



THE ROLE OF AIRPOWER IN FID

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Air Force [foreign internal defense](#) (FID) operations are founded on the basic tenets of airpower. These tenets, which apply equally to US and host nation (HN) forces, include centralized control and decentralized execution, flexibility and versatility, synergistic effects, persistence, concentration, balance, and priority. Specific methods, applications, and expectations, may vary according to the nature of the conflict.

Airpower plays a critical role in supporting counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations and entails supporting civil law-enforcement agencies and government administrative mechanisms, as well as military surface forces. For additional discussions on support to counterinsurgency and counterterrorism see AFDP 3-2, [Irregular Warfare](#). The most commonly employed airpower functions in FID include [air mobility](#), [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance](#) (ISR), and [command and control](#) (C2).

In counterinsurgency, civilian security and stability are of utmost importance. Air strikes are significantly restricted in order to limit collateral damage. The lesser requirement for kinetic effects does not obviate the importance of armed aircraft. Close air support, for example, may prove critical in situations with friendly troops in close contact with hostile forces. Interdiction may be required prior to launching operations against armed terrorist and insurgent targets. Armed aircraft can also accomplish route reconnaissance, defend convoys, and combat search and rescue. A major challenge for commanders is achieving a proper balance between lethal and non-lethal effects and assigning realistic priorities to the use of military force.

The HN's [internal defense and development \(IDAD\) strategy](#) provides the basis for determining appropriate airpower objectives. Accordingly, Air Force FID assistance should be designed to support and reinforce the host-nation's IDAD strategy. A typical IDAD strategy, illustrated in the IDAD Strategy figure, incorporates four basic functions designed to help prevent or counter internal threats. Airpower operations are most successful when their resources and methods support the total range of IDAD strategies.