

Planning Security Assistance Programs With Countries

By

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INTRODUCTION

In the early days of the MAP (Military Assistance Program), when countries were flat on their backs after World War II, and then later, when the U.S. had enormous amounts of surplus equipment to distribute after the Korean War, the U.S. could unilaterally plan the force structures and equipment of other countries' forces. With a prolonged period of deterrence and relative peace, the growth of cash sales, forty years of prosperity in the advanced nations, and the assertion of national independence and identity by countries, this is no longer possible in most cases. Today, the U.S. must plan jointly with the countries. Indeed, the country must take the prime responsibility, for it must operate and support the equipment and fight the forces when and if required.

Now, most of the planning is done with what are loosely described as "third world" countries, though the classification covers countries now entering the industrialized ranks, oil-rich countries, and "poor" countries. There are two main paradoxes which affect all planning the United States might do with such countries for the improvement of their own defenses. These are:

Paradox 1. The more advanced a country, and especially when their own cash is being spent, the more planning they do on their own, and the less access and influence the U.S. has on that planning. Conversely, the less advanced a country, the more access the U.S. may have, but it may not make any lasting difference.

Paradox 2. In cases where the country relies on U.S. financing, planning cannot proceed until the U.S. has committed specific funds, but then the planning is confined to the uses of those funds.

The main point is that the U.S. is not all-wise and all-powerful in today's world, and does not get to dictate the force structures countries have, how those forces are equipped, or how they are operated. Moreover, the U.S. has severe drawbacks even if it were to consider doing so, because of the erratic nature of its funding support. Nevertheless, while grand plans for the defense of a country or for the overall modernization of its forces are rarely possible, planning for the effective use of funds and for the effective implementation of detailed equipment and training programs has been pursued with considerable success with many countries, at least as measured against other countries who also provide military goods and services in the third world.

There are two kinds of military establishments that the U.S. has dealt with over time. The first is the "mature" force, one that is well-led, has a successful military tradition, fields a comprehensive force structure, and has existing training and logistics bases. The mature forces absorb U.S. material (and advice on the need for total packages) more or less easily, and the need and opportunity for the U.S. to work well down in the structure is not very great and is in any case generally resisted by the country. The second type of military establishment is one which is in an

undeveloped state, and needs comprehensive assistance and advice. There the total packages carry an implication of the establishment of training and logistic bases from the ground up, and the larger portion of the costs of the packages are consumed by these institutional needs. Countries in this condition are those which have not had a military tradition, or whose forces have thoroughly stagnated from an unproductive military tradition, and are beset by insurgencies or other conflicts, or who have dropped one supplier and are looking for another.

GENERAL GOALS OF PLANNING

In conducting a military assistance program, and in doing the necessary planning for an effective program, the U.S. seeks to achieve a mutuality of interests with the country. The objective, of course, is that the country be able to defend itself. In most cases, the U.S. cannot bear the responsibility nor support this entire defense effort, but our programs should contribute sensibly to that end. The programs should be suitable for the country's defense needs, affordable, absorbable, and sustainable by the country. That is, the programs should be appropriate to the country's level of technology, managerial skills, and capabilities of its personnel ---or if not, that any programs we undertake be comprehensive enough to advance those capabilities. Lest this sound condescending, the reliability of the US. as a partner will be reflected in whether equipment sold operates effectively, over the life of that equipment.

Planning is a practical matter. It is the planning of programs for the transfer of goods and services and their installation and operation in a country. It is not merely the accumulation of papers on strategy or the compilation of requirements that can never be met. Realistic forward planning has the following goals:

- Best utilization of available funds, which requires the setting of priorities.
- Within each "case," the incorporation of a "total package," to include not only end-items, but also the training, initial spares, and maintenance systems to make them work.
- The anticipation of production leadtimes. Only rarely does the U.S. cough up material directly from its own stocks. Most material must come from production lines. The leadtimes for these production lines may vary from six months for relatively common items, to three years, for most major end-items, to five years for some items, like radios. The U.S. insists that 80 percent of spares be in place and the training stream well-advanced, prior to delivery of end-items.
- Comprehensive country programs, especially for those building forces from the ground up. These must start with basic human needs, including boots, personal equipment, rations, and medical assistance before progressing to trucks, radio networks, or supporting firepower. To jump to helicopters, air launched fire support, national command and control, or other elaborate systems has to await satisfactory progress in the lesser spheres.
- Financial planning which ensures that U.S. funding is available or that the country will be able to come up with hard currency to meet payment schedules.

