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U.S. Foreign Security Assistance: The Mismatch Between the U.S. Departments of State and Defense at the Operational Level

by

Tomas A. Alksninis Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Introduction

Security assistance is a significant part of our nation's foreign policy effort, through providing tangible support to our allies and other nations to help shape the security profile across the world. Although only a small fraction of the federal budget (less than 1%), its development and management can significantly affect our influence abroad. Still, it is important to realize the importance of the proper execution of security assistance in order to maximize its potential. A strong security assistance program can provide a powerful tool useful in achieving our foreign policy goals, while a weak program can undermine our efforts.

Within the Executive Branch, the Department of State (DoS) is the lead U.S. foreign affairs agency. The DoS is tasked with advancing U.S. objectives and interests by developing and implementing the President's foreign policy. To accomplish many of the goals imbedded in the President's foreign policy, the President tasks the Department of Defense (DoD). This partnership between the DoS and the DoD is embodied within the U.S. Security Assistance Program. The program is developed by the DoS and executed by the DoD, through the Combatant Commanders. Like many relationships within a government, there are multiple mismatches between how one entity views how a program should be developed and managed and how the other side believes it should be done. This paper identifies specific mismatches between the ways the DoS and the Combatant Commanders develop and execute foreign assistance and analyzes ways to overcome those differences in order to improve the effectiveness of our nation's foreign policy.

The U.S. Constitution established a checks and balances system between the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches of our government. Although arguably not the

most efficient method of government, it does work. In parallel to this constitutional arrangement, the security assistance program is balanced not only within the Executive Branch but via the Legislative as well. Again, probably not the most efficient way to run the program, yet, it has its advantages. Improving inter-agency cooperation and strengthening the unity of purpose between the DoD and DoS are just two examples that will help overcome potential roadblocks which currently hamper the effectiveness of our Security Assistance Program and our nation's foreign policy.

The Security Assistance Program is composed of four appropriated programs: the Foreign Military Financing Program (FMFP), International Military Education and Training (IMET), the Economic Support Fund (ESF), Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and two non-appropriated programs, Foreign Military Sales (FMS), and Direct Commercial Sales (DCS).³ Because FMFP and IMET are the only appropriated programs in which the DoD is specifically tasked with overseeing, for the purposes of this paper, they will be the primary programs discussed when referring to security assistance.

Security Assistance - Background

By definition, Security Assistance (SA) is an instrument of national security and foreign policy. It serves the national interests of a country by assisting its allies and other friendly nations to acquire, maintain, and, if necessary, employ the capability for self-defense. Used correctly it can complement and supplement one's own defense posture and contribute to the vitalization of alliances. It should not be viewed as a philanthropic endeavor.⁴

There are examples of the use of SA by nations in their conduct of foreign relations throughout history. The Athenian and Spartan Alliances during the Peloponnesian War were

early examples of SA which included military training and arms transfers that were conducted both during and before the declaration of war. The United States could arguably never have won its independence from Great Britain without SA from France. France did not side with the American colonists for the mere sake of supporting revolution for American independence. Without engaging direct forces on its home soil, France was able to influence world affairs by providing assistance to a third party not only to defeat a common enemy, but to gain the future favor of a new nation. Whether in times of peace or war, SA can be a significant part of foreign relations.

After gaining independence, the United States deliberately avoided a foreign policy which included SA. In fact, it may be argued that it avoided foreign affairs altogether for a time. Reasons for this include: the fledgling strength of our economy, the concentration on internal matters including the pursuit of westward expansion (manifest destiny) and the hardship of a civil war, and a strict adherence to the advice given by George Washington during his "Farewell Address" to Congress in 1796 in which he advised the United States to avoid entangling itself in alliances with other nations.⁵

This approach began to change, however, in the twentieth century. Westward expansion reached its zenith, the sanctity of the Union was secured with the defeat of the Confederacy, and the Industrial Revolution created a robust economy that depended on the expansion of international trade. U.S. national pride and economic strength fostered a movement to export our ideals. The foreign policies of the twentieth century began to include American military involvement in the administration of other countries including Cuba, the Philippines, and other Latin American nations. This mix of American idealism and the overseas use of our military began a new chapter in American foreign policy.

