

PERSPECTIVES IN SECURITY ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT

a focus on special topics of interest



TAPS FOR THE MAAGS?

By Colonel Ronald A. Shackleton, USA

INTRODUCTION

This article is written with a purpose of focusing attention on an important issue of our times: the role and future destiny of our overseas Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAGs).¹ I naturally feel especially strong about, and close to, this topic in my position as Deputy Commandant of the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM), which has responsibility for training personnel enroute to MAAG assignments. During my tenure as Deputy Commandant, I have had the opportunity to visit many of the countries with which we have a security assistance program and to engage in firsthand discussions with host country representatives and U.S. country team personnel.

The discussion which follows is to a limited degree a selective reiteration of the thoughts of others who have published accounts on the subject. I, therefore, make no claim for total originality. However, in another and more important sense, I feel this portion of the message warrants repetition and hopefully the expansion and personal insight that I have provided. This topic is a controversial one to be sure and reasonable people, in good faith, can and do disagree. In this latter regard, the opinions expressed in this article are mine alone and not necessarily

those of the Institute, the Department of Defense, or any department or agency of the U.S. Government.

BACKGROUND

About four years ago, spurred on by a number of pressure groups, the Congress reviewed the state of U.S. military presence overseas. A most obvious target was the MAAGs scattered about in many countries of the world. In the minds of a significant number of influential people, somehow the MAAG had become an anachronism and no longer had a place in our foreign policy. The functions of the MAAG had to be restricted -- voluntarily, if possible -- by force of law, if necessary.

A number of questions were immediately raised -- questions which reflected mounting concern over the prospects of the MAAG. Was this review to sound the death knell of an institution that served the country well for over a half century? Would this mean the demise of a concept which began as a collection of small military missions to Latin American countries and which had matured as a major foreign policy instrument in the middle decades of this century? Was the U.S. military presence which was perceived by many host nations as a positive, physical evidence of American interest to be shelved? Was the on-site assessment of a host country's military infrastructure to be denied our policy makers? These and a myriad of other questions begging answers arose around that 1976 statutory decision of Congress -- a decision that has established a watershed for the continuance of the MAAG as a viable foreign policy factor. Faced with the outcome of that decision, there are those in government who now challenge it. They feel that the decision was made on the altar of political expediency and that the long term consequences of its scope were not fully thought through.

The Congressional hearings which preceded the decision were long and convoluted with accompanying claims and counterclaims. The pivotal point of discussion appeared to be whether the continued existence of the MAAG

in its then existing form and numbers was beneficial to our national security interests or would succumb to the then extant political climate. Overseas involvement by the U.S. military had become a public anathema. The American public seemed to have wrapped itself in a blanket of guilt, chagrin, disappointment and resentment over foreign relations. They thought, and had truly expected that as a result of the huge largesse of 25 years of economic and other foreign aid, the U.S. would gain the respect and gratitude of the recipient nations. When that did not happen, the Americans did what they usually do -- turned inward.

That perception, coupled with the malaise of Vietnam which stuck as a bone in its throat, seemed to convince the public that the U.S. had seen enough of foreign involvement, especially that which included the military. The public's disenchantment was augmented by anti-military action groups which were supported by a coterie of Congressional and other foreign affairs personnel seeking limitations to, if not complete abolition of, the MAAG concept. Some of these groups considered the MAAGs presented opportunities for military aggrandizement and a means for furthering unnecessary foreign military sales.

After much debate and disputation, and with the express reservations of then President Ford, the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976 was passed and the phase down of the number of MAAGs and personnel assigned thereto began. By a stroke of the same pen that drafted the law, the remaining groups and their latter day counterparts found their traditional autonomy limited, their representational tasks minimized and, ultimately, a new group of broadly defined responsibilities dumped on their doorsteps.

The results were predictable -- U.S. military presence was markedly reduced and its representational tasks significantly cut back. The feedback of current information from the field all but evaporated because of limited liaison with host military services, and the ability to advise a country on the wisdom or risks associated with buying a new weapon system waned considerably.

Despite the radical cut back in authorized manpower, the associated workload did not correspondingly decrease. The MAAGs seemed to be caught in a dichotomy between the policy makers who reduced the size of the force and the commands which were responsible for program implementation. A major problem appeared to be how much autonomy should be given to carry out MAAG responsibilities or how much control should be exercised centrally. The problem that confronted both the policy makers and the command headquarters was how to guide the MAAGs in a way that would best serve the national interests while still remaining within the inflexible confines of what is now considered badly constructed policy.

