
U.S. Military Assistance in the 90's

by

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[The following is a reprint of a statement presented by Mr. Rowen in testimony before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee in Washington, DC, on June 22, 1990.]

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your invitation to testify on the subject of military assistance in the 90's. In the interest of time, I will speak briefly on the political and military environment in the world, and will introduce General Brown of the Defense Security Assistance Agency who will address the issues in greater detail.

In the last 12 months, we have seen a lot of changes around the world, especially in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Most of these changes are good, some spectacularly so. The political character of Eastern Europe has moved toward more democratic forms. Militarily, the Warsaw Pact is effectively finished. Economically, these countries are pushing hard to become market-oriented economies. Elsewhere, the Soviets withdrew troops from Afghanistan, cut forces along the Sino-Soviet border, and removed aircraft from Cam Ranh Bay. The Cubans are coming out of Angola. In Latin America, the Sandinistas lost the election in Nicaragua; Noriega is awaiting trial in the U.S.; and there were free and fair elections in quite a few countries. That's the good news.

However, today's world in transition is full of uncertainties and potential for instabilities. No one knows what will happen in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union remains a formidable military power with thousands of nuclear warheads—many are targeted at the U.S. In East Asia, Soviet military power is little changed. North Korea continues to be a threat to the South and is now engaged in its own nuclear program. In Southwest Asia, the tension between India and Pakistan, and between Iran and Iraq, threatens regional stability. Tensions there threaten our increased need for Persian Gulf oil. In the Middle East, the relationship between Israel and the Arab states is an on-going concern. In Central America, the economies are weak, the democracies are fragile, and the narcotics trade is getting more violent.

Another major concern to us is the proliferation of advanced weapons including nuclear, chemical, biological, and missile weaponry. Many Third World nations now have these technologies and have used some of them against each other, as evidenced in the Iran-Iraq war.

THE ROLE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE

As we attempt to manage what we hope to be a transition to a more stable peaceful world, military assistance plays many roles; however, I can sum up the benefits we receive from our military assistance program in three words: *Access*, *Presence*, and *Influence*. These benefits have served our national interests very well in the last four decades. We are now reaping benefits from having stayed the course. Moreover, if—as we all hope—the Soviet Union turns into a model pluralistic democracy, our needs for security assistance will remain because most have little to do with the Soviet Union. In that optimistic picture, our interests in Arab-Israel relations, including

the peace process, will remain; so will our interest in access to Persian Gulf oil; so will our stake in stability in East Asia; so will our interest in consolidating the future of democracy in Central America and fighting the drug war in the Andean region.

Nevertheless, I believe that we need to rethink our basic rationales for military aid in this rapidly changing environment. This process has started both here on Capitol Hill and in the Executive branch. Should we deeply cut our military aid at this point? No. I have outlined the uncertainties and dangers that affect our security interests around the world. We also have ongoing programs with recipient countries; we must keep the commitments made to our friends when we needed their help most.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, during this period of shrinking budgets, we don't expect a real increase in funding; we are merely asking for flexibility and continuity. As we are making a transition to a new era, it is important that we make it an orderly one.

Now, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly commend the next witness, General Brown, for the outstanding leadership he has provided to the Defense Security Assistance Agency. General Brown will retire later on this summer and we will miss him. Thank you.