By World War I, the United States adopted the use of SA as an integral part of our foreign policy. At first it was strictly an economic policy of selling arms to anyone who would buy them. However, when Germany began attacking our shipping there was a dramatic shift to exclusively assist our allies. This shift and the eventual entrance of American troops fighting alongside our allies in Europe would forever change our use of American SA. At the beginning of World War II, the United States re-invigorated its SA program towards its allies, through arms sales to France and a lend-lease arrangement with Great Britain. After it entered the war, it expanded its policies to include the Soviet Union. Without a robust SA program from the United States, the Allies might have never won the war.

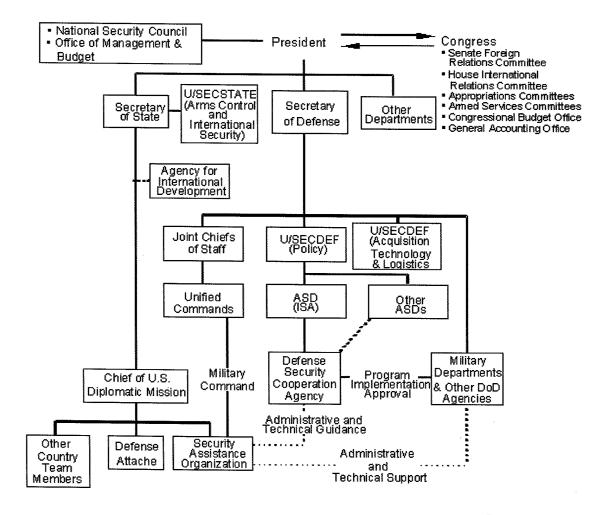
Many can say that the Cold War which dominated the second half of the twentieth century was fought not with firing weapons, but SA. The Truman Doctrine evolved from President Truman's request to Congress for SA funding to Turkey and Greece to contain the spread of communism. Every President since has included a significant SA program as a part of their foreign policies. The development and expansion of NATO, the Vietnam War and eruption and resolution of conflict in the Middle East are just a few examples which are directly related to U.S. SA programs. Again, through peace and war, SA has had its role in foreign policy.

Today's SA program is no different. With the end of the Cold War, many believe the United States could go back to a policy of isolationism. However, this period is arguably the most important time for the United States to pursue an even more aggressive SA program. SA is just as vital in times of peace as it is in war, in its ability to influence foreign affairs by strengthening relationships of allies and other friendly nations, foster the security forces

(military and otherwise) of those nations against potential foes, export American values through education, and maintain the robustness of the military-industrial base of the United States.

Key Players in the U.S. Security Assistance Program

The importance and relevance of SA in foreign policy is apparent. However, how such a program is developed and integrated into a strategy to reach national goals is also important. The SA program in the United States is a multi-agency program with many key players. The complex system of checks and balances established in our Constitution serve to both hinder efficiency but also provide balance in its execution.



United States Government Organization for Security Assistance⁷

The Executive Branch of our government, under the leadership of the President, is the primary agent which develops and executes our nation's foreign policy. The National Security Council (NSC) outlines a National Security Strategy which provides guidance for the rest of the administration to follow. As mentioned previously, the Department of State is the lead agency in conducting foreign affairs. It is within the DoS that SA is formulated and integrated into foreign policy. SA within the DoS is handled at a variety of levels. These include: the DoS organization in Washington, DC, U.S. Ambassadors, U.S. Embassy staffs and country teams.

The DoS organization in Washington, DC tasked with developing SA policy is coordinated between the Under Secretaries of State for Arms Control and International Security (T) and Political Affairs (P). The T group is specifically tasked with developing SA policy under the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. The P group supports the T group from its separate geographic bureaus: East Asian and Pacific Affairs, European and Eurasian Affairs, Near Eastern Affairs, South Asian Affairs, and Western Hemisphere Affairs. Each geographic bureau handles a variety of issues dealing with multiple countries. As can be seen, these sub-divisions of tasking can be difficult to coordinate.

