall security assistance program.

Within DOD, ISA has a vital role in its efforts to define country-specific strategies. They coordinate closely with their state counterparts. The creation of the Board for Low-Intensity Conflict within the National Security Council, and the designation of a Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs for Low-Intensity Conflict and an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict [ASD (SO/LIC)] clearly provide mechanisms for improving the coordination process, though they could also complicate it. As called for by NSDD 277, National Policy for LIC, the Board for Low-Intensity Conflict will receive recommendations from several working groups on the issues of foreign assistance, intelligence, C3 interoperability, and regional coordination problems.

These structural initiatives are significant steps in the right direction, but there continues to exist a requirement for individual agencies in the system to integrate programs with strategic objectives, to find funds in innovative ways, and to devise procedures that assure the CINCs are fully informed.

### **Recommendations**

The Washington community should:

- Exploit the potential of the emerging LIC organizational community to promote fully integrated political, economic, and military programs and strategic plans.
- Insist on carefully detailed country programs. The community should carefully examine whether to establish security assistance priorities as an alternative to funding all programs. (An alternative approach would be to take a long-term vs crisis response.) The focus should be on country programs which deliver real defense rather than simple political entree, particularly since more detail now is required for the *Congressional Presentation Document* (CPD).
- Orchestrate through existing organizations or through the use of the emerging LIC organizational community, a coordinated strategy for all Congressional efforts. The community should press for flexibility in legislation and pricing, and should undertake, as a top priority, an effort to remove most restrictions on IMET programs.
- Use the collective influence of the emerging LIC organizational community to increase service support and understanding of security assistance and LIC.
- Keep the CINCs fully informed and include their staffs in planning efforts, visits, etc.

### **CONGRESS**

Although Congress must provide funding and legislative authorities for the security assistance program, as an institution it responds only reluctantly to security assistance issues. No constituency for security assistance exists within the electorate, and only a few members of Congress seem to exhibit serious interest in security assistance and few of those take a positive view. Some take keen interest in specific countries, often for political reasons. Broad Congressional interest can be sparked during a crisis, or if events clearly pose a threat to U.S. national security interests, or if the country is clearly popular in the U.S.

The limited focus on security assistance that does exist occurs largely in a few committees, but they have not been particularly helpful in security assistance matters. This narrow interest becomes even narrower in light of the larger economic challenges faced by the full Congress. In an era of deficit reduction emphasis, security assistance is forced to compete for funding in the shadow of the larger struggle between domestic and defense programs. Any increases in security assistance funding are now held hostage to larger political issues (e.g., increases in taxation).

Analysis of Congressional action over the past several years suggests a number of characteristics in the Congressional approach to security assistance:

- Perceptions of current foreign policy issues serve as the basis for action, rather than broad, long-term strategic considerations. Nevertheless, Congress does seem to appreciate the need for base rights and access to facilities for U.S. forces, and the need to relax laws for better alliance standardization and cooperation.

- Programs generally are better supported on a country-by-country basis, rather than by region or broadly based strategic objectives. The mix of economic and military assistance is also more defensible on a country-by-country basis.
- Notwithstanding the primacy of foreign policy, a sensible military program, as a strong second-order consideration, can be a firm base for Congressional support. Congress will support a proper mixture of practical programs for equipment, troop support, logistics, maintenance, and medical support, as well as the fire power, helicopters, and fighter aircraft, but it will look askance at unbalanced programs or where cost, human rights, and arms transfer considerations are not taken into account.
- There is a constant need to distinguish arms sales from the financing of programs, and to remind Congress that the program is not a giveaway, and that benefits flow into the U.S. economy.
- Finally, appeals to the public generally do not help. Exceptions would be select situations (e.g., currently the Philippines), or certain cases supported by ethnic groups in the U.S.
- Congress is now supportive of SO/LIC, but this support has not yet been extended to the security assistance program.

Efforts to gain Congressional support for particularly difficult situations--e.g., El Salvador, the Philippines--have been successful, but not without strenuous, persistent efforts over a long period of time (perhaps three years as a rough estimate). These efforts include demonstrable pressures by the U.S. on the country for reform of both its political system and military structure, the hammering out of careful, prioritized military plans with the country, and the achievement of strong agreement within the Administration.

### *Recommendations*

- Review security assistance legislative liaison efforts as conducted by the services, agencies and departments. Determine the most effective liaison approaches and develop an integrated administration approach, including the promotion of more in-depth hearings that will permit security assistance to be examined in the broadest of contexts.
- Develop procedures to permit timely CINC in-depth testimony before Congress.
- Seek legislation to increase funding of the Special Defense Acquisition Fund (SDAF) to increase the volume and type of equipment available and to facilitate timely responses to country requirements.
- Use the emerging LIC organizations to establish broad guidelines for realistic and sensible program planning for those third world countries which especially need our help along these lines.
- Encourage the services, agencies, and departments to establish and maintain close working relationships with key Congressional members and their staffs.
- Encourage countries to carry their representation to Congress when appropriate.

## CONCLUSION

The road ahead will not be easy. Organizational changes can have only marginal effects in a situation of restricted funds, restricted authorities, and a high degree of unpopularity of programs. Yet these marginal efforts can have high payoffs when applied to priorities with efficiency and with a high degree of coordination among all U.S. agencies. It is not possible to delegate responsibilities to single agencies, e.g., a LIC Board, or a Unified Commander, if full support of all agencies is to be gained and continued efforts are to be made with Congress. A community effort is inescapable.