

The FY 1987 Security Assistance Request

By

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[The following is a statement by Admiral Crowe before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Washington, D.C., on 19 February 1986.]

I welcome an opportunity to testify on behalf of the Fiscal Year 1987 security assistance request presented to you by the Administration.

This submission marks 40 years of steady and successful reliance upon the security assistance program to further the cause of international peace and security. With reference to postwar efforts by the Soviet Union to subvert Greece and Turkey, President Truman declared in 1947:

I believe that it must be the foreign policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure. The free people of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedom. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world, and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our nation.

Another factor was uppermost in the minds of the U.S. Congress when it endorsed the Truman Doctrine and expanded it with the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949. In the four years following World War II, the U.S. had spent billions of dollars on refugee relief and rehabilitation, in part, for people unwilling or unable to live under a communist system imposed upon them. We were confronted with a choice of helping people defend themselves, financing a massive exodus from Europe and Asia, or simply turning our back on the problem. We made the right choice on moral and strategic grounds.

Over the years, U.S. security assistance has had an impressive track record of putting itself out of business as a grant aid program. Many former recipients are now themselves major donors of economic and military assistance to the Third World. Others have shifted gradually from a heavy reliance upon grant aid to the Foreign Military Sales Credit program. At the same time, however, we see a whole family of nations in Africa and Latin America becoming more dependent upon external assistance to maintain their independence and territorial integrity. These emergent requirements are related to severe economic problems, some of which may take years to solve, and a persistent military threat from such Soviet surrogates as Libya, Ethiopia, Cuba, and Nicaragua. In the foreground, we also see a reappearance of the refugee and rehabilitation problem, notably out of Afghanistan, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Nicaragua. You will find in this year's submission \$20 million to help refugees from two of these countries [i.e., Afghanistan and Cambodia].

STRATEGIC DIMENSIONS

Beyond humanitarian considerations, there are sound strategic reasons for funding a security assistance program adequate to meet the needs of our friends and allies.

The program supports a forward defense of the United States and collective security arrangements to enhance our national security in cooperation with other nations equally concerned

about and often more directly exposed to the Soviet threat. We have a strong self-interest in helping our allies defend themselves, particularly when they are situated on the front lines and apt to be the first to fight. In all of this, our principal goals are peace, stability, and freedom.

The program further underwrites our long-term interest in access to raw materials and a daily dependence upon such strategic waterways as the Malacca, Hormuz, and Gibraltar Straits and the Suez and Panama Canals. We are far more intertwined with a global economy than we have been at any point in our history. Further, we know from experience as well as simple calculations that closure of a major waterway can cause massive economic dislocations and severely impair our capability to project and sustain U.S. power overseas.

Over the years, this program also has helped us contain and defuse longstanding and often bitter regional conflicts which otherwise could have taken thousands of lives, invoked a U.S. security commitment, and destabilized entire regions. While we do not have a perfect record of success, I still credit the program with pushing a number of nations toward a peaceful resolution of their differences. Throughout, our goal has been a simple but effective one: "make the fight not worth the candle."

One of the most important spin-offs from the security assistance program often is overlooked or taken for granted. The U.S. policy of supporting those striving to build free and functioning societies has enabled a number of nations to reject the heavy hand of Moscow and move back into the Western fold with confidence that their security would not be critically impaired. Our military calculations and our force requirements are far different today than they were two decades ago when China, Indonesia, and Egypt saw their future in alliance with the Soviet Union.

In essence, when you stand back and look at the security assistance program over time and in a broad context, you find that it is an essential pillar of U.S. strategy. I urge you to bear this in mind as you review individual country requirements and the cost of various program elements.

THE MILITARY FRAMEWORK

Next, a few words about how this program fits into the military framework.

I already have mentioned the importance of helping countries who have the will and the manpower but not the means to defend themselves. Translated into military principles, it is a simple fact that local forces, well-trained and equipped, can be far more effective in deterring military threats than a large U.S. force deployed to the scene of action too late to influence the course of events. We learned that lesson the hard way in the years preceding World War II and in 1950 when North Korea invaded the South. We are now applying that lesson to most countries receiving U.S. security assistance.

At the same time, this assistance enables our Unified Commanders to take into account the military planning process of other nations as they prepare a collective defense of their theaters and to do so in peacetime rather than when confronted with an act of aggression. Forty years ago, the Joint Chiefs of Staff counted this combined defense planning function as one of the most important reasons for having a security assistance program. They still do.

