
Security Assistance: An Applicable Strategy for the 1990s?

By

Philip C. Rusciollelli

[Editor's note: The following is a reprint of a chapter from a forthcoming book entitled, *Can America Remain Committed: U.S. Security Horizons in the 1990s*; David Haglund, Editor, Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1992.]

INTRODUCTION

An important security issue confronting America and its allies during the 1990s will be weapons proliferation. The Gulf Crisis (and subsequent War) revealed the extent to which arms transfers can be destabilizing, certainly in a region like the Middle East. Yet for the United States (and some allies), there is a paradox. On the one hand, they have arms transfer interests and policies that can be argued to contribute to the proliferation problem; such a charge has been made regarding the subject of this chapter, the U.S. security assistance program, and the arms transfers it involves. This program, which in 1992 is projected to cost \$8 billion (down from \$8.5 billion in 1991), includes foreign military financing (FMF), economic support funding (ESF), international military education and training (IMET), and peacekeeping operations (PKO).¹ On the other hand, the provision of security assistance to friendly foreign countries and allies can help both to deter aggression and to improve those countries' defensive capabilities against external threats, and thus, in this context, may be linked to the furtherance of regional stability and international peace.

What makes this program so important to America's security commitments is the realization that, in the future, the U.S. certainly will be unable to mobilize and deploy massed forces on the scale of those of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The changes in world politics brought on first by the end of the Cold War, and then almost immediately by the Gulf War, pose a set of complex challenges for this American foreign policy tool. Perhaps the most compelling argument for the continuation of the security assistance program is to be found in the widening of the U.S. "commitment/capability gap," effected in large measure by the ongoing reductions in U.S. forces after the Cold War, and compounded by an international resurgence of civil turmoil caused often by anxieties about national sovereignty. If the ending of the Cold War dictates a reduction in U.S. forces, the apparent increase in non-"East-West" strife might require the U.S. to seek to provide more security to its friends and allies, by allowing them to maintain their own defensive capabilities. Security assistance has the potential to address the latter problem, by furnishing a method for sustaining close international ties and providing the means to enhance stability for emerging national entities.

Security assistance has been an essential element of America's foreign policy and military strategy for two generations. As described in a recent *Congressional Presentation Document* (CPD), jointly prepared by the Departments of State (DoS) and Defense (DoD), security assistance programs have involved the United States in various ways with the militaries of friendly and allied countries. In addition to regulating arms transfers, the current program provides Congressionally appropriated assistance in the following categories: FMF, which today has mainly been reduced to a grant aid program to assist in acquiring defense articles and services (including training); ESF,

¹Department of State and the Defense Security Assistance Agency, *Congressional Presentation for Security Assistance Programs, Fiscal Year 1992* (Washington: Department of Defense, 1991), p. 1.

which provides an all-grant program to promote economic reform and development; IMET, which furnishes professional military education and technical skills under grant aid; and PKO, which finances U.S. contributions to the United Nations Force in Cyprus and to the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai.² Other U.S. foreign aid includes Bilateral and Multilateral Development Assistance, the Food for Peace Program (PL-480), and contributions to the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBS) and to international organizations.

Because security assistance had its origins and initial rationale in the Cold War environment, its relevance may now be questionable. Recent dramatic changes in international security suggest to the Congress and its constituents that security assistance may have little or no utility in the New World Order.³ Security assistance might equally be regarded as an efficient alternative to the actual use of an ever-decreasing American military force, as well as a means of promoting important national and international policy aims, including the preservation of U.S. national independence and the protection of the vital interests of allies. As a result of the Cold War, however, many Americans have come to perceive security assistance, because of its arms transfer element, as a source of international instability, not as a means of prevention. Nor does it help matters that the program is often seen by those same people as being primarily driven by political and economic factors instead of security objectives.

In what follows, I will focus on the arms transfer element of security assistance, and in so doing, will provide an historical as well as a contemporary policy perspective. As such, I will be chiefly interested in the utility of security assistance for the furtherance of major U.S. foreign policy and security interests. I will be mindful of what might be called the "political-military structure" within which the program operates, for it is clear that the domestic and international political environments are such as to require a seemingly endless process of adjustments and accommodations in policy, at the "tactical if not the strategic level." My overall objective is to answer this simple question: Does security assistance have a future? In moving toward this answer, I assume the post-Cold War period will not be a threat-free era; indeed, I highlight the likely rise in new sources of international instability. I conclude that the security assistance program should be retained, subject to several important domestic and international considerations, which I will indicate.

SECURITY ASSISTANCE: A RELIC OF THE COLD WAR?

It could be argued that American security assistance is a vestige of the Cold War era and should be abandoned. In making such a claim, however, one tends to run the risk of committing a category error. That is, one fails to see that what is taken to be a context- and time-bound program is really a more broadly based phenomenon, since beyond the U.S.' security objectives of preserving national independence, there is the extended purpose of safeguarding the interests of allies. These national objectives have been pursued through the security assistance program by, *inter alia*, enhancing the ability of allies to deter aggression; promoting regional stability; securing access to bases and facilities; strengthening key economically depressed countries; and providing

²Ibid., p. 3. Security assistance is defined by the U.S. Department of Defense, The Joint Chiefs of Staff PUB I. *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1 June 1987), p. 327, as "that group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense related services, by grant, credit, or cash sales, in furtherance of national policies and objectives."

³Richard A. Clark, "The Changing Nature of U.S. Military Assistance," *The DISAM Journal* 13/1 (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Ohio: Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management[DISAM], 1990), pp. 8-9.

support to emerging democracies.⁴ The analysis of security assistance in the following historical sections will emphasize the difficulty that a program based on such lofty ideals can sometimes encounter, as it tries to meet expectations and deliver satisfaction in a rapidly changing world environment. As will be argued, the program, which was essentially developed to satisfy both the American ideology for democratization and stabilization through deterrence in Western Europe, has suffered a fundamental change in purpose due to a diminishing threat and a basic flaw in application.

Military assistance and arms transfers have a lengthy history of being integral to foreign relations and national security. It might even be argued that the roots of security assistance can be traced back to Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The subject of arms transfers and military assistance is as controversial today as it was when Aristophanes objected to the armament industry's threat to the peace of Greece.⁵

American history provides many instances of military assistance, from both the recipient's and donor's perspective. For instance, during the Revolutionary War, French arms suppliers were perhaps indispensable in maintaining the colonists' momentum in the early stages, during 1776 and 1777. During the Civil War, arms were a prominent aspect of the unindustrialized South's imports, something not lost upon the North, when it launched its blockade of Southern ports. From 1914 to 1917, a period of American neutrality, the U.S. became a major supplier of armaments to the Allies—to such an extent that the issue later arose as to whether arms merchants had not jeopardized America's very capability to distance itself from the European war. In 1934, the Nye Commission, a senatorial committee set up to investigate this question, recommended tighter regulation in both the manufacturing and the transferring of arms.⁶