It is not always possible to do such forward planning. It can best be done at the beginning of a relationship, and when immediate conflicts are not pressing both parties. Otherwise, much planning may be remedial. Remedial planning often entails the stretching of resources (reprioritization), the smoothing of payments schedules or addressing other payment or loan repayment difficulties, planning for immediate operational needs during conflicts, or to solve support and sustainment problems that have cropped up because of earlier insufficient funding or a change in the pace of operations.

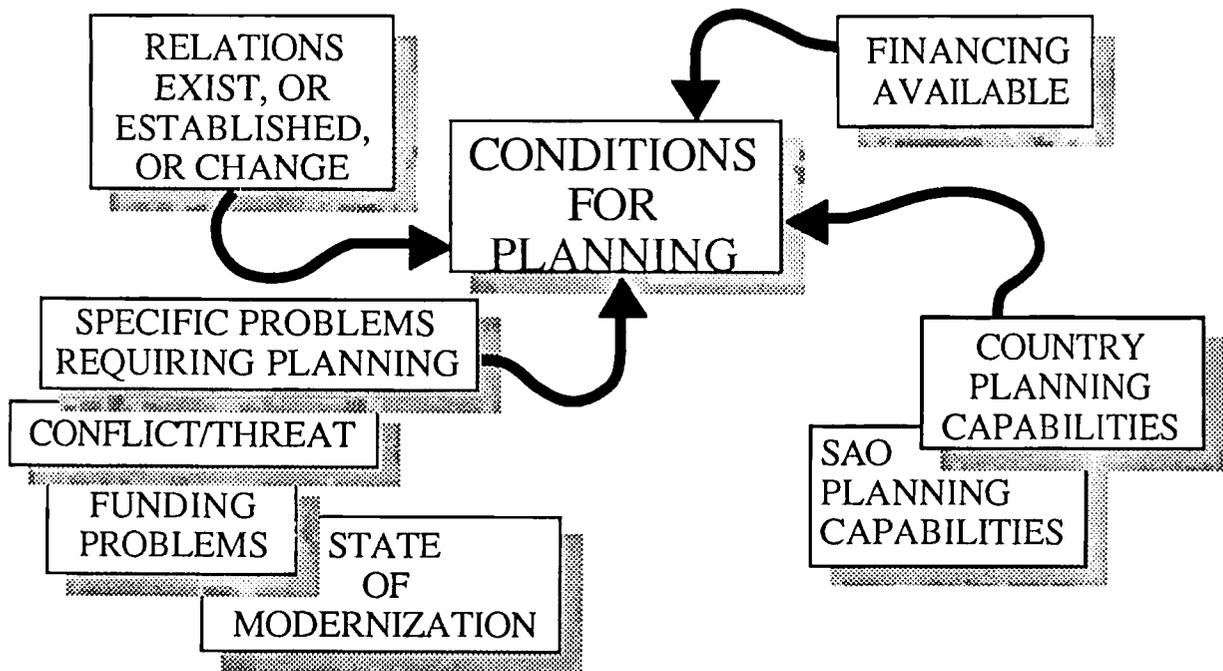
In any case, planning can build the relationship with the country, but only if such planning results in effective programs which themselves do not later bog down the relationship. If both the dialogue and the programs are successful, the relationship can be expanded in other ways, e.g., cooperation between the forces of two nations.

CONDITIONS CONDUCTIVE TO PLANNING

Planning, or more broadly, a planning relationship, cannot take place between the U.S. and a country unless a number of conditions are fulfilled on both sides. These include the recognition of a necessity for a relationship, or a change in relationship which disposes the country to want to plan with the U.S., specific conditions in the country's defense situation which cry out for planning, the country having the disposition and personnel capabilities to engage in specific planning, and the U.S. itself having the resources and disposition to engage in constructive planning. The satisfaction of any of these conditions determines whether there is any planning and the extent to which it can proceed.