The Military Assistance Program also dovetails with and continues to support requirements for overseas base rights, often near those strategic waterways I referred to earlier. Without these bases, we simply could not reach or cover some areas of the world with our strategic airlift, tactical fighter wings, and seaborne units. In the alternative, we would have to develop a much larger sealift and underway replenishment capacity than we have available today. Some of these bases are critical to the "readiness" of our forward deployed forces. Between the Arabian Sea and the Continental United States, for example, the base at Subic Bay is the only one where we can off-

load aircraft directly from a carrier onto an air station for purposes of major repairs or shorebased training. Rota, Spain has similar characteristics in that broad expanse between Norfolk and the Eastern Mediterranean. As the Soviet Union acquires and deploys more carriers into distant areas, I can almost guarantee that they will be looking for facilities with such capabilities.

Lastly, the International Military Education and Training Program brings hundreds of foreign military personnel to the United States each year for the purpose of acquiring professional and technical skills. Over the years, thousands of foreign leaders have undergone training at senior U.S. military schools during their military careers. For example, nearly one-third of the foreign graduates of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College have attained general or flag rank. Coincidentally, the IMET program enables foreign military personnel to witness firsthand the constitutional principles upon which our nation is founded, the liberties we enjoy, and the dynamics of our free market society. It is no accident that most military establishments in the world have enormous respect for the American people and the American model. I have heard some very different impressions from people exposed to the Soviet model.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

I will not dwell unduly upon the many factors considered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff when analyzing and assessing security assistance requirements. However, I would like to comment briefly on our total force planning process and how such assistance fits into the process.

The common denominator is a Soviet threat with global dimensions. On and around the Eurasian Continent, Soviet armed forces continue to enjoy a significant numerical superiority over U.S. and allied forces. We count heavily upon quality equipment and the synergistic effect of collective security arrangements to offset that numerical advantage. We now see that qualitative edge gradually eroding as a result of the sheer momentum of Soviet force modernization and their heavy investment in research and development. In addition, we see a dramatic surge in Soviet arms transfers to the Third World, clustered around less than a dozen nations closely aligned with Soviet policies and extremely hostile to Western governments and people. The aim is to fracture the free world's unity. In this situation, Soviet surrogates are becoming both the military powerhouses and the troublemakers of Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In sum, the day has passed when we can think of the Southern Hemisphere as a quiet backwater where national security requirements can be met with one or two air transports, a brace of coastal patrol craft, and a few unarmed or lightly armed vehicles.

Given a global challenge, this year's program continues to provide substantial assistance to allies, such as Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, and South Korea which are highly exposed to an assault by Soviet or Soviet-allied ground forces. We also want these allies to maintain a strong air defense posture for themselves and as a buffer between Soviet air power and allied sea lines of communication in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, and Western Pacific. Without this buffer, we would have less warning time and less capability to fend off maritime strike aircraft launched from the USSR. Additionally, we count heavily upon Turkey to control its Straits and upon South Korea to defend one flank of the Tsushima Strait.

In the Middle East, our approach to security assistance considers, more than any other factor, the current and evolving balance of forces. On the one hand, we want the armed forces of Israel and Egypt to feel comfortable with the Camp David peace process and our security assistance commitments within this process. On the other hand, we see a continuing requirement for moderate Arab states to arm themselves adequately against more radical forces in the area. Our military calculations simply cannot ignore a heavy and continuing infusion of Soviet tanks, missiles, and combat aircraft into such countries as Libya, Syria, South Yemen, and Ethiopia. Coupled with a permanent Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Aden, this threat poses a significant challenge to the armed forces of Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan, and

North Yemen. Additionally, we must continue to watch developments in the six-year war between Iraq and Iran, and valid FMS requirements which may emerge from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States. It is especially important today that we maintain a flexible and open mind toward such requirements.

Lastly, we are trying to develop the most cost-effective way possible to deal with insurgencies and low-intensity warfare directed against friends and allies in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central America. As my earlier quotation of The Truman Doctrine suggests, this is not a new challenge. But the sheer tempo of Soviet involvement in such conflicts has increased dramatically in recent years--essentially since 1977 when a change in their constitution firmly committed the Soviet Government to support "wars of national liberation."