More focused dealings with individual countries are accomplished at the overseas missions the United States has established in some 180 countries with which it has diplomatic relationships. Each of these missions, whether they be embassies, consulates, or other diplomatic missions, have the responsibility to provide specific information and analysis of countries back to Washington in order for the DoS to properly develop and carry out U.S. foreign policy. These individual U.S. diplomatic missions are led by a Chief of Mission (CoM), usually an Ambassador. Chiefs of Missions, in addition to supervising all

aspects of DoS and other Executive Branch personnel, have the authority to direct, coordinate, and supervise all DoD personnel within the country, except those under the command of a U.S. military commander. As such, they have considerable authority to ensure their personal views are reflected in all recommendations regarding SA towards their assigned country.

At the discretion of the CoM, an informal interagency working group may be established to coordinate the various functions conducted in each of the U.S. missions. It is through these "country teams" that SA recommendations for a particular country are usually developed. ¹⁰ In addition, country teams develop Mission Performance Plans (MPPs) which are used to consolidate and express specific objectives and methods each U.S. mission will undertake in conducting foreign affairs with its specific country, including SA.

The Department of Defense is, in large part, the primary tool in backing up presidential foreign policy with action. SA, although formulated by the DoS, is usually executed by the DoD. Like the DoS, the DoD has various agencies, bureaus, and commands that execute the SA program including: DoD organizations in Washington, DC and various agencies, Unified Combatant Commanders and their staffs, and Security Assistance Offices in a number of countries.

The organization in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) that deals specifically with SA is sponsored by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)). Within the USD(P) structure are the Assistant Secretaries of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD(ISA)), International Security Policy (ASD(ISP)), and Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC)). In addition to supervising SA programs for all foreign governments not under other ASDs, ASD(ISA) has a specific DoD

agency that interprets executive policy and develops all DoD SA policies and programs, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). ASD(ISP) is responsible for supervising SA programs for countries in Eurasia while ASD (SOLIC) is responsible for Central and South American countries.¹¹ Like the DoS organizational structure, coordination within OSD can be complicated.

The most basic level of managing the execution of SA directly with individual countries is accomplished by Unified Combatant Commanders (CC) and their staffs, and through Security Assistance Organizations (SAOs). CCs and SAOs work very closely in many aspects of SA that are not the functions or responsibilities of the CoM. CCs, among other SA functions, provide recommendations to the Joint Staff and the Secretary of Defense on many aspects of SA programs including: projections and activities in their respective Areas of Responsibility (AORs), technical assistance and administrative support to SAOs, coordination of regional SA matters with other U.S. diplomatic missions and DoD components, and evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of DoD overseas SA organizations.¹²

In addition, each CC is responsible to develop a Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) which details peacetime security engagement plans between the U.S. military and individual countries in support of U.S. foreign policy. TSCPs are similar to DoS MPPs and may contain many of the same objectives but deal with military engagement exclusively. Of note, the AORs of the CCs do not necessarily correspond to either DoD OSD or DoS bureau areas of focus. This makes coordination of TSCP development and SA recommendations difficult to coordinate with the organizations set up in each of those departments.

SAOs encompass all DoD elements located in a particular foreign country that are responsible for carrying out SA management functions in that country. SAO Chiefs have the unique dilemma of being responsible to three authorities: the CoM, the CC, and the Director, DSCA.¹³ Balancing priorities and keeping each of their bosses informed of directed actions from other sources can be quite challenging.

To balance the Executive Branch in the conduct of the country's foreign affairs, the Legislative Branch has two very influential means at its disposal: budget spending levels and national law. While it is the Executive Branch that coordinates, with the DoS lead, an SA policy and submits budget proposals, the final federal budget amounts appropriated for SA execution lay with the U.S. Congress. Without funding, there can be no SA programs. In addition, national laws set boundaries for the President and his administration to follow in executing foreign policy. Current laws that primarily govern the use of SA funds are the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended. Congressional action can determine what countries receive SA funds, how much they receive, and what they can spend the funds on, which in turn can have dramatic effects on SA program planning, effectiveness, and ultimately the desired influence on foreign countries.