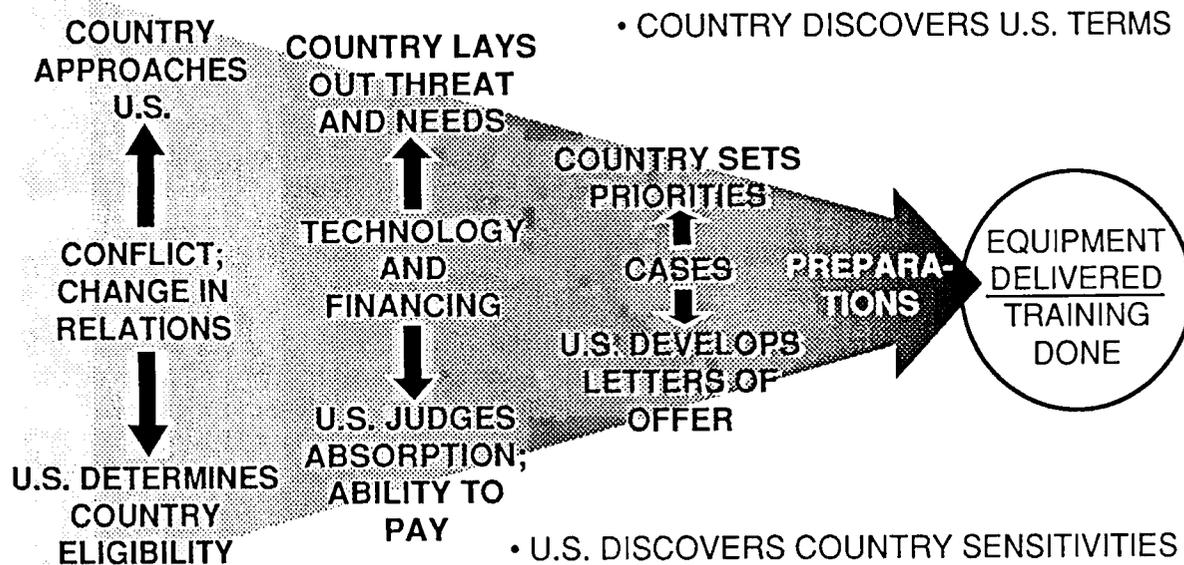
FIGURE 1

Conditions Conducive to Planning



In the first place, there must be a relationship, or change in relationship, which permits a planning dialogue. If planning has not been going on for a long time on an institutionalized basis (e.g., as with Turkey and South Korea), there must be some dramatic change in the environment that causes a country (1) to want a program with the U.S., and (2) to engage in planning with the U.S. on that program. Such dramatic changes include conflicts flaring up, peace breaking out (Camp David), a change in alignments by the country, or a significant change in government in response to circumstances. The change may simply be the availability to the country of large new financial resources (e.g., oil receipts). The country must want to turn to the U.S. in these circumstances for political, resource, or material reasons. The less the drama, the more the country may simply want to buy the material and associated services, without an attendant planning exercise.

FIGURE 2
Establishing A Security Assistance Program/Relationship



In the second place, specific conditions in a country's defenses must need fixing. A country may have cut relations or otherwise lost a previous supplier. Its equipment may be in a gross state of disrepair or obsolescence. It may be unable to cope with conflict because of disorganization, lack of discipline, and political in-fighting in its officer corps. A country rarely, if ever, has invited the U.S. in to assist it with internal organization, strategy, tactics, unit training, and other disciplining of its troops. It is usually more interested in the material help the U.S. can provide. The U.S. uses the amount, delivery schedules, and operational and maintenance needs of that material to press the planning of training and support, and thus comprehensive military organization. Building on that base of confidence, the country may then seek advice on broader military matters, but not inevitably.

Business relations and conditions may also lead to a necessity for joint planning. A country may have made serial decisions on purchases, without prioritizing or balancing those purchases, and may have run out of funds. Or a defense ministry may have over-committed funds to a number of programs, and there is a need to smooth out payments schedules. Above all, the necessity of adjusting to production leadtimes may require advance planning. The U.S. in the best of circumstances cannot deliver goods instantly. More often than not, it has to procure them from industry. Transportation arrangements have to be made and delivery take place. Material has to be moved from docks to units or depots.

