
Summary of the Task Force Report on Foreign Assistance

Committee on Foreign Affairs U.S. House of Representatives

[The following is an extract from a report prepared by a special Congressional task force which recently completed its review of U.S. foreign assistance programs and activities. Many of the recommendations included in this report are expected to be introduced during the current session of Congress as proposed legislative changes. The full report may be obtained from the U.S. Government Printing Office under the title, *Report of the Task Force on Foreign Assistance to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives*, February, 1989, 101st Congress, 1st Session, No. 93-740.]

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the second session of the 100th Congress, Chairman Dante B. Fascell [Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives] established a task force to conduct a review of U.S. foreign assistance programs and activities. The task force was chaired by Representatives [Lee H.] Hamilton [D-IN], and [Benjamin A.] Gilman [R-NY], with all Members of the Committee invited to participate in the review, which included extensive meetings with executive branch officials and non-governmental experts. The process also included a review of pertinent studies and reports and written submissions requested by the task force.

The following is a summary of the principal findings and recommendations of the task force:

FINDINGS

The task force concluded that foreign assistance is vital to promoting U.S. foreign policy and domestic interests, but that the program is hamstrung by too many conflicting objectives, legislative conditions, earmarks, and bureaucratic red tape.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

The Committee should consider the:

- Enactment of a new international economic cooperation act to replace the existing Foreign Assistance Act and sundry amendments thereto;
- Creation of a restructured foreign aid implementing agency to replace AID;
- Identification of four principal objectives (economic growth, environmental sustainability, poverty alleviation, and democratic and economic pluralism);
- Provision of greater flexibility in the implementation of assistance programs;
- Provision of more effective accountability focused on results rather than on allocations alone;
- Improving coordination with other U.S. international economic policies, with other donors, and within country programs.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE

The Committee should consider the:

- Separation of the grant and concessional military assistance [authorities] from cash sales authorities;
- Creation of a new defense trade and export control act to replace the Arms Export Control Act;
- Establishment of one military assistance account;
- Provision of more effective accountability, again focused on results;
- Phasing out over a five year period of military assistance [to base rights countries] as a quid pro quo for base access rights.

[The following additional military assistance recommendations, though not included in the summary of the Task Force Report, are extracted from the body of the Report.]

- Clarify the goals of the Military Aid Program.
- Reduce, if not eliminate [Congressional] earmarking [of military assistance funds].
- Replace small military aid programs in individual countries with an unearmarked regional contingency fund.
- Create a separate [budget] line item for police training.
- Encourage aid graduation [by recipient countries from FMS concessional/credit programs to cash sales programs].
- Examine alternative funding [such as Export-Import Bank financing, private credit markets, and a blending of government and commercial credit].
- Coordinate military assistance with other foreign policy programs.