



AIRPOWER OPERATIONS

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Airpower assets can work synergistically to support [foreign internal defense](#) (FID) operations, including counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Commanders should consider the political, economic, informational, and military implications of using the functions of airpower.

AIR MOBILITY

[Air mobility](#) increases the government's capacity to govern and administer through presence and persistence in otherwise inaccessible regions of the country, and by physically extending the reach of public policy and information programs. Air mobility also provides a means of rapidly transporting security forces and supplies to forward areas.

Air transportation can access remote regions and bring resources and personnel in order to promote balanced development and mobilization through nation assistance. Airlift can carry specialists and trainers to remote regions to provide on-site technical training and assistance in areas such as public services management, sanitation and hygiene, agronomy, agribusiness management and technology, veterinary medicine, ecology, environmental protection, and public schools administration.

Air mobility can also support developmental initiatives by delivering construction equipment, supplies, and personnel for building rural housing projects, power generation plants and hydroelectric facilities, bridge building, and other public works programs. Air mobility can support security and neutralization by deploying, sustaining, and reinforcing civil law enforcement agencies as well as military and paramilitary surface elements. Air mobility has also successfully supported political goals by extending the electoral process to rural groups.

Logistics tasks are carried out through air landing, airdrop, and aerial extraction of equipment, supplies, and personnel. Air mobility operations can include any combination of combat operations, casualty evacuation, emergency extraction of military forces, noncombatant evacuation, troop movement, and resupply. Air mobility can also be used for infiltration and recovery of ground reconnaissance teams, surveillance personnel, and special intelligence resources. Tactical battlefield

mobility, including [casualty evacuation](#) (CASEVAC) and logistics support for surface combat units, is a vital airpower function for maintaining security and neutralizing hostile forces during [counterinsurgency](#) (COIN) and counterterrorism operations. Both fixed-wing and vertical-lift airlift play crucial roles. Fixed-wing transports are best suited for carrying ground assault forces into forward staging areas for tactical insertion by vertical lift aircraft. Fixed-winged and vertical lift aircraft are ideal platforms to carry ground assault teams into the immediate target area or employment site. CASEVAC should be integral to any operation involving the employment of personnel in hostile-fire situations. Vertical lift aircraft are best suited for this task because of their vertical retrieval capability and their ability to land and take off in the immediate vicinity of the target area.

COMBAT SUPPORT

[Combat support](#) (CS) operations in FID may be designed to support US-only operations, multinational operations, enable host nation (HN) airpower capabilities against irregular threats, or a combination thereof. CS may transition from a purely Air Force support role to one of more direct involvement as when training HN aviation forces in such areas as maintenance, air base defense, medical, etc. Commanders should consider the following factors when employing CS in FID:

- ✦ Operating in austere environments with limited infrastructure.
- ✦ Increased combat readiness for surviving and operating in increased threat environments to include chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear environments.
- ✦ Increased security and force protection requirements.
- ✦ Extended logistical lines.
- ✦ Communications limitations.
- ✦ Multiple distributed operations.

HN forces' combat support capabilities should be assessed and training and education developed to ensure full mission capability.

INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE

Airpower can help commanders maintain situational awareness through [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance](#) (ISR) capabilities. Airpower can provide intelligence collection capabilities for security and neutralization. These capabilities may provide intelligence to civilian law enforcement agencies or to military and paramilitary units. Platforms equipped with [signals intelligence](#) (SIGINT) or [geospatial intelligence](#) (GEOINT) capabilities can identify and assess insurgent, terrorist, or drug enterprise

infrastructures. SIGINT and GEOINT capabilities can provide real time battlefield awareness and battle damage assessments, and identify and pinpoint high value targets in real time.

In many cases, the most useful intelligence in counterinsurgency and combating terrorism operations has proven to be [human intelligence](#) (HUMINT). HUMINT-derived information can yield insights into sources and potential vectors of destabilization and revolt before a situation spirals out of control; while counterintelligence activities can be employed to identify, deceive, exploit, disrupt, and neutralize the threats. It can be used to build strategic assessments and plans for [internal defense and development](#) (IDAD), and for planning US strategic paths. HUMINT can provide information on how well US FID programs are working in other countries and how HN authorities intend to employ FID-provided weapons and training. This information can be used to improve or modify the FID effort.

Air or space-based reconnaissance and surveillance can be used to monitor the condition of isolated friendly enclaves, surface lines of communication, and civilian population groups, or to collect intelligence on enemy strength, location, and movement in denied areas. Information on hostile activities is also accessible through other intelligence disciplines, including HUMINT; and threat information exchanges through joint counter intelligence and law enforcement activities. Airpower assets can expand and accelerate the HUMINT process by opening up collection sites not accessible by surface transportation, and by speeding up collection and recovery of time-sensitive data.

ISR is a critical airpower function in counterinsurgency. Air or space-based ISR are rarely a replacement for HUMINT, however ISR is the principal capability that enables governments to maintain situational awareness of ground events and the physical disposition of insurgent forces within the country's borders. ISR is also employed during [dynamic targeting](#). The platforms best suited for this mission are equipped with electro-optical sensors and deployed to detect, identify, and report maneuvering adversaries and cross-border traffic. The principal task of ISR supporting offensive security and neutralization is finding and identifying targets for exploitation by HN forces.

Many ISR requirements can be satisfied through unmanned aircraft systems. However, there will continue to be a need for manned ISR platforms in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Training on processing, exploitation, and dissemination; and overall intelligence-related skills should also be included as part of the overall FID ISR mission.