Bridging the Gaps and Resolving Mismatches - Is it possible?

The Cultural Divide – There are unique differences between the culture of the DoD and the military and that of the DoS and Foreign Service officers. Both have reputations that are sometimes viewed as polar opposites. Although both (should) work for the same objectives as stated by the National Security Strategy, their perceptions and methods usually

differ. The following descriptions are deliberately extreme to point out how different the cultures between the two communities can be:

- When implementing foreign policy, many believe that the military should only be called upon when force is necessary. The Department of State, specifically the Foreign Service, can have a reputation as an organization that is anti-military. The Foreign Service is taught to be adept at diplomacy and engage in foreign affairs through mediation and agreement without the need for military involvement. SA is often viewed simply as a negotiation tool and should be kept to a minimum, lest we begin an arms race.
- The military believes that peace through strength is a virtue. SA amongst all friendly nations should be a vital part in maintaining a stable world order. Active engagement between militaries is an effective way to influence governments since in many countries the military has a significant governmental role. A large and strong SA program can provide all the influence that is needed to carry out foreign policy objectives.

Solution: Combatant Commanders (CCs) must ensure that their SA managers do not perceive the cultural differences with an "us verses them" attitude. Remembering that the lead agency in the Executive Branch for foreign affairs is the DoS and that one of the greatest aspects of our government is civilian control of the military can help improve relations between military members and DoS personnel. We all work for the same President and should focus on unity of effort to obtain his foreign policy objectives together. Because of the unique relationship SAOs have with both CCs and embassy staffs, they are in the ideal place to facilitate breaking down divisions between the two cultures.

<u>Inter-Agency Process Improvement</u> – When developing SA policy and strategy in theater, the current system within which the DoS and DoD interact involves considerable

coordination, most of which is informal. The "country team" concept used by most DoS missions involves representatives on-site and, at the discretion of the CoM, may not include key players. From the CC's perspective, individual country MPPs may not always correspond with their regional TSCP. This type of sporadic contribution makes CC regional coordination very difficult.

Considering that much of the interagency work involving program development occurs in Washington, a CC's input into the system can be limited. President George W. Bush's National Security Council System established by National Security Presidential Directive-1 abolished many of the old Interagency Working Groups developed by President Clinton. As such, there exists no formal SA interagency working group. Without this formal system, the SA program may lack sufficient interagency coordination.

Fiscal Year Planning Assessments (FYPA), usually developed by country teams, are considered the single most important planning instruments for funding SA programs.¹⁷

These FYPAs are submitted to the DoS for submission into the President's budget. Without a formal system established for country teams or an interagency working group for SA, CCs may have difficulties in having enough input into the final SA program.

Solution: A new formal inter-departmental process between the DoS, DoD, and other federal departments must be developed. Although tasked with developing SA program budget submissions, the DoS, unlike the DoD, has no central agency to coordinate such proposals. As mentioned previously, the DoD has the DSCA, the agency tasked to interpret executive policy and develop and manage all DoD SA programs.

The DoS should establish an SA coordination agency, perhaps along the model of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The new agency would be

tasked to formalize coordination between U.S. Missions and the DoD, specifically CCs, on the development of SA programs. Components of the new agency should come from both the DoS and DoD, possibly even merging with the DSCA.

In addition, the DoD should establish a formal system and instruction for CCs to submit *regional* FYPAs which integrate MPPs and TSCPs for DoS consideration. Regional FYPAs would be required to be submitted together with a CCs TSCP and assign monetary recommendations to ensure that the DoD, specifically CCs, has direct input into the interagency coordination of the SA budget.

Without undermining DoS responsibility for the overall effort of foreign policy and SA policy objectives, creating an SA coordination agency and receiving regional FYPAs would create a concerted effort to integrate an interagency working relationship between the DoS, DoD, CCs and U.S. Missions.

Budget Control – Probably the most contentious issues of SA is how much one should spend on the security of another country. Federal budgets are never unlimited and as such debates occur at every level of our government. The answer lies in what can be termed "the price of influence." This "price" is how much it costs to influence the attitudes, confidence, and willingness of other nations to act in accordance with our desires.

