
Global Air Traffic Operations/Mobility Command and Control Foreign Military Sales: Supporting Our Nation's Security Strategy

By

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In this country, the enduring national security strategy and national military strategy include basic tenets of shaping the security environment, responding with decisive force when required, and preparing for an uncertain future. The first tenet is usually the focus of foreign military sales (FMS) division of ESC/GA and is the underlying purpose of the work being accomplished by Team GAF. FMS is one of the many tools available to the Department of State and to the regional unified commanders for accomplishing foreign policy objectives. We believe our work in Team GAF has a strong relation to shaping the security environment. For example, our efforts in East Europe support expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military alliance, and also support aspiring NATO members in meeting their Partnership for Peace goals.

Our directorate's product line is global air traffic management and mobility command and control systems. The focus of Team GAF is to acquire high quality air traffic control products that meet the customer's requirements, delivered on time, and at a price FMS customers can afford. We in Team GAF strive for quick turnaround acquisitions, and we are fortunate to see our air traffic control navigation aids (NAVAIDS) products delivered and installed on host nation airfields in a matter of months. We have found the new nations in the East European region to be most helpful in providing the support and assistance required to implement the new FMS air traffic control (ATC) systems in quick fashion.

Background on Team GAF Efforts in East European Region

Since 1989, Central and Eastern European nation states have, in general, moved rapidly to modernize and improve civil and military air traffic control equipment and systems for both en route and terminal service. However, on the military side, progress may be significantly slower, constrained by limited budgets and deliberation over alternatives and impacts on the host nation's existing aircraft. Important problems normally encountered by these countries include incompatibility between civil and military systems, which could restrict military operations and impact training. Another typical problem is compatibility with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the United States systems and procedures. NATO/ICAO/U.S. compatibility objectives are often huge factors in early modernization decisions and plans. The availability of replacement parts and sustainment cost of aging Soviet-legacy navigation equipment is also a common problem in the region.

Team GAF Efforts in Eastern Europe Typically Follow the Following Pattern

Upon the invitation of the host nation, Team GAF participates with a larger NAVAIDS country study team consisting of the members of the U.S. Embassy's Office of Defense Cooperation, ESC and SAF program managers, and various engineers to begin the requirements definition and FMS acquisition process. The focus of the NAVAIDS Country Study Team is to:

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- Discuss host nation strategies and goals with respect to ATC requirements
 - Solutions planning

A country study effort usually follows. This is a fairly comprehensive effort which often takes about five months to complete. The report contains:

- Findings from site surveys, requirements definition, and assessment of existing capabilities
- Alternatives, selection factors, and modernization recommendations
- Suggested implementation approaches based on near-term and far-term time lines

Both current and advanced navigational techniques were considered in the evaluation and recommendations process, and definitions are provided.

The modernization recommendations of this report usually play an important role in the host nation navigation and landing system modernization strategies, and the country study report often resurfaces during the course of later acquisition activities.

If the host nation elects to proceed using FMS procedures, a letter of request (LOR) for defense articles and services is usually submitted through the U.S. embassy. This is forwarded and processed through the channels, and eventually ends up at grass-root program offices like ours for action. We in turn process a given LOR by obtaining marketing data to determine realistic pricing and availability estimates. The results are used to develop product descriptions, lead times, and pricing in letters of offer and acceptance (LOA). We typically have thirty days to process LORs. LORs may also simply request price and availability (P&A) to help host nations develop their modernization planning.

There is much to consider when developing LOA data, and this activity serves as the what, when, and how-much sections of forthcoming LOAs. Our results undergo a lot of further review and processing at higher echelons within the DoD. Eventually, a formal letter of offer and acceptance is provided to the host nation. This LOA is a DoD letter by which the U.S. government actually offers to sell to a foreign government or international organization U.S. defense articles and services pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, as amended. The LOA lists the items and services, estimated costs, and the terms and conditions of sale. It also provides for the signature of an appropriate foreign government official to indicate acceptance. You should notice the LOA includes an offer, acceptance, and consideration, the stuff of contracts. In a sense, it is a contract between the U.S. and the host nation for items and services. Once a LOA is accepted, the document and corresponding funding and direction quickly find their way back to the grass roots level, i.e., the acquisition program offices like Team GAF.

Once the approved LOA, funding, and direction are received, the acquisition office assigned the task uses the same acquisition procedures and processes and oversight and scrutiny that would be applied to an Air Force acquisition program. Requests for proposals are developed and issued to industry, proposals are received and reviewed, contracts are awarded, items delivered and installed, and so forth. At this point, the process becomes a typical acquisition program. Metrics are used by Team GAF to track our progress, and customer contact is maintained throughout the acquisition.

Our occasional travels to our FMS customers have proven invaluable to our success in delivering quality products on time and within budgets. And this travel is certainly an exciting,

albeit unintended, benefit of our job. More importantly, however, we believe by making these FMS systems available to our new partners, we in Team GAF play our part in helping to mold the U.S. security environment. From the example above, we believe our contribution in this process has been of help in shaping our security environment, and to host nations in meeting their PfP goals, and in supporting their strategic growth towards European and Western integration.

About the Authors

Pauline M. Forebel is the Deputy Program Director of Global Air Traffic Operations, Mobility Command and Control systems Program Office, and the boss of our foreign military sales division. She ensures our military and foreign military sales products meet all customer requirements.

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Guy Larrimer is a Case Program Manager, working for the Titan Corporation. Guy manages the day-for-day administration of procuring and installing NAVADS in host nations.

Stanley Mitchell is program manager and lead engineer for foreign military sales, Global Air Traffic Operations/Mobility Command and Control at the Electronic Systems Center. He has over twenty years experience in advanced systems design and development. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from the University of Iowa and a Master of Science degree in telecommunications from the University of Colorado at Boulder.