In the early phase of the Second World War, U.S. military assistance for British efforts was organized through the destroyers-for-bases exchange, done with Britain in September 1940, and the Lend-Lease arrangements of the following years (also extended to other allies). In channeling aid to Britain in 1940, the administration had to circumvent federal neutrality legislation that prevented or impeded such activities. In the case of the destroyers-for-bases exchange, this was achieved by the administration's certifying that the World War I-era ships were less essential to national security than were the basing rights, a stratagem that would set the tone for subsequent executive-legislative interaction, and one that would continue to characterize the politics of security assistance.⁷

Since the end of World War II, U.S. security assistance has undergone an enormous set of changes, although it has continually been steeped in, and possibly sold by dint of, anti-Soviet rhetoric. The first architects of containment envisioned checking the spread of Soviet expansionism in Western Europe by reliance almost exclusively on economic and financial aid. Indeed, it was a major concern of Washington and the Europeans that an emphasis on rearmament would delay the recovery of Europe; thus in the early postwar years, military assistance was regarded as potentially replacing economic aid as the first priority for Western European economic

⁴H. Allen Holmes, "Testimony to Subcommittee on Arms Control, International Security and Science of the House Foreign Affairs Committee," 8 March 1989.

⁵Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Assistance* (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Ohio, 1990), pp. 1-9.

⁶Geoffrey Kemp, "The Arms Trade Phenomenon," in *Arms Transfers and American Foreign Policy*, ed. Andrew J. Pierre (New York: New York University Press, 1979), pp. 16-19.

⁷Paul Y. Harnmond et al., *The Reluctant Supplier: U.S. Decision Making for Arms Sales* (Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1983), p. 3.

revival.⁸ Soviet expansionism soon led to a sweeping reassessment of the merits of security assistance, both to Europeans and to other American “friends and allies” the world over. To understand this reassessment and to comprehend the current status of the program, it is necessary to have some insight into the exigencies of the domestic political process in the United States. As well, it is important to review the major international developments that have led to the enhanced prominence of security assistance over the past decades. Such an exercise should make it clear that security assistance, far from being a relic of the Cold War, is a policy tool with continuing relevance to U.S. security interests.

THE EVOLUTION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE: THE EARLY YEARS

President Harry S Truman quickly discovered after 1945 that winning a war did not mean a world at peace. Confronted with the fact of increasing Soviet domination of Eastern European countries, Truman reacted to the real prospect of Soviet political and even territorial gains in Turkey and in Greece by enunciating what would soon develop into a full-blown policy of “containment,” one seeking to counter Soviet expansion anywhere, with whatever means were required.⁹ This policy depended upon both economic and (eventually) military assistance, the latter often in the form of collective defense or alliances. In putting this policy before Congress, Truman indicated that he hoped non-military assistance would be sufficient: “I believe,” he said, “that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly process.”¹⁰

The continued spread of Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe, however, convinced the Truman administration that economic assistance alone could not contain Moscow. In 1948, the United Kingdom, France, and the Benelux countries signed a collective defense treaty, known as the Brussels Pact, the precursor of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which in 1949 would become the military corollary of the Marshall Plan with its economic focus.¹¹ What dollars were for the latter, military assistance would be for the former. The Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, the instrument that provided military aid to NATO and other countries, thus marked the beginning of a new era in security assistance. However, the program designed to counter the bold attack on democratic values and international stability in Western Europe was quickly replicated in other regions where, although instability was prominent, the basics of democracy were not. The “globalization” of security assistance to counter Soviet expansionism manifested itself in U.S. involvement in the Korean War, as well as through Washington's energies directed at the formation of a series of collective-defense agreements during the 1950s.¹²

⁸John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 73.

⁹Ibid, p. 22.

¹⁰President Harry S. Truman, 12 March 1947 speech to Congress (Washington: Truman Presidential Papers, 1947), p. 179.

¹¹Of course, Secretary of State Marshall, in putting his plan to Congress, stressed that it was needed to save Europe from communism.

¹²Richard F. Grimmett, “The Role of Security Assistance in Historical Perspective”, ed. Ernest Craves and Steven A. Hildreth, *U.S. Security Assistance: The Political Process* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1973), pp. 1-14. For each instance where security assistance has been effective, such as Korea, there have been cases (e.g., Vietnam, Iran) where no amount of security assistance could have secured national objectives.

In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower, Republican presidential candidate, proposed boldly to transcend containment.¹³ In his inaugural address the following January, Eisenhower stated that there was "no free nation too humble to be forgotten."¹⁴ However, this assuredly did not mean that there was no price too large to be paid for defending others. Eisenhower did not believe in massive defense spending, and instead proposed a "New Look," in which there would be a great reliance on the nuclear strategy of "massive retaliation," accompanied by limited use of military ground forces only in those areas of vital U.S. interests, namely Europe and Japan.¹⁵ Elsewhere, as John Foster Dulles explained to the Senate, it was expected that protection against aggressors could be met with bombs not ground forces.¹⁶ Thus was established a principle that continued to characterize American security assistance: the idea that U.S. technology would, ideally, substitute for the country's military forces.

A more flexible understanding of the term *allies*, would characterize many of the treaties initiated in the Asia/Pacific region by Eisenhower and Dulles, just as it had previously characterized treaties negotiated by the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations with Western hemisphere states, banded together in the Rio Pact. In like fashion, the very idea of security assistance also tended to take on broader dimensions, and soon terms such as internal security, counter-insurgency, civic action, and nation building became staples of the containment lexicon.¹⁷ Nor were concepts the only things to expand: funding levels for security assistance grew apace. From a one-sixth share of the foreign aid budget in the years 1949 to 1953, military grant aid funds would swell to more than half of the foreign aid appropriations during the Eisenhower budgets of 1953 to 1961.¹⁸ This latter expansion did not go unnoticed by Congress.

The administration of John F. Kennedy inherited not just Eisenhower's restrictive option of nuclear "massive retaliation"; it also was bequeathed the growing Congressional yearning for greater oversight of foreign aid programs. In his first State of the Union address, President Kennedy sought to defuse this yearning by impressing upon the nation that freedom was under attack everywhere: "Each day the crises multiply Each day we draw nearer the hour of maximum danger The tide of events has been running out and time has not been our friend."¹⁹ Kennedy thereupon proceeded with what was hitherto the largest arms buildup in modern U.S. peacetime history (in absolute terms), increasing the defense budgets by nearly fifty percent in his first two years in office. His objective was to gain some "flexible response" alternative to massive retaliation, primarily by expanding the NATO conventional force deterrent.²⁰

In other areas, Kennedy sought to "support any friend, oppose any foe" by offering whatever security assistance he deemed necessary. To counter the prospect of Castro's revolution (which would receive massive Soviet-bloc support) being exported to other Latin American countries, Kennedy directed considerable amounts of economic and military aid southward.

¹³Stephen E. Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 133.

¹⁴Eisenhower Inaugural Address, 20 January 1953 (Washington: Public Papers of the President: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953), p. 6.

¹⁵Donald M. Snow, *National Security: Enduring Problems of U.S. Defense Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), pp. 52-54.

¹⁶Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, p. 145.

¹⁷Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Assistance*, pp. 1-17.