The bottom line is that the MAAGs presently are struggling to carry out their mission with a clouded mandate. Confusion and lack of job satisfaction are manifest. Straightforward answers to questions are not forthcoming or are delayed to the point that when they are received, they are no longer germane. MAAG personnel are often embarrassed when they cannot answer their foreign counterparts' queries on relatively simple problems because they lack sufficiently current data. Professional frustration appears to aptly describe the attitude prevailing among our overseas military representatives.

My conclusions on the current bleak outlook of the MAAG concept and the improbable path of its future are based on personal visits to MAAGs throughout the world, conversations with ambassadors and other consular officials and with personnel from the Departments of State and Defense. The results of all of these contacts generally fall into two distinct categories. Defense officials were concerned over reduced personnel, diminished contact between military professionals, reduced autonomy and the very real possibility of the complete disappearance of the MAAG. On the other hand, many, although not all, Department of State representatives felt that the reductions in the MAAG activities and their consolidation with those of the Defense Attache Offices (DAO) were entirely appropriate. I must further point out that while the embassies in the developed countries (i.e., Western Europe) appeared not to be too upset if the MAAGs were eliminated, some of those in the third world countries saw

much value in the continued presence of the MAAG and strongly supported its role.

PERSPECTIVES

Historically, the MAAGs were responsible to oversee the military assistance activities and guarantee that these activities were carried out to the mutual interests of both the recipient countries and the U.S. From their very beginning, they played an important role in the balanced determination of a host country's defense needs, training of its military personnel in the proper deployment and use of its defense materiel, and in the prescribed maintenance and support of its materiel. In the eyes of the host governments the fact that there was a MAAG physically located in its capital was evidence of U.S. interest in that country.

The MAAG traditionally occupied three roles -- representational, informational and managerial.

Representational roles were quite broad and were generally an effort to demonstrate a United States presence and concern for host military and security problems by giving advice and assistance; by maintaining liaison between the United States defense establishment and that of the host country; and by establishing and maintaining a relationship of mutual trust and confidence with host country's military establishment.

Informational roles were highly dependent upon success in performing representational roles. Access to key military and government personnel in the host country was highly instrumental for gathering field information about country needs, wants, fears, or attitudes, as well as internal domestic developments that might relate to United States security interests. MAAGs reported on host government's plans and programs relevant to the Unified Command; provided specifically requested reports for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA), the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the military departments; regularly reported on host government's utilization of defense articles provided as grant aid; and often reported on any problems with recently purchased arms services and training.

Managerial roles included: Assisting host governments in arranging purchase of United States weapons and services; assisting DSAA and the military departments in Foreign Military Sales negotiations; assisting United States commercial representatives who wished to sell defense articles and services to host governments; assisting United States military departments in delivering security assistance to recipients; assisting host governments in meeting contractual obligations related to grant aid, Foreign Military Sales, or excess defense articles; providing training or advice to host governments concerning plans, programs, budgets, or military resources; assisting DSAA or ISA on matters relating to joint research and development with a host country; and performing ² other tasks if specifically requested by competent authority.

The question arises that if the MAAGs were so important and obviously beneficial to the U.S. national interests, why did they fall into such disfavor in the mid-1970s? There are several impressions that come to mind, each contributing a part of the answer but not necessarily satisfying the whole. First, the decision in all probability reflected public sentiments of the time. Secondly, there was a belief in the Congress that the U.S. generally had become too heavily involved overseas; that the MAAGs were too costly for the benefits received; and that the program, which had been around for over 50 years, had outlived its usefulness. Generally, the 1976 Act and the following year's International Security Assistance Act of 1977 (PL 95-92), reflected the general anti-military mood and disillusion with military involvements that appeared to extend beyond stated foreign policies. Congressional attitudes may also have been influenced by allegations that the (military) missions, which as a matter of form reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff via the Unified Commands, encumbered, if not undercut, the role of the United States Foreign Service.³ In any respect, Congress perceived that the lack of control over the field operations of the MAAGs and inadequate coordination between the various levels of security assistance management conflicted with other foreign policy goals. These perceptions reflected the longstanding feeling of the Congress that it had been denied access to information of the security assistance program as promulgated and implemented by the Executive branch. It also showed some misgivings that MAAG personnel might be unduly engaged in encouraging foreign governments to expand and update their military structure with arms and equipment from U.S. commercial

sources. The basis for these concerns remain somewhat confusing when it is realized that at the time of the Congressional action, the then existing (1972) DOD Directive 5132.3, required the MAAG to, among other responsibilities:

...assist the host government in arranging for purchase of defense articles and services to meet valid country requirements through foreign military sales (FMS) and commercial sales and...