The country itself must have a cultural and situational disposition and capability to plan. If a monarch makes all the decisions, it is very hard for subordinates to plan with the U.S. If there is no central staff, it is difficult to plan. Most countries have three separate services (or four) which must be dealt with. Staff capability must be itself planned and trained. And yet, it is necessary to be cautious in pulling in the best officers to the center to grind out paper when they should be

managing units which are absorbing equipment (Saudi Arabia) or directing small unit actions in the field (El Salvador or the Philippines).

The country must have some authoritative way to set priorities. Of course, it must be able to recognize the need for comprehensive programs and for adequate financial coverage.

In summary, some countries can plan and some cannot. For those that cannot, part of the planning equation is a slow and patient dialogue to establish the need. The need to avoid condescension by U.S. officials is evident; luckily, most American officials bend over backward to adapt to the local conditions.

The U.S. itself must have the disposition and capability to plan with the host country. We have to want the relationship, and we have to be ready to devote some level of resources to it, for, as noted earlier, planning will be largely confined to the resources available, at least in the case of a financed country. The U.S. must also find it in its strategic interest to release technology and be willing to press for the necessary assurances in order to protect that technology. The U.S. has to consider whether it will be able to stay the course and be a reliable supplier.

It is assumed that U.S. personnel have planning capabilities, but this is not to be taken for granted. The planning effort has to be mobilized and directed, under terms of reference that establish how much of a commitment the planners can make. Many American staff officers can fall easily into the trap that planning is paper or prolonged study, but in security assistance it is for direct, practical action that will result in the delivery and deployment of material resources. Whether this can extend into the planning of strategy and operations will be discussed in the next section, but it should be noted at the outset that the permanent mission in country--the SAO (Security Assistance Office, previously commonly known as the "MAAG")--is not automatically the planner. Many of these offices are small, the individuals are not necessarily qualified to plan, and they have other responsibilities. What they do make possible in many cases is access to host country officials.

If planning is to take place, the U.S. must have access. Sometimes events press the country into opening a dialogue. In other cases, it takes careful diplomacy, the patient cultivation of good relations with host country officials that will permit them to open a planning relationship (as opposed to the country merely being the buyer, the U.S. the seller). Access means access to those host country officials who can deliver, who can actually execute the resultant plans and make them stick.

THE MODALITIES OF PLANNING

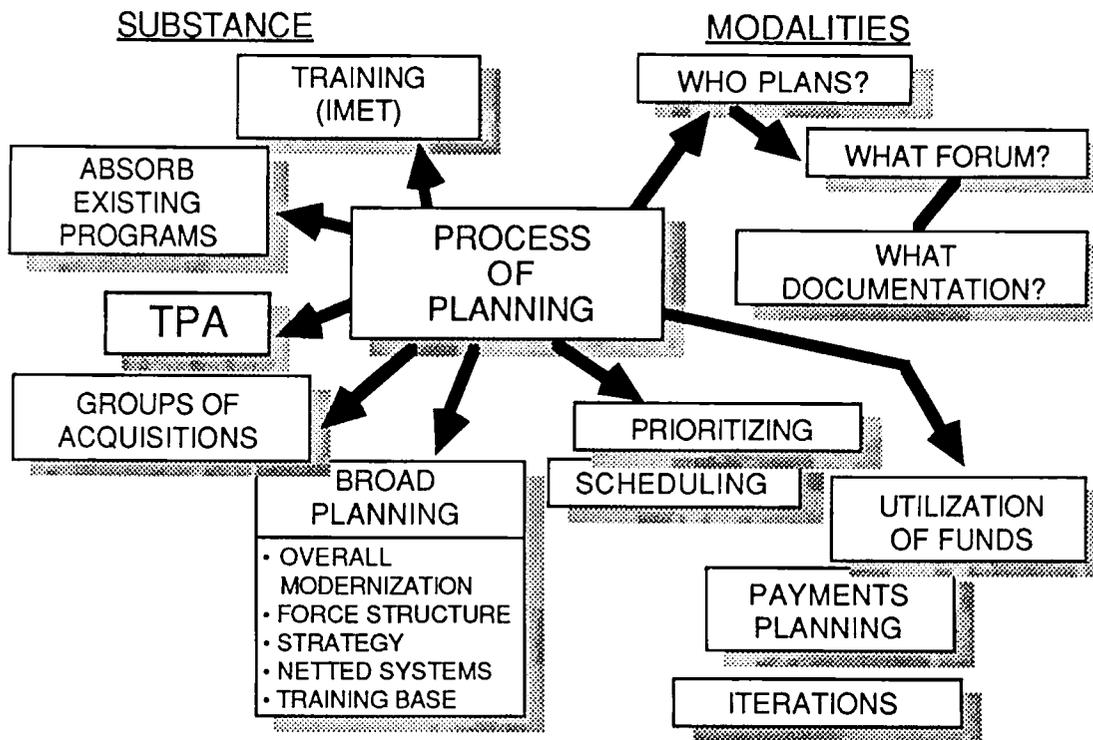
Once the conditions are set for security assistance planning between the U.S. and a host government, planning can proceed within the limits established by those conditions.

