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# Life In The Fast Lane

By

LTC Paul S. Gendrolis, U.S. Army

“Hi, Lieutenant Colonel Smedley. This is Major Assignments. I've got a really great job lined up for you—it's right up your alley. We're assigning you to the security assistance organization in Turkey. You'll love it!”

“Hold on there. I'm a logistician. I don't know anything about security.”

“No, not security. *Security assistance.*”

“*What the hell's that?*”

Has this ever happened to you? Has your branch officer or assignment manager ever given you a cheerful wake-up call with the good news that you are going somewhere exotic to perform some obscure duty in something called an SAO? If not, then you are missing out on one of life's little pleasures. This article is designed to provide you with a brief introduction to security assistance, the security assistance organization (SAO), and some of the many duties you will be asked to perform.

So, just what is security assistance? Let us begin by saying what it is not. Many people initially react similar to LTC Smedley—believing it to be directly related to physical security or maybe to document security. Relax; it is neither of those two activities. When we speak of security assistance, we are addressing a formal group of programs which are legislatively-based, which the United States Government (USG) has established to assist foreign governments. This assistance is funded on an annual basis in accordance with our overall foreign policy and national security requirements. It encompasses both military and economic assistance programs designed to strengthen the economic systems, infrastructure, and military programs and capabilities of the recipient country. The overall responsibility for the management of and policy directives for security assistance rests with the Department of State (DoS). Authority for the implementation of specific military programs rests with the Department of Defense (DoD).

Before taking a closer look at each individual program, let's look at the roots of security assistance. Although it has been around in some form since World War I, it was not until the post-World War II period that the United States became actively involved with far-reaching economic and military assistance programs. The Greece-Turkey Act of 1947 signed into law by President Harry S. Truman was the signal event which marked the beginning of the security assistance programs as we know them today. However, it was not until the presidency of Richard M. Nixon that the term *security assistance* gained more common use and was used to define the specific assistance programs used by the USG to win friends and influence people around the world. In very generic terms, we can define security assistance as the sale, transfer, grant, or lease of USG defense articles, services, and training to a foreign government.

There are two laws which are considered to be the basis for the management and implementation of security assistance programs: the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) of 1976, as amended. These laws define and guide the operations of the six major components of security assistance: Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Financing Program, International Military Education and Training, Direct Commercial Sales, Economic Support Fund, and Peacekeeping Operations.

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With Congressional oversight and DoS guidance, DoD manages the following programs:

**Foreign Military Sales (FMS)** is a government-to-government, non-appropriated activity normally thought of as a cash sale to a country. Besides the sale of U.S. defense goods and services, it also includes the Foreign Military Construction Program, the sale of design and construction services.

**Foreign Military Financing Program (FMFP)** is a Congressionally appropriated activity which allows foreign governments to buy U.S. defense articles, services, and training through the FMS system using U.S. grants or repayable loans.

**International Military Education and Training (IMET)** enables foreign military members and civilians with military oversight responsibilities to receive U.S. military training and professional military education on a grant basis.

The other three programs are managed by the DoS:

**Direct Commercial Sales (DCS)** of defense articles, services, and training is an industry-to-government arrangement monitored by the Office of Defense Trade Control through the issuance of an export control license.

**The Economic Support Fund (ESF)** is a special fund administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development and used to promote economic and political stability in countries or regions deemed especially significant to the U.S.

**Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)** have supported the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai and the United Nations Force in Cyprus. In recent years, as the UN and U.S. roles in peacemaking/peacekeeping operations worldwide has grown, this program has expanded.

Now that we know what security assistance is, we are almost ready to move on to discussing what you will do as a member of an SAO. But before we do that, let us look at one more unique feature of security assistance: your boss. For whom will you work? In a word—everyone! But let's narrow that down a little. The SAO Chief and his/her subordinates are responsible to a number of individuals and agencies which have a role in security assistance. As a military organization, there is a chain of command that goes back to a specific unified command which has regional responsibility for your country. Since LTC Smedley is headed for Turkey, he will be responsible to the Commander, European Command (EUCOM). Another good point to remember is that efficiency/fitness reports are written or reviewed by the unified command. Another "boss" is the U.S. Ambassador in the country. He or she is the designated representative of the U.S. President and is responsible for all official activities which take place in his/her country. And, as we know, since security assistance is a DoS-guided program, the Ambassador closely monitors all related activities. Another significant player is the Director, Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA), which has been delegated by the Secretary of Defense to manage worldwide security assistance operations. DSAA provides policy guidance and operating instructions in carrying out security assistance policies. One other player is the specific service chief who might have a vested interest in a particular security assistance activity implemented in your country. For example, in LTC Smedley's country of Turkey, F-16 co-production is an extremely visible and important program about which the Chief of Staff of the Air Force may want to be kept up-to-date. So here is your first challenge: keep all of your bosses satisfied at the same time!