...cooperate with and assist representatives of U.S. firms in the sale of U.S. defense articles and services to meet valid country requirements ...

In addition to these tasks, MAAGs furnished fundamental military information and advice pertaining to strategy and doctrine, force planning and structure and logistics operations to the host country military. Thus, the U.S. military personnel and their foreign counterparts created an atmosphere of mutual understanding and professional practicality. However, the very real benefits of those associations were discounted by many as inconsequential and of little value to the U.S. It was also felt that these relationships placed the MAAG in semi-autonomous positions which were used to its advantage and fostered direct communications through U.S. military channels.

...As such, they would be in a position to frustrate the lines of authority flowing from both the ambassador and the Department of State. These concerns were enhanced by both the perception of the closed military chain of command running through the regional commanders and the military communications system and the "military-to-military"⁴ relationship enjoyed by the MAAGs and their host counterparts.

Legislation for reduction of the MAAGs involved testimony by Lieutenant General Howard M. Fish, USAF, the then Director of the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA). He argued that reduction and eventual abolishment of the MAAG would adversely impact on national security:

...the missions are essential for administering military assistance and for building up a relationship of mutual trust and confidence with the host country's military establishment.

...their elimination would strain relations with friends and allies. It would be an indication that the U.S. is isolating its interests at a time when the Soviet influence is expanding in many parts of the world.

...he and others in the Department view the effect of the new legislation as calamitous, since the MAAGs are performing an important function which needs to be continued.

General Fish concluded his comments by stating, "there have been some expressions of unhappiness in countries where we are shutting down the Military Assistance Advisory Groups."⁵

The drawdown of the MAAGs created a vacuum, and international politics, like nature, abhors a vacuum. As our presence diminished, some of the countries which depended on us turned to other sources, notably Europe, some Warsaw Pact countries, and especially the USSR -- a situation that became painfully apparent in Latin America. Soviet periodicals in that period proclaimed that one of the best ways to improve Soviet-Latin American relations was to eliminate the United States MAAG and MILGP (Military Group) programs. An observer at the time commented, "Is it any wonder that Latin American countries observe with amazement that the United States by its own actions is supporting this Soviet objective?" He continued, "I can state with certainty that the Latin American countries strongly support the opposite view and desire continuation of the MAAG and MILGP programs as a buffer against further Communist influence."⁶ One only has to refer to tonight's TV newscast to see how prophetic those fears were, and the end is not yet in sight.

IMPACT OF PL 95-92

The International Security Assistance Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-92) which circumscribed MAAG operations and established a manpower ceiling

also created four primary functions to be performed by them, i.e., logistics management, transportation, fiscal management and contract administration of country programs. Although the law addressed these functions in broad terms, specific direction as to how these are to be performed remains vague and incomplete. Consequently, some MAAGs still are uncertain of what is expected of them, and their performance suffers.

I believe this fault can be traced back directly to those who crafted PL 95-92 and this lack of understanding of what is entailed in these tasks. Take, for instance, the seemingly innocuous term, "logistics management." By direct reference of the term, as defined in the JCS Publication 1, all of the four separate duties prescribed by PL 95-92 can be grouped under logistics. The concept that logistics is limited to "box kicking and lable licking" or "parts chasing" is a gross distortion of reality. Logistics literally embraces the acquisition and sustained support of everything, including trained personnel, to effectively and efficiently carry out a defense mission. Thus, logistics, with its roots deep in the economic and production base of a nation, covers every aspect of military potential except weapon delivery by tactical or strategic operational elements.

In the face of the severe reduction of its manpower, the possibility of a MAAG effectively carrying out the awesome tasks so broadly mandated (although they were intended to be somewhat restrictive in nature) by PL 95-92 becomes improbable at best. For example, delivery of a new weapon system, be it a tank, aircraft, ship or whatever to a foreign country, is assumed to give the receiving country an enhanced military potential. Not necessarily so! Without logistics wherewithal to give full potential to the newly acquired weapon system, the receiving country has but a shining new aluminum or steel monument to man's fallibility instead of the usable weapon it required.