¹⁸Nicholas Eberstadt, *Foreign Aid and American Purpose* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1988), p. 31.

¹⁹Quoted In Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, pp. 182-83.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 186.

However, after a promising beginning, the economic program known as the Alliance for Progress was allowed to languish. Other regions captivated both the Kennedy and Johnson defense planners' thoughts as well. The Middle East resurfaced as an area of major interest because of its critical oil resources. There, the Military Assistance Program (MAP), which had been largely grant funded, took on a very different aspect as some supported countries became more affluent and Foreign Military Sales (FMS), a cash-and-carry type program, became the major method for transferring armaments.²¹ And in Indochina, where the Truman administration had earlier supported the French against communism, Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon would see fit to engage in what would become a protracted conflict that sent a total of 2.5 million U.S. servicemen and women and enormous amounts of military assistance to Vietnam between 1961 and 1973.

THE STRUGGLE WITH CONGRESS OVER SECURITY ASSISTANCE

For Richard Nixon, in particular, Vietnam was a disastrous situation; one he did not create, but had to resolve. At the very onset of his administration, the U.S. troop level there was nearly 550,000.²² The annual amount of military and economic aid being transferred to Southeast Asia was in the billions of dollars, the American public and Congress were becoming extremely disillusioned with the war effort, and the public and Congressional mood called increasingly for more Congressional oversight and legislative control of the security assistance programs. It was in this context that the Foreign Military Sales Act was enacted in 1968, requiring the administration to ensure U.S. foreign policy interests were stressed in all arms sale transactions—this in response to concerns over allegations of a new “merchants of death” thesis. Nixon's own security assistance policy can be glimpsed in his “Guam Doctrine,” in which he stated that the United States “would look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.”²³ The Nixon Administration also activated in 1970 the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA) to better control, coordinate, and administer military assistance worldwide.

Foreign military sales increased rapidly under Nixon, who was less than pleased about the more assertive arms sales review process in Congress. After Watergate, legislators were hardly of a mood to allow the White House a free hand, and responded by further limiting executive powers, amending the 1975 foreign aid authorization bill, so as to require Congressional notification for “any major defense equipment” (MDE), or arms sales of \$7 million or more, “or any defense article or defense service valued . . . at \$25 million or more.” The foreign aid authorization bill of 1981 raised these amounts to \$14 million and \$50 million, respectively.²⁴ President Gerald Ford would further find that efforts to reopen security assistance to Latin America would elicit Congressional resistance both to the lack of program controls and to the administration's inability to verify responsible and/or improved human rights practices within many recipient countries. Moreover, Congress and public opinion, in an era of superpower détente, had difficulty accepting the logic of a foreign aid program that was perceived only to counter the Soviet threat. This was especially important in Latin America, which was affected with a rash of military regimes in the 1970s. The upshot of these trends was a series of Congressional restrictions being attached to security assistance, culminating in 1976 with the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act (AECA), which emphasized “control” in lieu of arms sales, severely cut the

²¹Graves and Hildreth, *U.S. Security Assistance*, p. 22.

²²Richard Nixon, “U S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: The Emerging Structure for Peace” (Washington: Report to Congress by President Nixon, 1972), p. 110.

²³Roger P. Labrie et al., *U.S. Arms Sales Policy: Background and Issues* (Washington: American Institute for Public Policy Research, 1982), pp. 8-9.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

military assistance infrastructure, and withheld assistance from countries with a consistent pattern of gross human rights violations.²⁵

The Carter Administration took a different tack on security assistance from its predecessors. A new emphasis on human rights became a hallmark of President Jimmy Carter's foreign policy, as evidenced in his inaugural address when he stated that the U.S. would "never be indifferent to the fate of freedom elsewhere: our commitment to human rights must be absolute."²⁶ Consistent with this new stress on human rights, the administration was determined that, henceforth, foreign military sales would be used as an *exceptional* means of supporting other governments in meeting their defense needs by themselves. To be sure, this policy did remind some of the Nixon Doctrine, but it also coincided quite well with Carter's own resolve to reduce arms sales.²⁷ In doing so, however, it created some nettlesome contradictions, especially those stemming from the desire to restrict arms flow on the one hand, and on the other, from the desire to use arms transfers to support U.S. friends, allies, and established agreements.

In an effort to satisfy the desire to reduce arms transfers, Carter conducted a review of arms sales policies that eventuated in Presidential Directive 13, unilaterally restraining the U.S. from arms sales, except where necessary for national security. His ability to get other governments, in particular the Soviets, to accept this policy met with less-than-complete success on specific regional issues, and resulted in the subsequent failure of the Conventional Arms Transfer Talks.²⁸ In the cause of promoting human rights, the administration did make large cuts in military and security assistance programs, fearing these would be used for inhumane purposes.²⁹ Yet at the same time, Carter attained his greatest foreign-policy victory by weaving an Egyptian and Israeli peace accord with the costly and controversial thread of security assistance. Ultimately, the contradictions never were resolved, and by the time he left office, Jimmy Carter was seen by public opinion and Congress to have contributed to an overall reduction in the U.S. security posture.³⁰

THE BALANCE BEGINS TO SHIFT

The new administration of Ronald Reagan made the strengthening of U.S. military capability its chief priority as a heightened perception of the Soviet threat after Afghanistan in 1979 caused a return to an explicit containment policy. Defense spending was drastically increased and the foreign aid/human rights policy of the Carter Administration was concomitantly de-emphasized. In addition, Reagan believed that security assistance was neither good nor evil, but that an arms transfer capability was essential to support U.S. foreign and defense policies. In security assistance, Reagan reversed Carter's preference for eschewing arms transfers, establishing instead guidelines for promoting them. The Reagan policy was formally announced in a 21 May 1981 speech by James Buckley, Undersecretary of State for Security Assistance. "Arms transfers, judiciously applied," said Buckley, "can complement and supplement our own defense efforts and serve as a vital and constructive instrument of American foreign policy."³¹ The new security

²⁵Labrie, *U.S. Arms Sales Policy*, p. 10. The new title, "Arms Export Control Act," was adopted in 1978 and it continues to be used.

²⁶ Quoted In Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, pp. p. 294.

²⁷Graves and Hildreth, *U.S. Security Assistance*, p. 75.

²⁸Hammond, *Reluctant Supplier*, pp. 169-77.

²⁹ Eberstadt, *Foreign Aid and American Purpose*, p. 47.

³⁰Graves, *U. S. Security Assistance*, pp. 78-79, and Snow, *National Security*, pp. 67-94.