Having said all of this, it is now about time to discuss your job. What does an SAO do? The short answer is that you will oversee the specific military security assistance programs which

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have been implemented in your country. However, let's try a longer answer! As you have no doubt surmised, security assistance is managed from on high and the SAO has a number of significant bosses. As might be expected, the functions of the SAO are mandated by specific sections of the FAA and AECA. A short description of each function should give you an idea of just what will be expected of you:

- **Case Management.** When the USG and a foreign government have agreed on the purchase of a specific military article, service or training, the agreement is formalized on a Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) or formerly [prior to 1 June 1992] written on a DD Form 1513. Once accepted, this sale becomes an FMS case. It is your job to ensure that the case is implemented in accordance with all applicable USG terms and conditions and with the specific requirements of your country. As a logistician, LTC Smedley can do this!

- **Training Management.** This involves the determination and coordination of host country training requirements, the administration of international military students, selection, testing, country (U.S.) briefings, and travel preparation, to name only a few aspects.

- **Program Monitoring.** This requires the oversight of all programs to realize the overall U.S. national security objectives and foreign policy goals. The SAO is required to closely follow the status of applicable security assistance programs to ensure that they are meeting the needs and requirements of both the USG and the foreign government. It also monitors the use of end items to ensure that proper use procedures are met.

- **Evaluation and Planning of the Host Country's Military Capabilities and Requirements.** The SAO evaluates the broad spectrum of the host country's military capabilities, to include its schools and training programs, in order to determine if it is maximizing its defense expenditures. This function includes the development of an Annual Integrated Assessment of Security Assistance (AIASA) by the Ambassador's country team which outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the host country and makes recommendations on the direction of existing and future programs. The AIASA is arguably the most important document regarding security assistance signed by the Ambassador. It is used extensively in many levels of decision-making in the management and budgeting areas. Most importantly, it is used in the development of the Congressional Presentation Document (CPD), the President's annual security assistance budget request and justification.

- **Administrative Support.** The SAO is responsible for myriad administrative and logistical requirements to conduct security assistance operations and to take care of its assigned personnel. Depending upon the size of the SAO, it may take care of most of its operational requirements itself or it may receive a great deal of support from its unified command and from the U.S. Embassy through a foreign affairs assistance support agreement (FAAS).

- **Promoting Rationalization, Standardization, and Interoperability (RSI), and Other Defense Cooperation Measures.** One of the overall goals of security assistance is to encourage a country to purchase U.S. defense goods, services, and training not only because it may be the best available, but also because it enables a wider range of compatibility between services and countries in the use of the equipment. The recent Gulf coalition is an example of where RSI worked in a highly successful manner. Most of the coalition partners were either using U.S. equipment or had received U.S. doctrinal training. This was a big factor in the overall success of combined arms and joint operations during Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

- **Liaison Functions.** This particular function may also be aptly entitled "other duties as assigned." One of the primary additional duties SAO personnel perform is protocol or escort duty. Depending upon the visibility of your country and the types of programs being

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implemented, you can expect to have visitors, ranging from the President to a humble DISAM instructor. No matter who the visitor may be, if you are asked to host him/her, it will require you to make billeting and transportation arrangements, set up office calls with U.S. and host country officials, and coordinate many other aspects of the visit. In this regard, you could become very close friends with the customs and immigration officials at the local airport!

If this is not enough to take care of, the SAO is also responsible for monitoring and annually reporting on any DoD leases the USG might have with the country. One final area of responsibility to be noted here deals with your relationship with defense contractors. It is the stated policy of the USG that the SAO will assist defense contractors in promoting the sale of U.S. goods and services to a foreign country. Therefore, you can expect to receive requests for information regarding the host country's decision-makers, the budget cycle, and especially, for setting up meetings with your country's officials.

So far we have only mentioned what you can and will do. There is one notable restriction which should be addressed here. That involves combat-related activities. It is the intent of Congress that the SAO will conduct its business of advising the host country at the highest levels, i.e. Ministry of Defense, Land Forces Command, etc. Operational level advising at the small unit level is meant to be performed by special service-specific training teams, e.g. technical assistance field teams (TAFTs), mobile training teams (MTTs), etc. Obviously, this is situationally dependent, but the point is that SAO personnel are neither equipped nor mandated nor permitted to become involved in combat or direct combat-related activities.

With this brief introduction to security assistance, we have hopefully answered LTC Smedley's initial question. If you have questions, we recommend two great sources of information: *Security Assistance Management Manual* and DISAM's *The Management of Security Assistance* textbook. And since DISAM conducts regular courses for all security assistance personnel, whether assigned overseas or stateside, we expect to see you here for some really intense instruction. We also offer a refresher course for those of you wanting an updated look at the big picture of security assistance. So, LTC Smedley—see you at DISAM and down the road in Turkey!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LTC Gendrolis is an Assistant Professor and the Middle East Seminar Director at DISAM. His four overseas tours include assignments in two SAOs: JUSMMAT in Turkey and USMTM in Saudi Arabia. He is projected to return to the SAO in Turkey in the summer of 1994.