There is a definite hierarchy of what concretely is planned:

- The absorption and sustainment of existing programs. This planning is essentially remedial. In some cases (e.g., Philippines), it may involve the restoration of previously insufficiently supported programs.

- Planning of selected acquisitions. They may involve modernization (replacement) or the addition of new capabilities. For each significant acquisition, the U.S. insists on a "total package approach." This includes the system, initial spares, training, and initial installation, including some logistic and maintenance capabilities.

FIGURE 3
Types of Planning



- Planning groups of acquisitions. The U.S. may do this with certain countries at the beginning of a relationship, when substantial funds have become available or have been promised. It does not necessarily involve a complete program of modernization. Each acquisition would have its own "total package," and the necessity would be for the country to set priorities, especially if U.S. financing is involved. The U.S. presses the country to set its own priorities, for the country must live with its choice. If the U.S. were to set the priorities, we would be blamed when things went wrong.

- Planning overall modernization or restructuring of forces. The opportunities for comprehensive planning of this sort are rare indeed. They have ranged from Saudi modernization to the revitalization of El Salvadoran forces. The first step in these situations is usually a general requirements survey, done by a U.S. team with representatives from each Service.

These types of planning are material-based, and are really meant to ensure the effective absorption and use of equipment. Many countries would simply like to maximize equipment, and later figure out sustainment and training. The U.S. is gently insistent that the packages be comprehensive and prioritized.

Countries are more reluctant to let the U.S. assist them in strategic and operational planning, whether in the guise of training or as actual planning on paper. This is a reflection of sovereignty and is a fact of life. A number of the material planning approaches may have direct operational implications, however, as in the planning for a command and control center and network, or in the planning of an air defense network. Of course, where definite alliance arrangements exist, as in NATO and Korea, there is a good deal of force employment planning, but it tends to be based on

forces and equipment in being. There is also the NATO force planning system, which tends to challenge countries to build generally compatible and interoperable forces.

Further planning is often necessary, once groups of acquisitions have been decided upon and are in the pipeline or are delivered. This includes logistic sustainment planning, and the need to adjust payments and delivery schedules.

Who does the planning on the U.S. side? In countries where the U.S. has had a long relationship, and has a sizable mission in-country, new planning opportunities are generally pursued by the mission. They may be augmented from Washington or the Unified Command for particular planning exercises. For a new relationship, or in a drastically changed situation, a large Washington-led team may descend on the country for discussions. Typically, it has been hard to hold these teams to less than twenty people, since they may include State, OSD, OJCS, Service, and Unified Command representatives, as well as local mission personnel. The follow-up planning for individual acquisitions is done in detail by the U.S. Services. A U.S. survey team may be somewhat smaller, and is often led by lower level officials, often from the Unified Commands. Their task is to travel about the landscape, checking existing equipment, facilities, training bases, and estimating country needs.