³¹ Quoted in David Silverberg, "Official: Boost Arms Sales," *Defense News*, 6 November 1989, p. 4.

assistance policy featured revived arms sales to Latin America and China, as well as continuation of support for the enormous security guarantee established by Carter's Camp David Accords.³²

An even larger deviation from the practice of the Carter Administration was a willingness to use force to counter threats to American interests. Although the peacekeeping forces in Lebanon met with disaster, an invasion of Grenada rooted out a rag-tag band of Marxist extremists, backed by Cuba; an air attack on Libya led that state to reassess the utility of fostering terrorism; aid for the Contras in Nicaragua contributed to the Sandinista government's decision to gamble on democratic reforms and free elections; and support for Afghan rebels had a part in the withdrawal of Soviet forces. Ironically perhaps, the most amazing fallout of Reagan's aggressive foreign policy was a renewed openness in U.S. and Soviet relations, accompanied by a startling retreat of communism in Eastern Europe, the latter effected in part by a new Soviet respect for U.S. defense initiatives, such as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

George Bush has maintained the same commitment to aggressive foreign policies as did his predecessor, certainly insofar as security assistance programs are concerned. Reginald Bartholomew, Undersecretary of State for Security Assistance, Science and Technology (now Undersecretary of State for International Security Affairs), stated early on that the Bush administration would continue the Reagan administration's policy of using arms sales as a tool of foreign policy, and would actively support U.S. defense exports if they advanced U.S. interests. Bartholomew did add that the administration was also determined to consult with Congress on politically sensitive arms transfers.³³ As the Bush 1991 foreign aid submission indicated, Congress began to show renewed interest in this policy tool.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, it will not be an easy task for the White House to shape a consensus on the requirements for a continued security assistance program. Nevertheless, the requirements remain; security assistance need not and should not become a casualty of the ending of either the Cold War or the Gulf War.

As I have sought to demonstrate in this brief historical survey, successive administrations have made active use of security assistance as an extension of U.S. foreign policy. Although not universally consistent in theme or application, security assistance was utilized with the aim of furthering national objectives. And while American ideology stresses democratic values, the real benefit of security assistance has been its ability to inject some military means of stabilizing areas vital to national interests, in many cases with little regard for "ideology." Security assistance has been used to support ailing governments, to secure cooperative agreements, to barter for peace accords, and even to advance human-rights objectives. Whatever the specific objectives associated with previous reliance on security assistance programs, they were applied within the context of the long-standing and legitimate U.S. foreign policy objective of fostering a stable, peaceful world conducive to national security, economic prosperity, and individual freedoms. Moreover, although often embedded within a Cold War framework, security assistance is not exclusively linked to Cold War policy.

I will argue, in the remainder of this chapter, that the challenges of the New World Order will continue to summon a need for the security assistance program, but without some major adjustments in its process and structure, the program will be unable to deliver on its promise.

³²Hammond, *Reluctant Supplier*, pp. 78-79.

³³Silverberg, "Official: Boost Arms Sales."

UNILATERALISM, MULTILATERALISM, AND THE DURABILITY OF “THREAT”

If security assistance is to be a coherent instrument of U.S. policy, it must maintain consistence with important national interests. These interests, as stated, include the preservation of a “free and independent nation with its fundamental institutions and values intact,” and are extended to friends and allies in “safeguarding their interests by discouraging aggression.”³⁴ These concerns will obviously prompt some need in the coming decade for policy responses situated somewhere on a continuum ranging from doing nothing, at one pole, to directly using military force and declaring war, at the other. What interests might be served by a constructive use of security assistance during this period? Put alternatively, how might U.S. foreign policies be advanced in a new world order?

It would appear at the outset that the critical threat in this world order is instability arising from radical political and economic reforms and in some measure by new demands for ethnic, religious, and national autonomy and sovereignty. One writer has noted, aptly, that the diminution of East/West rivalry has not ushered forth an era of no, or minimal, threat. By the end of the 1980s, wrote Irving Kristol, “one heard less—and hears less today—about a community of nations living tranquilly under international law, and more of our commitment to the ‘enhancement of democracy’ around the world. As the Cold War has come to an end, this remains the dominant official motif of American foreign policy.”³⁵

The Gulf War, the world’s and America’s first major crisis in the aftermath of the Cold War, has lent urgency to Kristol’s point. The fact is, the Gulf War did not establish democratic values in either Kuwait or Iraq, nor for that matter in Saudi Arabia, but it was testimony of U.S. resolve to provide stability for regional self-determination. No longer can the U.S. shape its security policy by reference to a well-known (and well-worn) code derived from Cold War verities. It may be that the decades-long military threat from the Soviets has markedly declined; it is premature, however, to imagine that the military “threat” *per se* has been banished from international politics. Beyond identifying instability as the threat, one must develop a strategy to counter that threat. Security assistance provides one means of doing this, but only in a selective manner. This means that not all instability is amenable to being managed through arms transfers; in fact, the opposite of stability might very well result from such an inflexible application of policy. For example, while a case can be made in Western Europe and South Korea for judicious security assistance, it is hard to argue against the claim that other methods of diplomacy would have yielded better results, say, in Vietnam or Iran.

America’s diplomatic history has been marked by an abiding lack of patience for the frustrations of foreign policy. The U.S. tendency is to have issues “resolved” quickly, following which the American public seeks shelter from the rigors implicit in living in international anarchy. This is apparent in the lack of willingness of Americans to become the world’s policemen.³⁶ Isolationist yearnings can be identified in the U.S. in the immediate post-Cold War period, something Joshua Muravchik has observed. “The last time America found itself in such an impregnable situation,” he wrote in August 1990, “was in the immediate aftermath of WW I. The Kaiser had been defeated. New democracies were being erected on the ruins of old empires

³⁴Frank Carlucci, “Annual Report to Congress 1990” (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), p. 34.

³⁵Irving Kristol, “Defining Our National Interest,” *National Interest*, no. 21 (Fall 1990), p. 19.

³⁶Flora Lewis, “Policing the World,” *New York Times*, 27 October 1990, p. A27.

Our isolationists succeeded in defeating (Woodrow) Wilson's visionary schemes. Thanks in part to their determined prudence, within 20 years we were fighting for our lives."³⁷

The Gulf War assuredly stimulated the attention of the American sleeping giant, and the question of the moment is whether the powerful hulk will slip back into repose or whether it will assume a more active defense and security posture, commensurate with its renewed respectability as a capable military actor, and its stature as the world's remaining superpower. If it is to be the latter, there arises the further question of whether it pursues its foreign-policy goals through unilateral interventionism, versus some greater reliance on "internationalist" solutions, involving either the United Nations or creative multinational coalition-building (or, as in the Gulf case, both). And if the answer to the further question is that internationalism, not unilateral interventionism, will characterize the country's foreign and security policies in the 1990s, then it would follow that security assistance must remain an important tool for American policy makers. However, there is no guarantee that security assistance will assume greater importance in the 1990s; for even if Washington clearly follows an "internationalist" course, dependent on multilateral diplomacy, it is still possible to envision security assistance being so encumbered by constraints as to lose much of its political effectiveness. These constraints, which can be internal or external, I discuss in the following section.

THE DOMESTIC POLITICS OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE

A major problem facing the security assistance program is the political process itself by which goals and objectives get identified, defended, and, if successfully transformed into "policy," implemented. Of course, security assistance programs are far from being the only programs—whether military or civilian—to be subjected to the pulling and hauling of what Roger Hilsman labels "the political process model."³⁸ That being said, it is arguable at least, that by its very nature, security assistance is subject to more than the "normal" range of domestic political pressures. In this section, I highlight the phenomenon of what I term the "political-military" dimension of security assistance. The political constraints on security assistance programs are embedded in this political-military process, and the historical record clearly shows that overlapping administrative prerogatives and perceptions can and do fundamentally change how such programs get developed, and with what success they get implemented.