While I haven't seen it described as such, our national approach to this Third World problem has many characteristics of a mini-Marshall Plan, involving multilateral efforts to ease financial burdens, to deliver emergency food supplies, to stimulate economic recovery through trade and aid, and to transfer such military equipment as may be required to give these countries a fighting chance to maintain their independence and territorial integrity. In this regard, the Joint Chiefs of Staff see no merit in trying to match Soviet arms transfers on a weapon-per-weapon basis. They do believe that a steady and reliable application of various forms of assistance, along the lines I have just described, is paying off handsomely, as in El Salvador, and will continue to do so over the long haul. In fact, there are few investments which will pay as high a long range return.

FY 1987 SECURITY ASSISTANCE REQUEST

Given the nature of demands placed upon U.S. and allied forces, the Joint Chiefs of Staff strongly support this year's request for \$10.7 billion in security assistance funding. The military side of this program (\$6.8 billion) has several qualities which we specifically endorse.

It provides additional funding, above the Fiscal Year 1986 sequester, to continue the modernization necessary to keep our collective deterrent posture credible in Europe and Asia; to support our commitments to international peace and security; and hopefully to contain the further expansion of heavily armed Soviet proxies in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The program increases military funding for Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Turkey with a view toward a necessary strengthening of NATO's Southern Flank--currently NATO's most vulnerable front.

It also increases military assistance for the smaller programs in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. The vast majority of funds there still go to Egypt and Israel, for which we are not proposing increases this year after large increases last year. I consider this emphasis prudent and timely, given the military buildup in Libya and improvements in the posture of Syria vis-a-vis Israel and Jordan.

Additionally, the basic security of Pakistan continues to be threatened by the loss of Afghanistan as a traditional buffer state between that country and the Soviet Union and the very sophisticated combat forces deployed by the USSR into Afghanistan. Never has Pakistan been placed in a more difficult strategic position. Thus, I urge your support of the 1987 security assistance program for Pakistan.

The FY 1987 security assistance program continues funding for Western Hemisphere defenses, with particular emphasis on grant military aid for Caribbean and Central American countries. Increases are mostly on the economic side. Unlike the Soviet Union, which is funneling a vast amount of military equipment into two countries (Cuba and Nicaragua), our program is distributed among about 16 nations exposed to this threat and situated near southern

approaches to the United States. It is an investment we must make on behalf of our own security and in the interest of those countries which are putting down democratic roots, e.g., El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Cost Rica. These countries have made exceptional progress over the last few years under trying circumstances, but they still need military assistance to stem the pressure from Nicaragua and Cuba, and economic assistance while those roots take firm hold. Our modest security assistance investment has proved well spent.

For Africa, the program remains very small (\$201.6 million), compared with recent Soviet arms transfers to the region and assistance provided by our Western European allies. As in the Western Hemisphere, we also are spreading our military assistance program relatively thin--among some 15 nations for which we are requesting grant military aid ranging from \$1 million to \$50 million. The largest amount goes to Sudan, geographically caught between Libya and Ethiopia. It is extremely important that these Soviet clients not be in a position to pressure Sudan, which is coping with insurgency to the south and is trying to establish a democratic government.

This year's emphasis on Africa also takes into account widespread famine, ballooning debts, intractable civil wars, and a period of instability that may significantly expand Soviet opportunities on the continent. The severe austerities ahead for most African states will dilute the popularity of central governments and exacerbate the centrifugal forces of tribalism and ideology. In the long-run, political stability will only improve with better economic conditions. We must ease the defense burden of some of these states, especially those threatened by Libya, if they are to be able to establish economic growth in a secure environment.

In the Pacific and East Asia region, the FY 1987 military assistance program request emphasizes FMS credits for the relatively prosperous countries. In this regard, I urge this committee to approve the programs for South Korea and Thailand, both of whom are still confronted with severe threats on their borders. It is unnecessary to dwell on the security situation on the Korean Peninsula; you are all familiar with it. The threat from the north remains alive and ominous. Despite some recent encouraging gestures, Pyongyang continues to strengthen its forces and to redeploy them in a disturbing manner--accompanied by constant verbal threats. The next few years are crucial as Seoul hosts the Asia games in 1986 and the Olympics in 1988.

Thailand is literally a front line state as it confronts constant Vietnamese pressure on the Cambodian border. Bangkok's generous refugee policy is an example for the world. Certainly, the Thai leaders deserve our continued support as they confront the next few years of uncertainty.