Without belaboring the point, the absence of any one of a thousand different logistics factors, ranging from trained personnel to operate and maintain the new weapon, the manuals and handbooks needed to accomplish

these tasks, the facilities in which these can be accomplished, the munitions to give the system striking power, and down to the last bit, part, and piece will keep the marvelous new machine from functioning. It is particularly galling for MAAG personnel to try and explain why any of these missing logistics factors is so critical and more difficult still, why it was not considered when the new weapon was first requested. All that remains then is for the MAAG to perform frustrating and thankless tasks of determining what the new system needs and painfully seek resolution through a bewildering and distant bureaucracy. This then begs the question -- if the logistics tasks are mandated and must be carried out, how much of the precious little time that remains in a day can the MAAG devote to gaining the confidence of the receiving country personnel and counsel them how best to employ the new weapon, assuming it becomes logistically operable?

Although logistics deficiencies in security assistance program management are wide spread, they are not universal. For instance, the more sophisticated countries have extensive experience in logistics planning, programming and implementation and, as such, only require occasional assistance of troubleshooting teams. Countries which have limited experience in planning, programming and carrying out logistics support of the newer weapon systems require full time guidance and long term representation by U.S. personnel.

Notwithstanding the handling of the complex logistics functions just described, MAAGs also have the challenging and sometimes formidable task for maintaining a balanced liaison between the unified commands, DOD components, various U.S. diplomatic mission elements and military organizations of the host country. According to the proposed DOD Directive 5132.3, the reason for maintaining a viable liaison among these activities is to:

- a. Enable the foreign government to acquire information needed to make decisions concerning the acquisition, use and required training involved in obtaining defense articles and services from the U.S. through security assistance programs (keeping in

mind that host countries are to be encouraged to establish and depend, to the extent possible, upon their own procurement missions in the U.S.);

b. Obtain information needed to evaluate host military capability to employ and maintain equipment being requested and to process the foreign government's security assistance proposals;

c. Enable the U.S. to request the foreign government to take action in order to facilitate the timely, efficient, and responsive implementation of approved programs; and

d. Enable the USG to acquire information concerning potential future defense acquisitions by the foreign governments and anticipate demands on U.S. resources.

Beyond these far ranging responsibilities, there are numerous others that are inherent in the MAAG. Among these are preparing reports on how the recipient country utilizes weapons or training provided under grant aid; assisting receipt, transfer and acceptance of security assistance materiel, training and other services by the recipient countries; assisting host governments in the disposition of excess security assistance materiel; and advising the ASD (ISA), DSAA, JCS, Unified Commands and military departments of the on going security assistance activities in the host country. After all that, if there is time remaining, and if in the judgement of the chief of the diplomatic mission that it will not detract from the four primary functions, the MAAG can engage in advisory and training activities and negotiation of non-security assistance military matters. Obviously this makes for a full day and the effective accomplishment of all responsibilities that may be laid on the MAAG's shoulders becomes well nigh impossible. A recent message provides a partial perspective of the current state of security assistance management overseas.⁷

1. Many of the functions performed by the ODC (Office of Defense Cooperation) are not recognized by the law or by the many organizations who deal with the ODC. The ODC does not have "routine" functions as envisaged by the law. While the law does not recognize an advisory role for the ODC, it appears that the U.S. government expects the ODC to play an advisory role with respect to NATO - RSI (Rationalization, Standardization, Interoperability) initiatives.

2. In the security assistance area, the ODC serves as a point of contact, a U.S. military representative, and a trouble shooter. The subjects addressed to the ODC are always changing and there is a great fluctuation in terms of time and intensity required.

3. In what is traditionally thought of as security assistance -- that is FMS -- the [host country personnel] are primarily self-sufficient and can become more so. [Another country] depends more on the ODC for FMS assistance but could also become more self-sufficient.

4. The ODC has many non-security assistance functions. Some of these functions may in fact be more important to the United States than the typical security assistance functions. Although ODCs are typically pictured as providing services to the host country, they also serve U.S. defense and foreign policy objectives. Many ODC functions relate to U.S. NATO objectives such as host nation support, "REFORGER," lines of communication, and reinforcement storage facilities.

5. [Host country] officials believe it is essential to have an ODC type organization to serve as a point of contact on issues of mutual concern. They believe that the working level military-to-military contacts help to make U.S. diplomacy more effective.

