

DSCA Director's Blog

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

What is the "Total Package Approach?"

The Total Package Approach is a term we use to describe the security cooperation community's philosophy that guides how we structure Foreign Military Sales (FMS).

Often I'll hear from a foreign customer, "Why are you telling me this pick-up truck costs \$25,000 dollars, when I found it on line for \$15,000? In response, I usually ask, "Where did you get your price?" The answer most of the time is "Well, I Googled it!" What this answer fails to acknowledge is that the majority of the time, the sale is just not that simple. For example, let's imagine that the pick-up truck needs to operate in the desert, in extreme temperatures and in a dusty environment. Let's also imagine that the truck needs two-way radios that are interoperable with US and partner nations; and it must run on a fuel mixture not commonly available in the United States.

Sometimes simple purchases are not as simple as they might seem. And that's just the initial package. Now, if we go for the total package under FMS, we'll also ensure the truck comes with two years worth of filters, so that the vehicle will not choke on the dust and dirt. The FMS package will also make sure the trucks have special nozzles that can accept the foreign fuel and that the truck drivers have the training to drive and repair those trucks, and, oh by the way, operate those two-way radios!

I take each of these vignettes as an opportunity to educate our partners and others about the benefits of the Foreign Military Sales Program. The total package approach is, as its name implies, a complete approach to buying a system that will operate on delivery and still operate in two years. The Total Package will always consider the comprehensive needs for operating and maintaining a system upfront, not after there is a failure. These elements can include but are not limited to specialized training, spares, support equipment, publications, transportation and more. That's why the total package for the pick-up truck costs \$25,000 and not \$15,000.

Another by-product of the Total Package Approach is the time spent working with customers to identify their real needs. This builds reservoirs of trust and cooperation that can last for years, helping to cement important bilateral relationships between the United States and our international partners. It is very rewarding to work with partners who value our FMS process and appreciate the life cycle support.

I was with a foreign Chief of Air Force recently and he said, "We'll only go FMS! The total package approach is the right way to build relationships for the long haul."

DSCA Director's Biography



Vice Admiral Jeffrey A. Wieringa

DSCA Website



Defense Solutions
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About the Defense Security Cooperation Agency

The Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), as part of the United States Department of Defense, provides financial and technical assistance, transfer of defense materiel, training and services to friends partners and allies, and promotes military-to-military contacts.

Posted by Director, DSCA Blog at [9:23 AM](#) 

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