The US-Chinese relationship continues to improve. Although there are fundamental differences between our two countries, we have in common a strong desire to prevent Soviet expansion in the region. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe this nation can better ensure stability in the region by helping the defensive capabilities of the PLA through FMS cash sales and the transfer of appropriate production technology.

SPECIAL INTEREST COUNTRIES

At this point, I would like to comment on two countries of special interest to this Committee: Jordan and the Philippines.

I am aware that new sales for Jordan are "on hold." But I still want to state for the record my impression of that country's importance. Like every other nation in the Middle East, Jordan must concern itself not only with its territorial integrity but also the security of its capitol city of Amman: how fast and with what warning enemy aircraft could reach the capitol; what sort of defense stands in the way of a surprise attack; and how an attack would affect the functions of government. It is a classical military problem which the armed forces of Jordan must solve. The Kingdom also is in a political bind. From the U.S., they hear that they must have "peace before arms." From other

quarters, they and we hear that Jordan pursues peace with Israel only at its own peril. Overall, King Hussein has exhibited considerable courage supporting the peace process as he has threaded the shoals of Middle Eastern politics. But nothing can relieve him of the responsibility for keeping his defenses strong. We ignore that reality at the peril of the peace process.

I am also aware that we are at a political watershed in our relations with the Philippine Government. Recent events have even further muddied an already confused picture. Our government is already faced with difficult choices. I would say that decisions regarding the Philippines should be made in terms of what's best for the Philippine people as a whole--that should be the first consideration. Simultaneously, it is important to remember that no matter what government is in power, there are possible risks in curtailing our security assistance program; risks that the country as a whole will not receive the economic support it needs, and risks that the Philippine Armed Forces will have to confront the insurgency problem from a position of sagging military strength and morale. Only the Philippine Armed Forces have a reasonable chance of maintaining the internal cohesion of that nation of islands. We should not do it for them. We can, however, provide some of the guidance, training, and equipment they need to do it by themselves. As you confront this most difficult question, I urge you to look not at just a portion of the problem, but at the whole picture. I do not envy you your task.

PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY

On a different note, I want to thank this Committee for injecting more flexibility into the security assistance program for Latin America. I am referring specifically to recent legislative amendments which:

- Allow us to provide military assistance to police establishments in small countries which have neither a requirement nor the means to maintain a standing army or air force--and allow us to provide such assistance in El Salvador and Honduras if certain conditions are met;
- Permit us to train foreign coast guards in maritime law enforcement; and
- Remove the restriction on arming aircraft used by countries to monitor and interdict the traffic in drugs.

These measures have been most supportive of U.S. efforts to enhance the security of countries in the Caribbean and Central America and to cut off the transshipment of drugs into our country. In a similar vein, it is important that we keep our security assistance options open for the Andean Ridge countries--Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. The ridge is where much of the trafficking of cocaine originates, and it also is an extremely difficult environment in which to mount and sustain a drug interdiction effort. In an orchestrated, multilateral approach to this problem, we need to keep in mind the unique equipment requirements--short take-off and landing air transports, engineer battalion materials, and high altitude helicopters--as well as the political, legal, and economic aspects.

Additionally, I urge your support of proposals by the Administration to provide IMET programs for the officer and enlisted personnel of Brazil and Argentina. We do not further the cause of nuclear non-proliferation by restricting our military training relationships.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the U.S. security assistance program as a whole--economic support, foreign military sales credits, grant military aid, and grant military education and training--is one of the most effective and successful ventures ever undertaken by the U.S. Government. I attribute this

success to three program characteristics consistently supported by the U.S. Congress: adequacy, reliability, and flexibility.

On the military side, I cannot emphasize too strongly that this program is part and parcel of our total force planning process. Everything we do--or do not do--under this program ultimately has an impact on our collective capabilities to deter conflicts and acts of aggression and, ultimately, determines whether the vast majority of nations in the world will continue to live, as they do today, in peace and stability.

With respect to the Fiscal Year 1987 submission, a proposed funding increase of about one billion dollars for military programs is driven by three fundamental facts of life: a global and very persistent threat from the Soviet Union and its surrogates; equally persistent financial and economic problems confronting large and small nations alike, especially in the Southern Hemisphere; and in much of Latin America a convergence of interests between drug traffickers and insurgents. In some countries, they are better financed and better equipped than government security forces. Given this spectrum of challenges to international peace and stability--and the welfare of our nation--I join the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in strongly supporting the President's security assistance program and his budget request.