The Gulf War provides a case in point. Although much attention is now focused on the wisdom of providing arms to Saudi Arabia and other coalition allies, in the aftermath of that conflict, it could be argued that expeditious security assistance *prior* to the onset of Iraq's expansionary musings could have deterred Iraqi aggression in the first place. Prior to 2 August 1990, the U.S. political-diplomatic process appeared insensitive to regional security by failing not only to supply requested security assistance to Iraq's neighbors, but also by not forcefully sanctioning Iraq from further international arms transfers and for having used chemical warfare during its war with Iran. U.S. resolve might have proven effective in either instance, but instead of policy clarity, there was confusion, with consequences that would only become obvious by late 1990.

Paul Gigot has observed the inability of the U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy to react to several different world situations simultaneously, which engenders the very instability it is supposed to deter: in the case of Iraq, the U.S. "failed to give even the most basic signal that might

³⁷Joshua Muravchik, "New Isolationism, Same Old Mistake," *New York Times*, 28 August 1990, p. A28.

³⁸Roger Hilsman, *The Politics of Policy Making in Defense and Foreign Affairs* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), pp. 78-81.

have instilled caution in Saddam.”³⁹ In the winter of 1989, with all eyes focused on the East European Revolution and the related inevitability of German unification, the Iraqi dictator was amassing a chemical and biological arsenal and striving assiduously to develop a nuclear weapons capability, with the immediate purpose of controlling the Gulf region and the valuable resources located there. These actions were in nearly all ways overt, but the glare of the events in Europe caused American foreign policy makers not to see the significance of developments in the Gulf. With hindsight, we now know the choice of focus to have been wrong.

The argument here is that a coherent and steady program of security assistance can result in a future that, if not totally surprise-free, is more resistant to unforeseen events than was the case in 1989. Structured and implemented properly, security assistance can further American foreign policy objectives, including regional stability in the Gulf. The question to be asked, then, is can security assistance be structured to permit it to function in a changing world? To start, certain major structural impediments can be identified. Chief among these are the chaos of the political-military process in the domestic context, and the lack of a viable international regime for regulating international arms transfers. These two impediments are related, albeit not identical. It is or should be apparent that enhancing international stability through the judicious employment of arms transfers requires, at the outset, internal changes in the U.S. security assistance process, so as to allow needed rationality in funding levels and—more importantly—funding purposes. It also requires something else: international rationalization, by which I mean the creation and employment of a viable international control body for arms transfers.

Getting security assistance “right” means starting at home with the domestic political-military process. Perhaps the most evident reality of security assistance is that it functions within an American democratic political process of checks and balances that at times seems almost guaranteed to frustrate the program's very purpose. For example, programs that were “only” 50 percent directed by Congressional committees as recently as the mid-1980s, although showing some improvement from 1990 to 1991, are today restricted by mandated Congressional controls involving 87 percent of the foreign military sales, and 68 percent of the economic support fund budgets.⁴⁰ Not surprisingly, program flexibility and capabilities have eroded as administrations and Congress alike have continued, in recent years, to partition major portions of program funding to pre-selected recipients, who in turn are beneficiaries of rigorous lobbying efforts on their behalf. Particularly noteworthy in this regard have been the political action committees (PACs) representing such countries as Israel and Greece.

The chief defect of the political-military process is the placement of security assistance in a foreign relations, instead of a defense framework. What this means is that security assistance gets assessed, debated, funded, and administered by a combination of the State Department, and the foreign affairs and appropriations committees of both houses of Congress, rather than the Department of Defense and the armed services committees of the House and the Senate.⁴¹ To understand why the current structure is inefficient, let us take a look at the major players in security assistance.

³⁹Paul A. Gigot, “A Great American Screw-Up: The U.S. and Iraq, 1980-1990,” *National Interest*, no. 22 (Winter 1990-91), pp. 7-10.

⁴⁰James A. Baker, III, “Foreign Affairs Funding Proposal for 1992,” *The DISAM Journal* 13/3 (Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, 1990), pp. 23-47.

⁴¹Regional Conflict Working Group, “Commitment to Freedom: Security Assistance as a U.S. Policy Instrument in The Third World” (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), pp. 23-24.

THE ISSUES AND PLAYERS IN SECURITY ASSISTANCE

Paul Warnke, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense responsible for international security affairs, correctly noted that an intrinsic problem for U.S. arms sales policy has been that it "lacks coherence and overall limits. Several government agencies with quite different perspectives and interests are involved in the policy-making process and it is therefore difficult to attribute the policy outcomes to any single agency."⁴² A necessary element of any reformed security assistance must obviously be establishing that the actors in the process understand what the program is supposed to accomplish. In a new world order, security assistance should attempt to enhance U.S. national security by strengthening allies and friends, deterring conflict, while at the same time advancing U.S. political interests. Additionally, it can also be assumed that a variety of interests will continue to expect to derive domestic economic benefits from the program. This expectation, alas, can and does conflict with the prior aim of furthering regional stability, and is in fact a major hindrance to the success of security assistance, one moreover that is attributable in large part to the program's lack of any broad domestic constituency.⁴³ Program "reformers" must be aware of this, just as they must understand the agendas promoted by a myriad of powerful political action committees, with wholly different program objectives from that of regional security.

Reformers must also understand the content of the program. Security assistance advocates need first to answer a simple question: Who is being secured from what? Absent any clear answer to this question, there will be little chance of breathing much new life into the program. What must be remembered is that U.S. national objectives of security assistance to promote democracy and free market economies, although somewhat ideological, do require deterring aggression, promoting the stabilization of, and peaceful change in, regions deemed vital to U.S. interests. As noted above, the focus of security assistance has changed from Western Europe to the "periphery," especially the ethnic, religious, and political cauldron known as the Middle East, a region where the pursuit of those lofty U.S. national objectives has required and will continue to require certain strategic alliances and the wherewithal to secure such arrangements.

Security assistance provides a capability for doing this, but it should be remembered that this capacity is effected through the supply of defense commodities and services, such as weapons, conventional technology, other equipment, and military training. Keith Krause instructs us on the inherent politico-strategic nature of those commodities: "Weapons that kill are not purely economic goods to be bought and sold as copper, computers, or coffee."⁴⁴ But because of the lucrative nature of much of the arms business, there will always exist a commercially driven tendency to ease arms transfer regulations and controls in order to secure greater economic benefits.⁴⁵ In fact, arms transfer controls were relaxed during the Reagan Administration, and while some economic benefit undoubtedly resulted from the relaxation, it came at a cost to international stability.