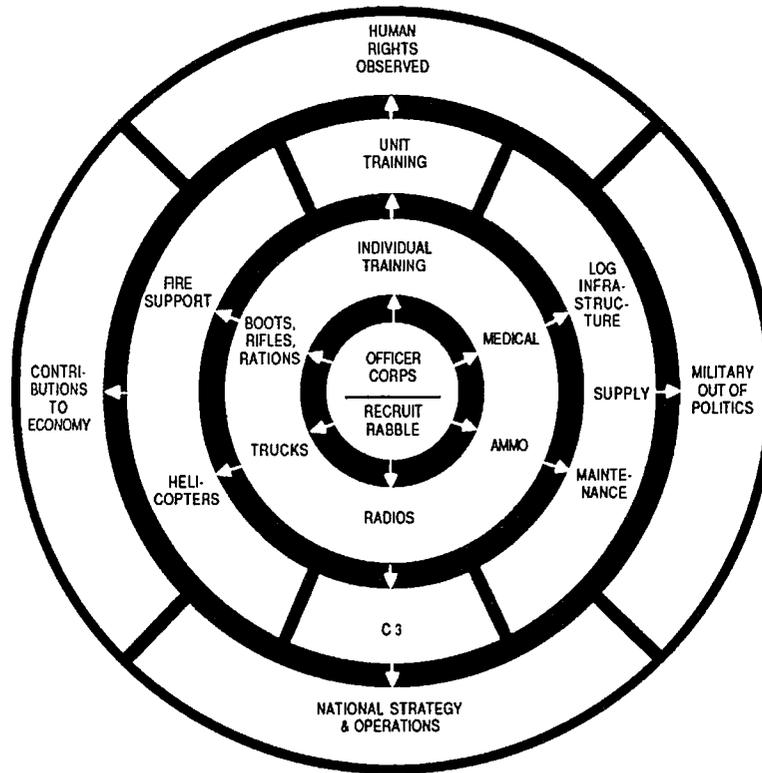
Planning may proceed with the country across the table in conference or through the aforementioned surveys and their briefing to the country. Typically, at the beginning of a relationship, in the cross-the-table session, a country will lay out the threat as it sees it (it is amazing how many countries are surrounded by red blobs), then reveal the state of their present forces--a painful process, often requiring the revelation of information that many in the country would never have given to outsiders. The country then indicates its replacement plans. For its part, the U.S. may indicate what kinds of equipment it can release, and whether funding may be available. Now some might think that the proper way to do planning is to cost out a requirements list, then find the money. Experience has shown this can only lead to disappointment, since the requirements are usually around ten times what the U.S. could possibly fund. Instead, the U.S. determines a financing level based on what it can afford and sell to Congress, and then the country and the U.S. conform a prioritized program to that level.

In a mature relationship, where U.S. equipment is already present and circumstances have called for revitalization of the host country military, planning may address first what it takes to restore and repair equipment and return the country to self-sufficiency, before adding new equipment. Planning also addresses the delivery status of previously ordered items, or those recently installed in the forces and requiring changes in associated support or training.

In any of these kinds of planning exercises, the U.S. Military Services play a key role, for they have to judge technological releasability, availabilities from production or stocks, and must cost out the packages. Planning has to address not only the equipment but also the scheduling and phasing of all the elements.

For those countries and situations where the military establishment has to be created from scratch (where essentially only an old military officer corps elite is the institution), the country may want to go right to helicopters, tanks, and heavy artillery. The U.S. will press instead to begin at the most basic level: the individual soldier's equipment, rations, training, medical care, and truck transport. Once a program is satisfactorily established at that level, more mobility, light firepower, and netted communications can be added, but only if the supply and maintenance systems are in place and personnel have been trained in those functions.

FIGURE 4
Evolution Of The Basic Military Establishment



As noted previously, the end product of planning is not paper, it is programs. However, documentation of U.S.-host country planning can take many forms. Surveys generally produce rather thick documents. At the other extreme, the Israeli and Egyptian programs, the largest in the U.S. system, are contained on one or two pages each. The Turkish prioritized programs were contained on one large sheet. The critical detail lies in the cases which are evolved from planning. Each case may require further detailed discussions between the U.S. Service which manages the case and its country counterparts.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANNING (AND DRAWBACKS)

