
THE EXPANSION OF THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
IN THE THIRD WORLD AND ITS EFFECT ON TACTICAL AIR COMMAND
TRAINING PROCEDURES

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On 29 July 1982, in a memorandum to the Secretaries of the Air Force and Navy, Deputy Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci observed that: "There are several friends and allies that are . . . modernizing their tactical aircraft forces. Only a few can afford first-line fighters, and because of fiscal and other restraints, it is important that the United States have alternatives to first-line aircraft available for export."

This indication of policy reflected some of the change in approach to fighter sales during the Reagan Administration's first year. In 1981, for example, the government decided to sell the F-16 to both Pakistan and Venezuela. Officials justified the sale of 40 F-16s to Pakistan by the need to bolster that nation's defenses in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Administration also defended the 24-plane Venezuelan sale as important to Venezuelan and regional defense capabilities. Congress carefully examined both sales.

The increase of sales worldwide has contributed to the expansion of the USAF Security Assistance Program. Moreover, it has placed a tremendous implementation burden on the Air Force, which has adopted a policy whereby:

. . . these aircraft are developed and produced in a manner generally consistent with our standards as though we were purchasing these aircraft for our own forces. The aircraft must be fully supportable within the FMS [foreign military sales] system and contractor support arrangements must be capable of meeting USAF standards. Finally, we must ensure the availability of training programs which will permit the foreign air forces to readily absorb these advanced systems into their inventories.[1]

Editor's Note: This article was adapted from a paper prepared for delivery at the Eighth Air University Airpower Symposium, Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, March 5-7, 1984. The views and conclusions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the United States Government.

In turn, the commitment has affected the Tactical Air Command's role in FMS, especially insofar as its training resources, methods, and procedures are concerned. Indeed, as the U.S. government has sold more and more fighter weapon systems to third world nations, the demand for TAC-sponsored schooling has grown to the point that careful management is required to ensure that USAF pilots receive complete training in an infrastructure that has not expanded at the same pace as the demands.

To help manage the increasing demands and to avoid potential problems, the Tactical Air Command established personnel limits on a number of programs. For example, the Command initiated a policy whereby no more than twelve allied or foreign aircraft could participate on any one RED FLAG exercise. This exercise combines air-to-air and surface-to-air threat resources under a central, independent manager to provide fighter units with realistic, simulated combat training. Command officials also decided that foreign exchange officers should serve only in training units or operations units with politically compatible tasking (e.g., NATO), and that there be only one exchange officer per available squadron. Additionally, foreign F-16 pilot training has been limited to the six FMS-dedicated aircraft assigned to Luke AFB, AZ.

These decisions, while major steps in controlling foreign training impacts, have not resolved all the difficulties associated with supporting foreign military sales of sophisticated weapon systems to third world countries. Indeed, the complex problems of training recipients to use advanced, high technology hardware in a proper and effective fashion generally require significant changes in methods and procedures which also affect resources. An example is the lack of technically-qualified personnel resources throughout most of the third world. As a result, foreign students usually must receive more TAC-sponsored training than their American or European counterparts. Moreover, a longer lead time normally is required to develop, implement, and administer instructional courses to third world students. Lastly, high instructor/student ratios are commonplace in most flying and maintenance training programs for foreign students. All these factors place a heavy drain on the Tactical Air Command.

Another element that complicates the Command's role in the Security Assistance Program pertains to the wide linguistic and cultural differences between many foreign students and their USAF instructors. Over the past several years, officials have recognized that even though a student may speak classroom English fluently, his abilities are often severely reduced during a highly technical course, a crisis, an emergency, or a "communication saturated" exercise. Different attitudes about learning and personal criticism coupled with a general lack of meaningful technical heritage increases the difficulty of administering even the most basic flight and maintenance courses. In many third world societies, for example, criticism of any kind simply is not permitted or accepted, while in others military men never have been exposed to complex machinery or weapon systems. Such factors obviously help to make the training process an extremely long and demanding undertaking.