The objective of minimizing the influence of mercantile interests in arms transfers, however laudable, is a difficult one to attain. So too is the goal of establishing an all-encompassing international forum, or "regime," to regulate arms transfers. For one thing, the U.S. defense industry would be hard put to accept restrictions if it was felt that other countries were continuing relentlessly to promote their own arms sales. Furthermore, given the current comparative

⁴² Paul C. Warnke, "American Arms Transfers: Policy and Process in the Executive Branch, in *Arms Transfers and American Foreign Policy*, pp. 218-19.

⁴³ Morton Dworken, "Security Assistance: A Department of State Perspective," Conference on Security Assistance, Langley Air Force Base, 1989.

⁴⁴ Keith Krause, "Trading in Weapons," in *World Politics: Power, Interdependence and Dependence*, ed. David G. Haglund and Michael K. Hawes (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Canada, 1990), p. 130.

⁴⁵ Robert V. Hrkavy, *The Arms Trade and International Systems* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1975), p. 12.

advantage enjoyed by U.S. arms makers in the area of high-tech weaponry, it can be expected that consumers, especially in the Third World, will expect and possibly demand more sophisticated weaponry, and even technology, from the United States.

Another factor impelling the U.S. arms industry to acquire more foreign markets is the looming reduction in America's annual defense spending. Over the next five years, the level of the U.S. armed forces is projected to be cut by a quarter. This translates into a 33-percent reduction of the current active Army divisions, 28-percent of the Air Force tactical fighter wings, and 14-percent of the Navy carrier battle groups.⁴⁶ For an armaments industry that views divisions as tanks, fighter wings as airplanes, and carrier battle groups as ships, these reductions obviously constitute a very serious problem. Some in the industry are coping with this dilemma by an enhanced focus on offshore sales such as the proposed Saudi Arabian agreement to purchase 315 M1A2 tanks, which will permit our sole remaining tank assembly line in Lima, Ohio, to remain open.⁴⁷ Of course, there have been reasons other than the thirst for profits that account for arms exporting. One obvious benefit of arms and equipment transfers traditionally has been the stimulus supplied to the U.S. defense industrial base, and the cost-savings made available to America's military consumers, given that larger and longer production runs will reduce unit costs for military hardware.

The program's impediments are not exhausted by a simple depiction of the contradictions noted above. One must also examine the bureaucratic players in security assistance. The major protagonist in the U.S. arms transfer process, certainly, is the President and the Executive Branch. The Departments of State and Defense, the National Security Council, the Office of Management and Budget, and such other departments as Commerce and Treasury coordinate with Congress on arms transfer activities. Not surprisingly, conflicts occur as each institution works from a somewhat different perspective to effect what it believes is the security assistance objective.

Within this bureaucratic process, the Department of State is the agency charged, under the Foreign Assistance Act, with administration of the security assistance programs. Within this mandate, it works with the Department of Defense to execute the program, and in so doing it coordinates activity both with the National Security Council system and the Security Assistance Budget process.⁴⁸ Sometimes, "coordination" can be an overstatement. For example, during the Reagan Administration, a strong National Security Council network with loose management from above instigated the "Iran-Contra" debacle, in which arms transfers were used to circumvent legislative restrictions on military support for the Nicaraguan Contras.

In more typical cases, there are certain channels through which relevant bureaucratic barges make their way. For instance, the link in the Department of Defense budget process is through the Defense Security Assistance Agency, which plans, administers, and accounts for the DoD involvement in the program. The international requirements for the program are generated through security assistance organizations (SAOs) located in the U.S. Mission [Embassies] in the recipient countries. These offices, in turn, operate under the direction of the respective US ambassadors and regional US commanders, who deal with host government needs and desires.⁴⁹ But what may seem, even in the "typical" case, to be a straightforward method of assessing security assistance

⁴⁶Ellot A. Cohen, "The Role of Force In U.S. Foreign Policy," lecture delivered at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 7 March 1991.

⁴⁷"Saudi Tank Order Saves Lima Plant, *Dayton Daily News*, 10 July 1990, p. 1A.

⁴⁸Lawrence J. Korb and Robert H. Gromoll, "The United States," in *Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study*, ed. Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1989), p. 49.

⁴⁹Regional Conflict Working Group, "Commitment to Freedom," pp. 24-25.

requirements is actually a very constrained and protracted procedure, dictated by budgetary and Congressional processes in which there is little apparent flexibility.

The Office of Management and Budget is concerned with the budgetary implications of the security assistance program. To say the least, it poses a serious problem for program flexibility. The cyclical budget process, weighted heavily in the direction of prior submissions, and subject to pre-emptive assessments as to what Congress is likely to fund, can be a daunting ordeal, one in which security assistance requirements often fall by the wayside even before getting considered in the legislative process. This budget process, in effect, strangles the program by severely restricting the establishment of new security assistance activities. Moreover, once a budget mark has been established very early in a fiscal year, changes in the requested levels of security assistance can only be effected by the intervention of the Secretary of State with the President.⁵⁰

The capacity of this structure to limit program change is even more evident by the State Department's development of case-by-case country components of security assistance. Franklin D. Kramer, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, notes in discussing the Department of State and the Department of Defense inter-agency review process that "generally," the Security Assistance Program Review Working Group (SAPRWG) will decide to increase or maintain program levels, not to decrease them."⁵¹ The U.S. "country team" in each security assistance program participant country provides an annual assessment approved by the ambassador on that country's security situation and program requirements. Each regional command also provides separate comments and recommendations on the countries within its area of responsibility. These, coupled with the Office of Management and Budget's "anticipatory" dynamics, result in little program flexibility, with few new security assistance requirements able to be presented to Congress for justification.

Interestingly, the most concerned executive actor in this process, the Defense Department, which is assigned the mission of implementing the military components of security assistance, participates in the process with varying degrees of intensity. DoD's International Security Affairs (ISA) regional affairs offices and DSAA, which has regional affairs offices to implement the programs, provide DoD's policy and program inputs to the SAPRWG process and program implementation. This "art" of using military means for political, as well as military, objectives stands as a stark reminder of the extent to which the international political components of the program are privileged vis-a-vis the military-security ones.⁵² This privileging does, in fact, drive a wedge between the support users (the military) and the support providers and congressional interests. Significantly, up to this point in the process, the military's primary formal input is its contribution of information and recommendations concerning its views on the country-by-country security requirements and host country desires within a regional context, all with the view to furthering foreign policy, as well as defense objectives. The latter include evaluating and processing projects that support interoperability, joint exercises, and so on.

A further wrinkle stems from those actions taken by the Departments of the Treasury and Commerce, which sometimes appear to be preoccupied with issues altogether divorced from the more narrow traditional military definition of national security. As an example, the recent Gulf War highlighted a number of high-tech and dual use products that, according to news reports, had

⁵⁰Franklin D. Kramer, "The Government Approach to Security Assistance Decisions," U.S. Security Assistance, p. 106.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 106.