Determining the right "price" is very difficult, if not impossible.

As stated earlier, while the Executive Branch proposes budget levels it believes will have a desired amount of influence, it is the U.S. Congress that ultimately funds SA programs. Congress carefully considers the justification submitted with the President's budget proposal when determining final funding amounts.

Which department actually submits justification for SA funds can have a significant impact on the amount of control that department has in managing the program. Since the DoS is the lead agency in formulating foreign policy it could be said that it is in the best position to justify how much should be "paid for influence." However, when it is the responsibility of the DoD, specifically the CCs, to actually execute spending SA funds, would it not be prudent for the funding to be part of the DoD budget? Other key questions that are part of the debate include: because military representatives may be more familiar with the actual costs involved in SA purchasing, wouldn't they be more knowledgeable about how much to ask for? Is military to military engagement a better forum in determining the security needs of other countries? Shouldn't CCs be given their own budgets for SA? What is the more valuable aspect of SA – the impact on our friends' military capabilities or the impact on diplomatic relations?

And, of course, the bottom line is that funding allocations are never finalized until Congress turns it into law. So who is actually in charge?

Solution: The previous proposal for the DoS to establish a SA coordination agency similar to the USAID would also provide a central voice under the DoS to strengthen and improve the efficiency of SA programs. Again, the new agency could be merged with the DSCA and have both DoS and DoD elements to focus on both the development and execution of SA programs for both departments.

As the authority on SA programs, the SA coordination agency could have more influence on the Legislative Branch by providing more thorough and better coordinated multi-agency input to the President's budget submission. While still under the purview of the

DoS, SA programs would have increased direction from DoD elements, specifically CCs, and the expertise of current DSCA program managers.

Measure of Effectiveness – Under DoDD 5132.3, CCs are tasked with "providing to the JCS a military assessment and impact upon SA programs within their respective AORs." However, the directive lacks any formal guidance on how this is to be accomplished. A similar problem plagues the TSCP process. CCs are required to develop a TSCP with no formal process of evaluation other than "review" by the Joint Staff. Because TSCPs are handled differently within the JOPES, they are not held to the same review standards as other deliberate contingency plans. ¹⁹ This includes a lack of measurable effectiveness standards. ²⁰

A recent report published by the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) identified many recommendations for how the Theater Engagement Planning (TEP) Process, the predecessor to the TSCP process, should be revised to include:²¹

- eliminating the current practice of the Joint Staff merely "reviewing" TEPs
 and including an assessment
- developing categories which CCs should be directed to demonstrate
 meeting defined measures of merit
- having the CJCS communicate global and regional priorities in the Joint
 Strategic Capabilities Plan
- combining the TEP with response planning methodologies to better align
 coordination between the supporting and supported CCs

What is not identified by the SSI report is the need to integrate measures of effectiveness into the interagency processes which affects the SA program specifically.

Solution: Accept the changes recommended by the SSI and include the requirement for CCs to assess the integration of TSCPs with country MPPs. This would ensure that CCs are not only ensuring the quality of their TSCPs but report on how effective they are using interagency cooperation in managing their SA program.

Long Range Planning - Long range planning for SA programs is inherently difficult due to the adaptive and flexible nature that is a part of the objectives involved in our national security and foreign policy objectives. Funding and financing aspects in SA are annually based, that is they are tied to the federal budget cycle. Unlike DoD Fiscal Year Defense Plans (FYDPs) and the Planning Program Budget System, SA budget planning is based on DoS funding requests.²² This makes planning by CCs particularly difficult. FYPAs, submitted by country teams, are developed annually to correspond with the DoS's annual budget submission. TSCPs, developed by CCs, are seven-year outlooks that are more in line with FYDPs.²³ The questions which plague both the DoD and DoS are whether long range planning is either possible or necessary. The answer lies in coordination and cooperation.

Solution: As discussed previously under the Inter-Agency Process Improvement section, increased interagency coordination through the establishment of a new DoS SA coordination agency and the submission of regional TSCPs would significantly overcome many of the problems faced by everyone in long range SA planning.