6. There is a real need to make everyone aware of what the ODC does because the ODC serves the interests of so many different organizations -- the Embassy, USEUCOM, [host country], the Defense Department, the State Department. These organizations may not be aware that their priorities are competing and may conflict with those of another organization....

The above message addresses a number of conditions in our MAAGs and ODCs. The question then remains of what should be done to rectify those conditions in fact of constantly declining manpower allocated to these duties. The decision to reduce personnel spaces appears to have been based on a rationale that is no longer current and reflects purported small monetary savings at significant costs to our security assistance policies.

Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, in his statement to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, commented on the status of our security assistance policies when he said:

Opinions on the role of security assistance in our national security vary. But probably we all would agree that we cannot stand in isolation from the rest of the world. By strengthening the security of our friends and allies we strengthen our own; by assisting them to improve their stability and deter external aggression, we are making effective use of our defense resources.⁸

One can logically presume that among those resources are personnel committed to overseas security assistance billets, for without competent advisors and managers to efficiently execute the programs, the efficacy of security assistance will rapidly dissipate. Secretary Brown brought those circumstances into focus when he declared, "the first point I would like to emphasize about the FY 1981 program is that we must arrest and reverse the almost three decades of decline in our support of the security assistance program."⁹

Our lack of constancy in how we intend to implement security assistance has distorted our basic foreign policy. There appears to be an increasing impression that the granting or withholding of assistance is capricious and based on unrealistic advice to the President or Congress. Secretary Brown continued:

Of course, we can work best with nation's whose interests most clearly parallel our own, and whose political and economic institutions are not too unlike ours. Sometimes we are faced with difficult questions about whether potential recipients' worthiness or lack of survivability outweighs their friendship. There are no simple rules -- and it is difficult to predict the outcome of competing unattractive choices. One negative rule I would offer is that if failure of U.S. support contributes to the replacement of a distasteful regime by a worse one, the deficiencies of the former¹⁰ are not a very good basis for satisfaction with the outcome.

Recognizing the great number of options present in implementation of security assistance and in the changing international environment in which these options must function, a significant change to the restrictive MAAG policies appears warranted. One element that requires priority consideration after relief of the manpower ceiling is the restoration of assignment

flexibility. The DSAA Director, Lieutenant General Ernest Graves, in his statements before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs commented on the need to be able to exercise a range of options. He stated that:

...because a change in the security assistance program for a particular country may bring about a need to increase the security assistance management effort in that country, we need to retain flexibility to increase the overall level, assuming that conditions around the world may not permit a compensating reduction elsewhere in the system.

The key word in that statement is flexibility -- flexibility in assignment of personnel resources in the numbers and skills required to accomplish what has been mandated. I believe it is perfectly clear that there are no two overseas operations exactly the same and in recognition of the differences, there must be a corresponding range of options which reflects the different needs. As a corollary to the principle of flexibility, there must be some upward adjustment in the numbers of people that can be authorized in the overseas positions. However, I am not advocating a return to the large numbers assigned to MAAGs years ago. Rather, I am suggesting a broader middle ground on which the actual requirements can be fulfilled from a greater number of individuals with the requisite skills.

Another facet of the flexibility principle is to acknowledge the change in the nature of the MAAG functions. In the early days of the program, the functions were heavily oriented to providing detailed military advice and training assistance to all of the host country's armed forces. However, many countries have progressed beyond the point where they require that level of detail. Instead, we need a blend of skills that include not only tactical or operational expertise but also logisticians, comptrollers and contract administrators to assist the implementation of in-country programs involving sales agreements. In this fashion, the total spectrum of a country's needs can be addressed without placing personnel into tasks in which they lack training, empathy or experience.

Flexibility was again highlighted by a supplement to "The Chairman's Overview," prepared by the JCS, in which it was stated that:

...current laws and regulations limit U.S. flexibility in security assistance activities. These developments have considerably reduced the capability of U.S. security assistance organizations to meet the full range of their assigned responsibilities. Specific problems include a weakening in military-to-military relationships and contacts, reduced discussions and mutual planning for collective security, and few opportunities to encourage allies to increase their share of the common defense burden and to promote standardization and interoperability of equipment and doctrine. ¹²

Thus, personnel assigned to the MAAG must be conversant with all aspects of a host country's military posture -- from its mission to the available quantity and quality of resources that translate that mission into a viable military capability. In the discharge of these tasks, the obvious and most efficient method is to observe and participate on-site.

