
U.S. Military Assistance and Sales to East Asia

By

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Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be here today to testify on U.S. military assistance and sales to East Asia.

It is common knowledge that our world is in a period of transition. This Administration acknowledges the changes that are taking place and, because of those changes, is in the midst of a review of our foreign aid programs, including security assistance. The shape of our programs, as we now know them, could change considerably within the next year or so. While it is premature for me to speculate on the specific recommended changes that will come out of this review, I can say that I expect things will be different. DoD is fully supportive of this review.

The Department of Defense has already modified its views to address the new international security environment. In the past we have focused on the threats of communism, specifically from the former Soviet Union. Today, instead of the unitary challenges of communism we grapple with the four threats that Secretary Aspin has outlined.

THREAT OF REGIONAL, ETHNIC, AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

The first I will discuss today is the threat of regional, ethnic, and religious conflicts. It is this threat that military assistance most effectively deals with. Our friends and allies depend on U.S. defense equipment, services, and training acquired through our security assistance programs to preserve peace, wherever possible, and to defeat aggression, whenever necessary. The security derived from being able to deter or defend against threats allows these countries to foster an environment that is conducive to social, economic, and political growth. U.S. sales and assistance programs also allow friends and allies to participate in international peacekeeping and peacemaking activities. For example, the Japanese have used C-130s purchased from the United States to support their peacekeeping efforts in Cambodia.

THREAT OF POTENTIAL FAILURE OR REVERSAL OF DEMOCRACIES

The next threat we face is the potential failure or reversal of democracies. Of utmost concern to us is the success of reform in the former Soviet Union, though we continue to work toward maintaining democracies in other parts of the world as well. It is in our best interest to see reforms in the countries succeed. Failure to do so could have severe adverse consequences for our own security.

One important avenue to positively influence democratic reforms is through our International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. This program provides courses in professional military education to military and civilian personnel from friendly countries. Under our expanded IMET initiative, foreign officials are exposed to training in human rights,

fundamentals of military judicial procedures, defense resource management, and civilian control of the military.

IMET has been very successful in the Pacific Rim countries. The importance of IMET was recently expressed by Admiral Larson, Commander-in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, when he stated that IMET, "is the cornerstone of USCINCPAC's security assistance effort in the Asia-Pacific region." [Ed. Note: the full text of Admiral Larson's remarks can be found elsewhere in this *Journal*.] Admiral Larson went on to say that through IMET, we create new friendships and strengthen alliances while simultaneously promoting good will, trust, and mutual confidence. These facets of the program serve us well because IMET participants often rise to important civilian and military leadership positions in their governments. When they achieve positions of prominence and influence, there is a great potential for U.S. influence in the decision making processes of their nations.

We continue to support a robust IMET program with our friends and allies in the Pacific Rim. In FY 1993, we provided expanded IMET training to Korea, the Philippines, Tonga, and Thailand, and we sent a Mobile Education Team to Papua-New Guinea to conduct human rights training.

THREAT OF LACK OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

The third challenge I will address concerns our ability to ensure our own economic security. We cannot separate our national security interests from our economic interests. While the primary determinants for military sales and assistance programs are the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals and the furtherance of our national security interests, U.S. economic interests should also be a significant consideration. We will continue to exercise due prudence in arms transfers to ensure that they promote, rather than detract, from regional stability. At the same time, it must be recognized that as our own defense spending decreases, defense exports have become much more important to the viability of individual U.S. defense firms and to our overall defense industrial base. Some of our important domestic defense programs, such as the F-15 fighter and PATRIOT air defense system depend on foreign sales to keep production lines open and to preserve the jobs of highly skilled U.S. defense workers. Foreign sales also can lower unit costs for DoD purchases.

The Pacific Rim countries are some of the world's fastest growing economies and some of our most promising markets for American exports. We have mutually beneficial security relationships with many of these countries, just about all of which make their purchases with their own funds. Some countries are in the market to upgrade or maintain previously purchased U.S.-origin equipment. Others are modernizing their force structures. For example, Taiwan recently decided to purchase F-16 aircraft to replace its current aging and increasingly nonserviceable inventory of F-104 and F-5 fighters. We also recently notified Congress of Japan's intention to procure two 767 AWACS aircraft. Through a combination of a direct commercial sale and FMS, we will sell AWACS as end items to Japan.

THREAT OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

Finally, the fourth threat Secretary Aspin has identified is nuclear proliferation. While the programs over which my agency has cognizance are not directly involved in nuclear issues, in the future FMS may prove a useful vehicle to provide U.S. defense services, such as training, to interested foreign countries in their pursuit of future nonproliferation activities.

FY 1994 MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND SALES PROGRAMS.

As you can see, threats continue to exist to our interests around the world. However, the United States cannot, and should not be expected to, intervene in every crisis. Our military assistance and sales programs provide our friends with the necessary tools to prevent some crises and to respond to others without our intervention. These programs also promote interoperability between the forces of the United States and other countries so that when a coalition effort is needed quickly, as was the case in the Persian Gulf War, our forces can fight effectively together. Our programs also support critical military base and access arrangements and provide highly useful opportunities for joint training exercises.

As I noted previously, our sales programs in the region are almost all handled on a cash basis. Our only remaining FMF program there is with the Philippines, and it is but a fraction of the size of the program it was before. This, of course, reflects our own serious budget constraints, the need to devote resources to crisis spots elsewhere, as well as our withdrawal from our military bases in the Philippines. However, we do continue to have security obligations to the Philippines agreed to under our Mutual Defense Treaty. In the absence of U.S. forces, our programs have become even more essential to maintaining an important link to our strategic engagement in the region. To maximize the benefits of our modest Philippine FMF we encourage them to use the funding for sustainment of U.S.-origin equipment. We believe it is important that this modest program continue—both for the Philippines' ability to defend itself and for our continuing security relationship with that country.

CONCLUSION

The close military and economic relationships between the United States and East Asian nations serve both parties well. The end of the Cold War may change the nature of methods used to further these relations, but should not diminish the relationships themselves. The security assistance and military sales programs have been basic tools to achieve contemporary national security and foreign policy objectives of the United States. Though the requested security assistance program for the region has been sharply reduced from previous years, we look forward to continuing those assistance and sales programs which we believe beneficial to advance our interests in the Region.