The absence of adequate dedicated resources continues to plague the Security Assistance Program's implementation. As far as the Tactical Air Command is concerned, with the exception of the F-5, F-16, Theater Air

Operations, Foreign Weapons Controller, and the German F-4 courses, foreign training is accomplished on an ad hoc basis. Where dedicated resources exist, foreign training impacts are known and measured, whereas in a case-by-case approach the potential for an adverse impact is much greater.

In many cases, problems caused by incomplete analyses of foreign disclosure and releasability requirements hamper the Command's efforts to support foreign training. Sophisticated electronic warfare sales, for example, have been concluded without thorough USAF analysis of training and operations support requirements. Effective utilization of a particular weapon system necessitates a high level of aircrew and maintenance training which requires the provision of such items as pod handbooks, threat data, jamming methods and techniques, and follow-up maintenance and technical support. When disclosure parameters are developed by the USAF after the sale, they frequently conflict with its purpose. Without release approval for needed information, the training's effectiveness is compromised significantly. If the combat capability inherent in the hardware purchased is not realized, U.S. credibility may be reduced, and the original aims of America's policy toward this country may be endangered.

Follow-on training, which may involve Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), Engineering and Technical Services Specialists (ETSSs), and Technical Assistance Field Teams (TAFTs), also places demands on command resources. The cadre concept, whereby a small team of foreign instructor pilots (IPs) is trained in the United States and sent home to establish in-country programs to complete a weapon system conversion, is the standard approach in most programs. This diminishes the demand on the Command's stateside resources, but requires extensive, in country support by USAF or contractor personnel to supplement the country's efforts.

The Tactical Air Command has adopted a number of educational procedures to help overcome some of the training difficulties associated with the Security Assistance Program. One of the most important developments during the past few years concerns English language instruction. Command officials have adopted a minimum English Comprehension Level (ECL) for many programs and exercises. To increase proficiency, foreign students are given intensive English language training at the Defense Language Institute which includes, for example, Air Traffic Control (ATC) voice tapes and an appropriate glossary of terms. Tactical Air Command training units supply some of these materials as well as provide limited feedback on the training's effectiveness. Officials also encourage American instructors to attend a two-week cross-cultural communications course at Hurlburt Field, FL, to facilitate the training process. An improved understanding of the impact of cultural barriers on effective training will improve instruction efficiency and ease the burden on resources.

Over and above these measures, the Command should do everything in its power to ensure that an accurate determination is made of a particular country's training and operations requirements. This requires an understanding of the capability the country is trying to achieve as well as an accurate current status assessment. The Tactical Air Command's stated mission is, in part, "to organize, equip, train, administer and operate forces . . . in tactical air operations." [2] The Command's expertise in this regard is directly applicable to the process of introducing new equipment or improved

capabilities into foreign countries. This expertise should be utilized at the earliest stages of any Security Assistance Program involving tactical weapon systems to ensure all the critical issues are brought to light, for correcting a program after the fact is most difficult and least effective. Such actions undoubtedly would increase the Security Assistance Program's effectiveness and would help strengthen America's foreign policy throughout the third world.

REFERENCES

1. U.S. Department of the Air Force. CSAF/CC message number 101800Z. "Intermediate Export Fighter (FX) Policy," October 1982. Although this message pertained to the FX, the cited paragraph outlined general USAF policy toward FMS of aircraft.
2. Tactical Air Command Regulation 23-1, 2 Nov 81.

Before retiring from the U.S. Air Force this past June as a Lieutenant Colonel, Mr. Koehler was Commander of the Tactical Air Command Security Assistance Office at Langley AFB, VA. During his military career, Mr. Koehler was assigned with the Technical Assistance Field Team (TAFT) in Saudi Arabia and the advisory group in Vietnam. He was a fighter pilot throughout most of his Air Force career and was also an F-5 instructor at Williams AFB, AZ. He graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1963 and holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from the Golden Gate University.

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