In reflection of my travels afield, I found varying levels of frustration with the security assistance management system, in total or in part. The elements of dissatisfaction, as I saw it, were fairly equally distributed between the field and the organizations through which the field activities had to deal.

From the field's point of view, an overwhelming bureaucracy essentially stifles any responsive dialogue seeking guidance on policy or assistance in resolving everyday operational difficulties. A number of personnel in the field are under the impression that no one will listen to their problems, and if they do listen, it is not done with the sense of urgency the field considers necessary. There appears to be a general feeling that the headquarters are insensitive to field difficulties and their pleas for help. Conversely, from the headquarters' or CONUS support activities' point of view, most of the complaints so lodged appear to be within the capacity of the field resources to resolve.

The higher echelons maintain that the system does work as it was designed and organized; that most managers work successfully in the system; and those who can't seem to function in the system just don't understand it. The higher echelons also contend that most field managers can ease their difficulties by thinking through the process and articulating their needs in a manner which could be more readily understood. It comes down to the field manager being willing to work their problems before seeking help. Thus, we have the classical dilemma, a "finger-pointing" exercise where both sides are held to be at a degree of fault and the total system creaks. As a net result, communications are distorted and we find that management cannot work effectively without communicating effectively.

In terms of communication effectivity, the so-called "procedural" tasks of logistics, transportation and contract administration are in essence, controls which monitor how well the U.S. has performed its foreign military sales commitments. Such monitorship provides an index to ascertain the efficiency of the U.S. military supply activities engaged in FMS support. The U.S. can scarcely depend on foreign sources for such information. We need to know from our own information sources how well we are managing. Those sources are best accessed by a U.S. presence in the recipient country. Although the recipient countries may accrue some advantages by locating purchasing missions in the Washington area, the U.S. should not have to prevail upon them to provide that information.

Another area of difficulty that occurs all too often in smaller MAAG organizations is the multitude of special and often conflicting tasks. Although the MAAG Chief may have laid out a plan of action to carry out his primary responsibilities, he is constantly besieged by unprogrammed requirements only remotely related to his charter. Such requests run the gamut from hosting a wide spectrum of visitors to participating in U.S. or joint planning exercises. Each of these special tasks may be accomplished singly, but when they have to be accomplished simultaneously with other mission needs, the MAAG rapidly exceeds its limited capability.

Some of these special requirements come down from the command headquarters which may be unaware or insensitive to the load the MAAG is trying to carry. As a consequence, the already overburdened MAAG is forced to delay completion on tasks that are, in all probability, long overdue because of a lack of manpower. While some MAAGs can accommodate special tasks without too much difficulty, those that cannot should not be reluctant to seek assistance from the command headquarters for the duration of the special tasks.

MAAG PERSONNEL SELECTION

I have dwelled long on the environment and circumstance in which the MAAG must operate. However, before leaving this discourse, I would like to briefly comment on the individual who is required to perform in this environment. I touched on the frustrations of the job and the special skill requirements of the environment but said little of the makeup of the individual selected to exercise these skills.

To begin with, I feel assignments to a MAAG are not made as carefully as they should. Although personnel policies require an element of volunteerism accompanied by an extensive preparatory education, automatic selection of personnel for the MAAG seems, at times, to be haphazard at best, disastrous at worst. My visits abroad have reinforced my impressions that there are only a few MAAG personnel who are not doing their damndest to get the job done but, among those, there are some who appear ill suited and were never really meant for their assignment.

In today's complex international arena those who participate must possess an extraordinary array of talents and sensitivities. Not everyone is equally suited for the job and yet there is no effective personnel mechanism to screen out those not suitable even though the requisite military skill is possessed or the individual has the required educational background.

If we were to tally what is required to play in the international arena, we'd find a staggering array of talents. The list would include a mixture of the diplomat, linguist, economist, legal expert, logistician, combined with well rounded military skills, infinite patience and a high tolerance for change. Unfortunately, not everyone is so blessed nor can these endowments be easily created in a normal military career pattern.

Another element that must be factored into a MAAG assignment equation is that of the family. The strains placed on some families by such assignments can be calamitous. Torn by duty and its concomitant responsibilities and the family unit and its responsibilities, those who cannot cope become less than responsive to job demands.