⁵²Ibid., p. 107.

been approved and licensed by the Commerce Department and sold to Iraq, sometimes over the objections of the Defense Department.⁵³

An additional indication of the complexities of the security assistance process can be glimpsed in Congress' own recent task force review of the U.S. foreign assistance programs and activities. The reviewers found that foreign aid, including security assistance, "was vital to promoting U.S. foreign policy and domestic interests, but that the program was hamstrung by too many conflicting objectives, legislative conditions, earmarks, and bureaucratic red tape."⁵⁴ Robert Kurz of the Brookings Institution, a former Congressional staffer, similarly stresses the complications attending security assistance programs, especially those laws that, based on outdated information, require re-evaluation to ensure legislative conformity to each new set of events.⁵⁵ Ideally, national security requirements should be the initial impetus for this change in foreign policy legislation, since the political-military process must have the capacity to act with some flexibility to accomplish security objectives.

Congressional involvement occurs at several points in the security assistance process. But throughout, Congress retains notification requirements and, through a joint resolution, veto authority over the transfer of any "major defense equipment" valued at \$14 million or more, or over any defense article or defense services valued at \$50 million or more.⁵⁶ And, though presidential requests for arms sales have normally met with Congressional approval, this accomplishment is often possible only because of political compromise: witness the arrangement of the Executive branch in submitting informal defense equipment or arms sales proposals to Congress and having them withheld from the Congressional Record for 20 days, allowing the Congressional review process additional time to react.⁵⁷ More importantly, such action permits the Executive an additional period to bargain with Congress and modify security assistance requests to meet the final Congressional expectations. A good example was the threatened Congressional veto of a 1986 Saudi Arabian arms package, which caused President Reagan to delete 200 Stinger launchers and 600 reloads from the original request, in order to win the veto override.⁵⁸ The effect of such political gambits on assistance programs can understandably erode the security gains sought through the program.

What is lost in the Bureaucratic pulling and hauling is any appreciation of the value of the proposed security measures. The convoluted process of give and take distorts the real necessity for regional security. A wiser U.S. security assistance process would address regional security requirements, and not merely perpetuate a system that supports the same select friends and allies, year in, year out. Furthermore, the process must garner a constituency that is less interested in arms transfers for their domestic economic value and that comprehends arms transfers are necessary for U.S. national security.

⁵³ Bob Dart, "Iraq Got Arsenal from U. S.," *Atlanta Constitution*, 18 October 1990, p. 10.

⁵⁴ *Report of Task Force on Foreign Assistance, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), p. v.

⁵⁵ Robert Kurz, "Congressional Perspective on Security Assistance," Conference on Security Assistance, Langley Air Force Base, 1989.

⁵⁶ "Committees on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations, Legislation on Foreign Relations through 1989" (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), pp. 300-8.

⁵⁷ Paul L. Ferrari, *et al.*, *U.S. Arms Exports: Policies and Contractors* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1988), p. 72.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

REGIONAL SECURITY APPROACH

A missing element in this description of U.S. governmental politics, although one that is continually cited in the formulation of critical foreign policy objectives, is a refined awareness of regional security complexities. Missing as well is sufficient receptivity within the process of advice from regional U.S. military officials. In effect, if security assistance dies, it may not be the Cold War's demise, but rather the bureaucratic process that is responsible. Contributions by U.S. regional commands in identifying and dealing with security requirements would seem to be the logical foundation of the program. The U.S. regional commander whose responsibility it is to span national borders in the effort to protect U.S. defense interests and enhance regional stability should have a primary voice in this process. Under the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the regional Commanders-in-Chief now have this capability. By this measure, Congress demonstrated its intent to improve the quality of military advice, and to enhance the responsibility and authority of the Joint Commanders, who are now expected to have a greater voice in regional security policy.⁵⁹

The voice has been present, but the effect of its presence has varied over time and with individuals and issues involved, and it remains uncertain. For instance, in early 1990 testimony of the Joint Commanders to the Congress, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander-in-Chief (CINC) of the U.S. Central Command warned that the Mideast region, which his command encompassed, was experiencing a growing availability of long-range missiles, as well as of biological and chemical weapons. This development, said Schwarzkopf, injected a "new and alarming lethal dimension [in]to the region The U.S. is providing too little security assistance to even meet the basic needs of several strategically important nations."⁶⁰ I introduce this example to make the point—and it is hardly a surprising one—that regional commanders like Schwarzkopf have a good grasp of certain regional "sensitivities," and they deserve to have their expertise make more of a contribution to security assistance effectiveness.

The Joint Commanders' role within the security assistance process should be strengthened. But how should this be done? In addition to providing expertise at appropriate moments, the CINCs should be given some control over the process itself. One means of doing this might be to channel annual security assistance budget and defense acquisition funding through them. Specifically, the DSAA should be the DoD agency responsible for apportioning and reviewing this capability in accordance with State Department approval and Congressional oversight. As things currently stand, the legislative restrictions and earmarks on funding make security assistance ineffectual from the CINC's position as the commanders responsible for U.S. regional security concerns. At times, the current arrangement can actually hinder, not advance, U.S. security interests.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The second major conditioning variable affecting security assistance programs is international. Specifically, in the wake of the Gulf War there is a national, as well as global, concern about tightening controls over arms transfers. Certainly, many of America's recent problems in the Gulf have been occasioned by a worldwide laxity of such controls. Joseph Nye, a former Deputy Undersecretary of State for Security Assistance, has identified the generic root of this problem: "Some trends in world politics suggest that it will be more difficult in the future for

⁵⁹U.S. Army War College Reference Text, *Forces Capabilities Handbook: Organizations Vol. I* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Army War College, 1990), pp. 1-2 to 1-3.

⁶⁰Quoted in William Matthews, "The World According to the Top Commanders," *Air Force Times*, 26 February 1990, p. 10.

any great power to control the political environment and to achieve what it wants to from others. The problem for the United States will be less the rising challenge of other powers than a general diffusion of power."⁶¹

This "diffusion of power" and control can be expected to have an impact upon the U.S. security assistance program in three ways. First, it may well weaken the program's effectiveness by reducing the leverage Washington can bring to bear on its friends and allies. Second, it could add more instability to the international arena by the proliferation of arms. And finally, it could render the process of controlling international arms transfers even more unwieldy than it now is.

Washington's capacity to shape this environment will further be affected by America's own economic problems. Budgetary deficits and other domestic issues likely will capture the attention of U.S. policymakers during the coming years, making it more difficult for the U.S. to exercise a role as world leader and to assume a position as a key advocate for an international conventional arms control regime. But we can be certain that the threat to international stability caused by the arms trade will only continue through the 1990s. Arms transfers were a prominent feature of modern history and increased during the Cold War, and the fact that their control was an element in the balance of power is nothing new. Recent arms transfers, however, have slipped the "constraints" imposed by the Cold War, and there now exists an abundance of markets and potential suppliers, including some Third World countries.⁶²

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that international arms transfers are, on balance, a major contributor to international instability. Iraq's out-sized consumption of imported arms in recent years should dispel the notion that the end of bipolarity suggests a more stable security future for the Third World. Iraq's ability to amass both conventional and non-conventional weaponry should alert all countries to the need for more restrictions on their arms peddlers. It is easy to point fingers: one could start by citing the Pentagon inquiry into possible bomb technology transfer to Iraq from Honeywell, Inc.⁶³ In fact, the dilemma is enormous, and can be seen in the French missiles, the German gas, the Austrian artillery, and the Swiss machinery, to say nothing of the Czech, Chilean, Brazilian, South African, Soviet, and Chinese weaponry that added to Iraq's military capability. Not only are there many potential weapon suppliers, there is also no shortage of "middle-men" in the arms transfer process—and not just in the Gulf region.