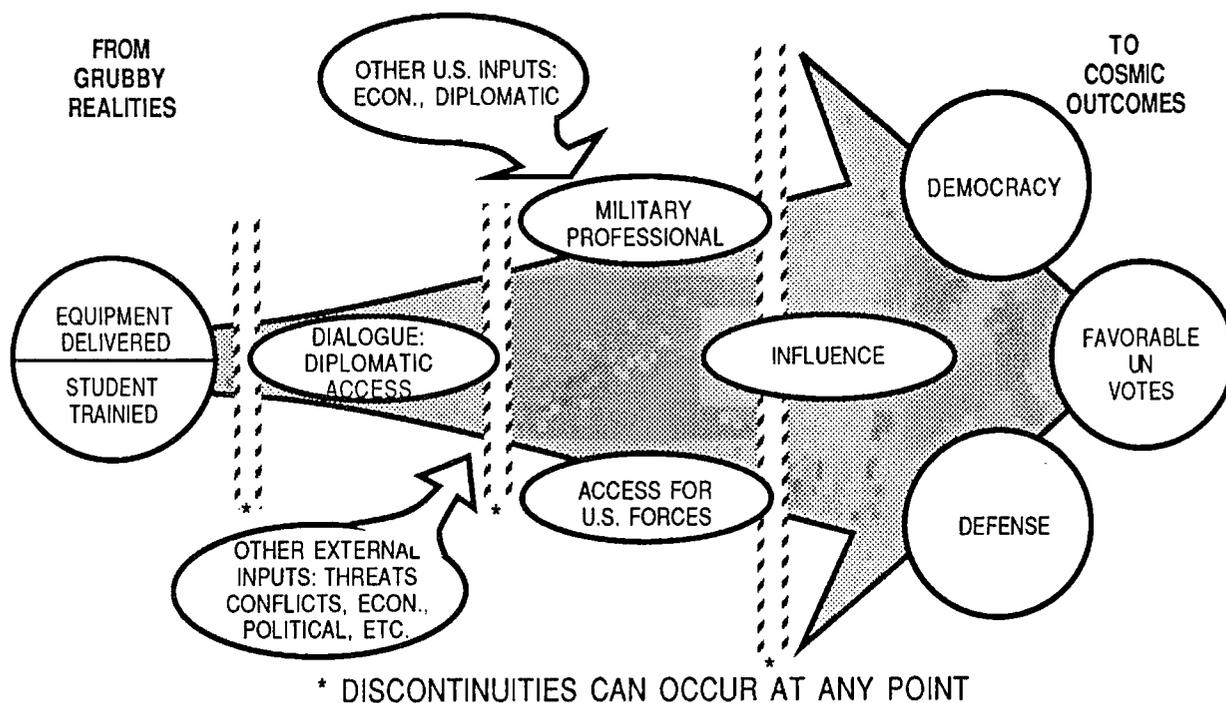
If program planning is done well, and program case details are satisfactorily negotiated, the first test is delivery of equipment in working condition, with facilities and trained personnel ready to receive it. The country must then successfully maintain and exercise the equipment, according to plan. That is, the equipment would be deployed in units, and the units exercised on it. Routine maintenance would be done, and spare parts would flow, either from central depots or from the U.S. to replenish stocks. The country would be gradually achieving self-sufficiency, though some technical assistance may be required indefinitely.

If the country must operate in conflicts, the tests of successful planning are whether they can deploy forces, sustain them in the field, evacuate medical cases, and maintain national-level command and control. They must also replace worn or expended equipment judiciously and within the appropriate lead times. In the long term as well, the U.S. expectation is that the well-equipped, well-trained and supported force will be more professional, with better relations between officers and enlisted. This is the kind of force the U.S. feels can support democracy and observe human rights.

The rewards for the country lie in a capability to defend itself or to be confident in the deterrent effects of its forces. Their sense of internal stability and support of political and economic processes may hopefully be greater. On the part of the U.S., in addition to the above things which we fervently want countries to achieve, our diplomatic and military access to the leadership can be ensured, and we may be able to expand our strategic dialogues and cooperative military activities. There are many factors which intrude into these neat, desirable outcomes, of course, to include circumstances both internal and external to the country.