Not every family is cut out for long separation from parents and other relatives, remoteness of assignment, culture shock, high cost of living, language difficulties, incipient threats of terrorism and the absence of a long line of creature comforts to which we've all become accustomed. Not the least of these comforts is the reasonable access to familiar foods, entertainment, reliable utilities and the roots formed by the children with their schools, friends, hobbies, sports and a hundred other things labeled as our "way of life." However, please don't misinterpret what I am trying to convey here. While there are family units which experience extraordinary difficulty in adjusting to a foreign environment, there are those who, despite some difficulties, consider an overseas assignment as one of the more attractive, sought after aspects of military life. The opportunity to really become acquainted with a culture unlike anything previously experienced can be enormously enriching and personally rewarding. Learning and applying a new language, becoming involved on a person-to-person basis, exchanging ideas and customs and the chance to intensively travel a new land can provide richly satisfying, life-long memories.

Perhaps an answer to this assignment problem might be found in the example furnished by the U.S. foreign service. It might behoove the military to develop a cadre of adaptive personnel, both officer and

enlisted, who voluntarily would form a core of dedicated, highly trained, language competent, culturally conscious experts in the various skills. The cadre, patterned on the defense attache or foreign service officer system, would form a pool of regional expertise which could be circulated through a region on a regular basis.

What I am proposing is a formation of a group of career professional military representatives who would be compensated for overseas inconvenience, and promoted and educated on an equal basis with their peers. Assignment to the group must be career enhancing rather than stagnating. Augmentation of the core cadre would be through regular infusion of junior commissioned and non commissioned officers who would, with their fresh ideas, guard against a sterile parochialism that might ensue if fresh blood was not introduced to the cadre.

It is further envisioned that at the very minimum, the senior MAAG representative would be a career professional. However, all personnel of the cadre including the senior officers when not posted to an overseas billet would, like the attache or foreign service officer, attend school and serve in related stateside assignments such as the Defense Security Assistance Agency, International Security Assistance, JCS-J5, senior service schools, or the ILCOs. The stateside assignments should be of sufficient length to enable the individual to remain current, expand his understanding and provide a welcome respite from the overseas pressures.

I feel that the current overseas assignment policy is too costly in monetary and personal terms. In fact, I consider the loss of the skills, education, and experience a disinvestment because of the costs and time involved in continuously preparing replacement personnel for overseas duties only to lose them to ordinary assignments upon their return. I believe the time is ripe for a rethinking of personnel management practices of our MAAG representatives.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is readily apparent that the manpower reduction of the MAAG has considerably restricted the capacity and capabilities of our security assistance activities to meet the full extent of their mandates. The weakening of the military-to-military relationships; fewer personal contacts; infrequent discussions; and the almost total absence of mutual planning for collective security and missed opportunities to encourage our allies to shoulder a greater share of the common defense burden should provide a strong incentive for legislative review of the MAAG manpower ceiling. In conjunction therewith, personnel assignment policies should be examined in order to provide sufficient personnel of the right skill and proclivity to carry out what is required by law. If this basic inadequacy cannot be reconciled, then swift action is necessary to reduce or at least clarify some of the mandated tasks.

It was obvious that some reduction of the overall manning of the MAAG concept was in order. The concept operated in an environment that has significantly changed over the years. No longer is it necessary to "advise" down to company level in most countries. Representation at the brigade or division level is adequate even in the lesser developed countries. However, I perceive a sizeable and continuing role for the concept in the years to come -- a role that cannot be fulfilled if the present Executive Branch-mandated manpower ceiling persists. In view of that difference, I would strongly urge that efforts be continued to lift the ceiling somewhat and restore the flexibility of assignment to the unified commands which are ultimately responsible for the concepts mission. Assignment of personnel both by type and number to carry out that mission must be tailored to meet a specific country's needs and be in our own national interests.

While it is true that the State Department, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, exercises some flexibility as to which MAAG should be manned with six personnel or fewer or how much of the security assistance function will be picked up by the Defense Attache Office (DAO),

operational details of how the separate missions are to be accomplished seem to be overlooked. In some cases, the assumption of security assistance functions by the DAO does not reduce the overall requirement for personnel but merely realigns certain MAAG responsibilities. In other cases, the assumption by the DAO is appropriate and appears to work well in countries with smaller, more established programs. The point being that the dynamics and size of the security assistance program rather than arbitrary ceilings should dictate the number of personnel assigned. Thus, the larger programs, such as those in Korea, Saudi Arabia, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, etc., should be manned in recognition of the size and complexity of the task -- even at the expense of other MAAGs. However, if the manpower ceiling was relaxed each situation could be assessed in terms of specific needs and numbers.