Clearly, regulatory structures in this area have been conspicuous by their absence.⁶⁴ This is no excuse for not trying to do better, and the U.S. is obviously not without guilt itself, since in the cause of "regional stability" it was one of the parties funneling assistance to an Iraqi dictator pursuing his own regional aims.

These pre-Gulf War tailings emphasize the need for the U.S. to provide strong support to international regulatory agencies that could monitor arms transfers. Such agencies ideally would be built on the foundation of multilateralism generated by the Gulf War. This is not to say that coalition diplomacy functioned perfectly during that conflict. Nevertheless, the model is an

⁶¹Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), p. 175.

⁶²Jonathan Powers, "Arms and the Third World," *World Press Review*, June 1990, p. 22. Also see, from differing perspectives, William D. Hartung, "Breaking the Arms-Sales Addiction: New Directions for the U.S. Policy," *World Policy Journal* 8 (Winter 1990/91): 1-26; and John McCain, "Controlling Arms Sales to the Third World," *Washington Quarterly* 14 (Spring 1991): 79-89.

⁶³*Minneapolis Star Tribune*, news release, Pentagon, 4 December 1990, p. 7.

⁶⁴Nevertheless, an "arms transfer regime" of sorts has been in existence during the past few decades. See Stephen C. Daffron, "U.S. Arms Transfers: New Rules, New Reasons," *Parameters* 21 (Spring 1991): 77-91.

encouraging one, and the U.S. should avail itself of relevant international fora from which to address the critical arms transfer control issue.

Recent (often reluctant) "confessions" by the major arms suppliers concerning their overt and covert arming of Iraq represent, at least, a start toward some multinational acknowledgment of the seriousness of the problem. As Mark Lowenthal, senior foreign affairs specialist at the Congressional Research Service, notes, the "Arms trade is something which must be factored into a new world order The Iraqi case has given us an example of what happens if this [trade] is left unchecked."⁶⁵ What is needed, however, is more than contrition. The U.S. and other countries must commit themselves to "simultaneous endeavors" to bring about arms transfer controls. To be sure, the U.S. must continue to support friends and allies with the necessary security assistance to help them maintain their security. However, the effectiveness of this objective will continue to be diminished to the extent that both international and domestic U.S. policy rationalization is missing. Internationally, the United Nations should be the forum for such dialogue on arms transfers. Domestically, the security assistance process must give greater responsibility to the U.S. regional military experts, the CINCs.

The time has never been better for such bold initiatives, and the celebrated "window of opportunity" has rarely been so ajar, with the world still focusing some attention on the effects of the Gulf War. There is no universal agreement among countries concerning stability and arms transfer controls, and there will never be. However, these subjects must remain as central items on the global political agenda, and it is incumbent on the U.S. to take the lead at the United Nations in calling for the establishment of an effective arms transfer control mechanism. The U.S. now has the opportunity to help forge such a mechanism, which would not only strengthen the capability for international stability through the control of arms transfers, but in doing so may also benefit U.S. international influence and increase the utility of U.S. security assistance.

CONCLUSION

The Gulf War, as I indicated, highlighted some of the contradictions and complexities of U.S. security assistance. The program in the Gulf region can, most assuredly, be viewed as having been structured to stabilize the Middle East, in the aftermath of several conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The 1979 Camp David Accords formalized an agreement that had long provided favored nation status to Israel. With that agreement, a similar bond was made between Egypt and the U.S., and billions of dollars of security assistance were subsequently furnished to both countries for the purpose of securing regional stability. In 1990, the amount of security assistance provided to Israel and Egypt alone was \$5.1 billion, or fully 61 percent of the \$8.4 billion program budget for that year.⁶⁶ In the wake of the Gulf War, the U.S. Congress and public might rightfully query, what influence did such enormous amounts of military aid provide?

The question of U.S. political influence over Israel is certainly not a new subject. In fact, the invasion of Israel on 6 October 1973 by Egypt and Syria was prompted, in part, by the failure of U.S. diplomacy to force Israel to make concessions toward its Arab neighbors.⁶⁷ As such, that war serves as a good example of America's failure to utilize its relationship with a military "dependency" to avert conflict: here, the lesson seems to be that *no* leverage flowed from the security support arrangements constructed over time. The Gulf War, however, was another matter, one that did evince leverage—and, more importantly, the capacity for U.S. influence in Israel, and this notwithstanding the strong Israeli political pressures on the U.S. Congress.

⁶⁵Sam Vincent Meddis and Tom Squitieri, "Stopping Iraq from Rearming," *USA Today*, 1 March 1990, p. 6a.

⁶⁶"Congressional Presentation for Security Assistance Programs, Fiscal Year 1992," pp. 6-16

⁶⁷Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism*, 271-72.

Certainly, in viewing the restraint of Israel to forego involvement in the Gulf War as Scud missiles rained down upon Tel Aviv, one can be permitted the observation that, in this case, U.S. security assistance seems to have paid dividends.

This influence that security assistance can bring to bear, as this chapter has sought to contend, is far from universal: what works in one context fails in another. For example, during the run-up to the war, the U.S. could not have anticipated the reaction of Soviet-aided Syria to participate so supportively in the coalition, or the U.S.-backed Jordanians vehemently to reject doing so. The issue of the "real" intelligence garnered via arms transfers will continue to be debated. In a sense, this instrument of statecraft can be likened to the use of economic sanctions, which have traditionally been held to be bereft of any capability to affect behavior in target states. What one scholar, David Baldwin, has said in defense of sanctions (and other forms of "economic statecraft") might equally be said of security assistance: its effectiveness must be assessed within an appropriate context, one in which one is able to ask (and determine) whether an alternative policy instrument would have produced any "better" results, at a sustainable price.⁶⁸

It is hard to see how ending security assistance would yield better results than would *reforming* it. For many, including myself, the central question regarding U.S. security assistance in the 1990s will certainly not be whether there exists a continued need for such a program: there does. The real question is whether, within the changing world environment, security assistance can attain more effectiveness in responding to whatever challenges to vital U.S. and allied interests will characterize the post-Cold War world. In the long run, the program's survival depends on mustering a broader constituency that understands and supports its objectives. Whatever the future holds for U.S. security assistance policy, one thing seems certain: America will likely be called upon again to use military means in pursuit of U.S. foreign policy objectives. The next time, however, coalition warfare will almost certainly not be as feasible politically. Unless one can imagine a world in which unilateralism can secure U.S. policy goals, America will have an ongoing need for a security assistance program. Will the necessary domestic and international reforms be achieved to permit such a program to function?

⁶⁸David A. Baldwin, *Economic Statecraft* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955).