FIGURE 5

Effectiveness of Security Assistance



Planning does not necessarily go smoothly, nor do the outcomes always work out to complete satisfaction. From an interactive standpoint, much dialogue and planning is a cultural feeling-out and adaptive process between the U.S. and the host country. Thus, planning takes time and misunderstandings have to be overcome. Disappointments are inevitable. The main dangers are that the U.S. side overcommits, and the country side overplans. In other words, expectations may be established which cannot be satisfied.

Inevitably, U.S. financing, where it is required, is not enough. This is in the nature of human affairs, but it has significant consequences for the relationship. Programs always cost more than expected (though the U.S. is usually conservative in estimating costs), mostly because some elements--like local facilities--prove more costly to establish than expected. The amount of financing the U.S. may indicate will be available is never enough to cover all the programs the country needs. Countries find the setting of priorities very irritating, in part because it provokes

internal disputes among services. Congress will fund a few privileged countries reliably and adequately, but the budget requests for many countries have to be cut in final allocations of appropriations because Congress will have cut the account across the board. It is also difficult for the U.S. to sustain programs over many years. The dire circumstances that created the opportunity for planning become less dire, the U.S. has up-and-down budget cycles, Administrations change, and senior officials in Administrations sweep off to the latest crisis.

Countries may also become impatient at long leadtimes and the U.S. insistence that all elements of the program be in place upon the delivery of equipment. They want earlier deliveries and they are impatient with the U.S. tendency to dwell on logistic matters. While the U.S. is always very careful to indicate what technology it can release, there are inevitable country pressures to upgrade that technology to what they may have heard some more favored nation may have received.

On the U.S. side, disappointments may relate to the slow process of local officials coming up to speed on planning, the inability of officials sometimes to make country decisions stick (having been overridden by higher authorities), and to a constant shifting of priorities. This constant shifting of priorities is an inevitable result of resource constraints. For cash countries, there is nothing to stop them from going to other suppliers to get what the U.S. might think would be imprudent for them to have, or which overload their facilities and personnel capabilities. Finally, the U.S. may be disappointed in the strategic and cooperative benefits that even a simple, well-run assistance program may bring. Countries often remain cautious as to their strategic commitments even when the relationship with the U.S. is excellent.

CONCLUSION

U.S. planning of security assistance with host countries is a highly programmatic matter. That is, the planning concentrates on deliverable programs which are meant to work when delivered, and to begin the process of self-sufficiency and sustainability. Planning is typically neither abstract requirements planning for capabilities which can never be realized nor, except in rare cases, is it of country operations in the field. Such operation are a country sovereign function. Planning of joint exercises or operations happens, but is not under the security assistance rubric.

Most planning is for the effective utilization of available funds, and the programs that are planned are thus limited to those funds. For cash countries and in other exceptional circumstances, the U.S. may conduct surveys and hold dialogues on comprehensive force structure and modernization planning. These kind of planning exercises may then provide shopping lists for later detailed planning of programs. Altogether, in both financed and cash cases, planning is limited to equipment and services to be purchased from the U.S.

Plans tend to be unique to countries. Because it is circumstances and the availability of funds which propel the U.S. and the country into a planning relationship, the planning and the resultant programs are responsive to those situation. The U.S. is highly adaptive and pragmatic in how it approaches each country; we do not press a common mold on countries, except that we insist on comprehensive packages which cover training and support as well as basic equipment. This means that planning gets into a lot of military nitty-gritty matters. It is best carried out by experienced U.S. military personnel with direct ties to the U.S. Services (Military Departments) who will be actually executing the resultant programs. This means in turn that most planning of programs must necessarily involve Washington personnel, especially at the beginning of a relationship. Security Assistance Offices in the country may handle some situations, with augmentation from Washington, and are responsible for opening doors and, of course, for ensuring plan execution on the ground.

Planning a program with a country builds the relationship between the U.S. and the country, if done well. That is, if there is a patient dialogue on a co-equal basis with mutual adjustment to each others' cultural predispositions, and if the resultant programs are effective and sustainable, the relationship is enhanced and solidified. Such a military -to-military relationship does not by itself bring larger benefits such as strategic cooperation or access for U.S. forces. These benefits depend on a host of other factors, including the long-term reliability of U.S. assistance.