Until that happens, expanded use of mobile training teams (MTTs), technical assistance field teams (TAFTs), and technical assistance teams (TATs) offer some relief. Most of lesser technical training requirements, i.e., weapon training, patrolling, communications, etc., that I refer to as "soldier skills" as well as higher level management education can be handled by a team.

It is also hoped that serious consideration be given to increasing the two-year limit on temporary technical assistance team (TAT) assignments. A TAT, on an as needed basis, can provide advisory and technical augmentation to the hard pressed MAAG. A TAT can be considered as a provisional, low cost, productive, non-provocative method of demonstrating our presence or interest in country.

However effective these teams are, the final solution will still elude us until the manpower ceilings received a responsible upward adjustment. Somehow the Congress and key Executive Branch officials must be made to understand that the overly restrictive legislative and Executive Branch policies have performed a disservice to our national interests. The twin handicaps of a rigid ceiling and inflexible assignment policies has forced the commands to "work the problem" in less than efficient ways.

MAAG personnel who are literally "in the trenches" continue to struggle with identity crisis, shifting roles, diminished autonomies and vague new responsibilities. On the other hand, the host nations remain confused by what they consider an unsure and ambivalent foreign policy.

Conversely, I wish to report that conditions have slightly improved for some MAAGs and that in itself is encouraging. Their role in the host country appears to be undergoing a change. They have been brought into the country team discussions earlier and appear to have their advice and influence accepted more gracefully. They also have easier access to the ambassadors and appear to be experiencing fewer difficulties caused by conflicting demands on their time by the unified commands.

Despite these occasional bursts of light on an otherwise dark outlook, there remains much to be done -- organization alignment, reduction of non-security assistance duties, enhanced administrative support from the embassies and a number of modifications to the basic MAAG structure.

However helpful these actions may be, they are treating only the symptoms not the problems. What is required is a thorough, objective analysis of the tasks that should be accomplished; realignment of functions shared with the embassies; provision of opportunities to help the assigned personnel identify with the jobs; clarification of individual responsibilities; and elimination of conflicting and often competitive demands of the commands. These steps should give a greater sense of purpose to the individual, reduce frustration and hopefully help him understand what he is doing out there. These actions should hold until some relief on the manpower ceilings and assignment policies is achieved. In the meantime, sounding taps for the MAAG concept may be premature -- reveillie for its renaissance, by whatever name, may be more appropriate.

FOOTNOTES

1. The term "MAAG," as used in this article, includes all of those activities designated by law as MAAGs, plus those referred to as Military Groups (MILGPs), Security Assistance Offices (SAO), Office of Military Cooperation (OMC), Offices of Defense Cooperation (ODC), etc. Excluded from this usage is the Defense Attache Office, even when these activities are authorized to engage in security assistance management functions.
2. Hammond, Paul Y., Louscher, David I., and Salomon, Michael D., "Growing Dilemmas for the Management of Arms Sales." Armed Forces and Society, (Fall, 1979), p. 3.
3. Tennison, Debbie C., "Dead End for the MAAGs," National Defense, (March-April 1977).
4. Hammond, et al, "Growing Dilemma," p. 12.
5. Tennison, "Dead End for MAAGs," p. 375.
6. Ibid, p. 375.
7. Message from an ODC, September 1980.
8. Brown, Harold, Secretary of Defense, "State and Regional Analysis," Address to Committee on Foreign Affairs (19 February 1980).
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Graves, Ernest, Lieutenant General, USA, Director, Defense Security Assistance Agency, Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs (27 February 1980).

12. Joint Chiefs of Staff, "United States Military Posture for FY 1981,"
A supplement to the Chairmen's overview.

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THE AUTHOR

Colonel Ronald A. Shackleton, USA, has been the Deputy Commandant of DISAM since its inception in 1977. He received a MS in International Affairs from George Washington University and is a graduate of the National War College. As the Deputy Commandant, he has travelled extensively to maintain an effective liaison with our overseas security assistance activities. He is the author of "Village Defense: Initial Special Forces Operations in Vietnam," (Phoenix Press, 1975).