Quality over Quantity - Much of the focus involved in SA programs deals with budgeting. However, because of the inherent difficulties in planning such as changes in policy, political fluctuations (both within our own government and those overseas) and because the U.S. government does not promote defense sales (except in rare instances),²⁴ the quality of execution of SA programs should be more important than quantity of funds.

Changes in U.S. policies are expected. What is most detrimental to the execution of the SA programs is when strategies and policies are not coordinated or interrupted by incompetence. Failure to properly manage SA programs could have disastrous consequences to our foreign policy objectives.

Solution: Better coordination and execution by the DoS and DoD is in the best interest of both parties and for the SA program overall. An increase in the unity of effort must break down the barriers as mentioned in the discussion of cultural differences between the two communities.

DoS elements, such as U.S. missions, must actively engage in discussions with DoD elements, specifically CCs, in developing MPPs and FYPAs. DoD elements must coordinate efforts when developing TSCPs with DoS policy makers to set more effective and realistic objectives and strategies.

In addition, proper training of DoD personnel, especially SAOs and CC staffs, is vital to the proper management and successful execution of SA programs. The DSCA is charged with supporting all DoD elements with educational programs through the Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management (DISAM).²⁵ All DoD personnel must be required to attend formal initial and periodic refresher training when assigned to perform SA related missions.

Conclusion

Security Assistance (SA) can vary what form it comes in, when it is used, and to whom it will be given. As such, SA is extremely flexible and can be tailored in attempting to achieve a variety of individual results. However, like poorly engineered reinforced concrete, uncontrolled flexibility, can cause a structure to crumble from within when stressed by

outside pressures. A successful SA program can produce impressive returns on its investment, while an SA program with interior flaws can be rendered ineffective in an ever changing international environment. To succeed, the SA program of the United States must harness the collective power of the Departments of State and Defense and work together in order to withstand the pressures from the numerous forces it faces.

By working with a unity of effort, better interagency coordination can work to minimize the impact on SA programs brought on by the unpredictable nature of politics within our own government as well as those abroad. The impact of congressional influence and budget funding can decimate the ability of SA to achieve its desired objectives. The best defense against detrimental interference would be to demonstrate effective results through effective execution. Improving the processes involved in developing and executing SA programs will also strengthen the ability to interact with changes in foreign affairs. Better cooperation and coordination will allow for improved foresight and better planning.

Finally, a bigger SA program does not necessarily mean a better one. This paper was not an effort to increase the scope or funding for the current SA program, but to improve its performance. Better coordination and the education of all participants will make for a more effective program. Only when the results of an effective SA program can be proved will it be prudent for the United States to expand the program.

NOTES

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⁵ [George Washington], <u>Great Americans Speak</u>, ed. John E. Pomfret (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1968), 29.

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¹² Department of Defense, <u>DoD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Assistance</u>, DoDD 5132.3 (Washington, DC: 1981), 7-8.

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¹⁵ Carnes Lord, <u>The Presidency and the Management of National Security</u> (New York: Free Press 1988), 47.

¹⁶ President, National Security Presidential Directive-1, "Organization of the National Security Council System," (March 2001).

¹⁷ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, <u>Security Assistance Management Manual</u> [book on line], DoD 5105.38-M, (Washington, DC, accessed 11 January 2003), available from http://www.dsca.osd.mil/samm/samm_ch4.pdf>.

¹⁸ Department of Defense, <u>DoD Policy and Responsibilities Relating to Security Assistance</u>, DoDD 5132.3, 8.

¹⁹ Thomas M. Jordon, Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., and Thomas-Durell Young, <u>Shaping the World Through "Engagement"</u>: <u>Assessing the Depart of Defense's Theater Engagement Planning Process</u>, (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000), 22.

²⁰ Ibid., 21.

²¹ Ibid., 27.

²² Defense Security Cooperation Agency, <u>Security Assistance Management Manual</u> [book on line], available from http://www.dsca.osd.mil/samm/samm_ch4.pdf>.

²³ Gordon, Lovelace, and Young, 14.

²⁴ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, <u>Security Assistance Management Manual</u> [book on line], available from http://www.dsca.osd.mil/samm/samm_ch4.pdf>.

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