COUNTERLAND OPERATIONS

In a COIN operation, the [counterland](#) mission includes [air interdiction](#) and [close air support](#) (CAS) with an emphasis on precision engagement. Counterland neutralizes or degrades enemy resistance before employing ground assault teams. The COIN

counterland sequence normally flows in sequence from aerial ISR into interdiction for target preparation before insertion of ground assault forces, and from there into CAS and CASEVAC and, finally, to air cover for extraction.

The applications of counterland for security and neutralization are in instances when hostile elements openly commit their forces during assembly and attack or when their command and control centers and logistics elements are exposed and identified.

Counterland operations should be planned and executed on a scale commensurate with the required effects. When countering certain forms of lawlessness (e.g., illicit narcotics production and civil disorders), surface operations are generally aimed at controlling territory, arresting people, and seizing contraband rather than inflicting casualties. CAS, if required, should be limited to protecting the surface forces by using tactics and munitions designed for suppression, shock, and intimidation, rather than maximum lethality.

PERSONNEL RECOVERY OPERATIONS

Personnel recovery (PR) operations can be employed in virtually every aspect of counterinsurgency air operations. The mission of AF Rescue is PR and the method by which they accomplish this is [combat search and rescue](#) (CSAR). Air Force PR is prepared to accomplish other missions to include [non-combatant evacuation operations](#) (NEO) and CASEVAC. CSAR remains the primary mission and is the most difficult. For additional information, see AFDP 3-50, [Personnel Recovery](#).

Reliable CSAR and CASEVAC, especially at night, historically improves the willingness and ability of HN ground forces to engage in operations they may otherwise be less motivated to perform. This was particularly noticeable in the Philippines in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. Philippine ground forces would not engage terrorists at night knowing there was no night CASEVAC capability available. Ground combat teams began night operations immediately after the Philippine Air Force acquired this capability provided by Air Force [combat aviation advisors](#).

INFORMATION OPERATIONS AND INFORMATION RELATED CAPABILITIES

The informational and psychological effects of using air assets can have significant consequences when interacting with a HN. The [information operations](#) (IO) planning function ensures that these consequences are fully examined prior to taking actions. The effective planning and employment of [information related capabilities](#) (IRCs) can create a desired effect on adversary, neutral, and friendly decision making contributing towards a specified set of behaviors.

IRCs are the individual tools, techniques, or activities using data, information, or knowledge to create effects and operationally desirable conditions within the information environment. IRCs may include [operations security](#), [military deception](#),

[military information support operations](#) (MISO), [public affairs](#), Air Force information network and [electromagnetic warfare](#) (EW) operations. IRCs may also include activities such as counterpropaganda, engagements, and shows of force. IRCs can be employed individually or in combinations to create effects.

Airpower provides MISO capabilities such as delivering information by radio, television, loudspeakers, and print. Using air mobility to establish the physical presence of government officials at isolated locations increases and improves information dissemination and collection efforts with the added benefit of building psychological support among target audiences. MISO can help turn hostile elements into neutral elements and neutral elements into friendly. While not part of MISO, public affairs operations can help support the overall MISO effort.

In addition to technical means of information delivery, airpower forces possess capabilities to produce influencing effects by demonstrating superior mobility, responsiveness, and firepower. Influencing the behavior of target groups through air operations may be used to weaken enemy resistance, capture public support, or both. Influence operations may produce indirect benefits resulting from such activities as humanitarian assistance and civic assistance action.

Development and mobilization programs involving military security forces should include informational initiatives that clarify and promote government intentions. Air transportation of public information officials can provide a means of disseminating vital information, especially when undertaken in isolated areas. Public affairs operations can be an effective tool to bolster a HN's public support for counterinsurgency operations and can increase HN government legitimacy.

As an IRC of IO, EW is conducted to secure and maintain freedom of action in the [electromagnetic spectrum](#) (EMS). Military forces rely heavily on the EMS to sense, communicate, strike, and dominate offensively and defensively across all warfighting domains. EW is essential for protecting friendly operations and denying adversary operations within the EMS. EW consists of three divisions: [electromagnetic attack](#), [electromagnetic warfare support](#), and [electromagnetic protection](#). All three contribute to the success of air, space, and cyberspace operations. Employing EW offers commanders both lethal and nonlethal options.

Employed across the entire continuum of competition and conflict, EW can enhance the ability of operational commanders to achieve advantage over adversaries. Commanders rely on the EMS for intelligence; communication; positioning, navigation, and timing; sensing; command and control; attack; ranging; data transmission; and information and storage. Therefore, control of the EMS is essential to the success of military operations across the competition continuum. EW considerations must be fully integrated into operations in order to be effective.

[Cyberspace operations](#) capabilities provide an indirect or direct combat role to support or extend lethal and nonlethal effects and can provide defense in-depth options in the

face of increased probing and attempted intrusion or attack of coalition networks. Counterintelligence activities in cyberspace can identify, disrupt, neutralize, penetrate, or exploit the adversary's activities, threats or plans, or use it as a conduit to achieve some effect. Cyberspace plans and operational considerations are important to integrate into US FID operations.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Air Force special operations forces (AFSOF) offer extended military capabilities and tailored options providing great flexibility, stealth, surgical execution, speed, and surprise. AFSOF aviation is inherently offensive in nature and is especially useful in situations where conventional solutions are not effective against insurgent and terrorist threats. The development and maintenance of AFSOF aviation is particularly important to countries that must deal with such internal asymmetric threats as guerrilla insurgency, terrorism, criminal subversion, and illicit drug production and trafficking.

AFSOF aviation should be primarily organized, trained, and equipped to support special operations surface forces in hostile, denied, or other politically sensitive territory with air mobility and resupply, insertion and extraction, personnel recovery, ISR, and CAS. AFSOF aviation should enable surface forces to conduct small-unit tactical operations in territory that cannot be accessed or occupied by conventional forces. Whereas many foreign nations possess surface special operations units, few possess special operations aviation assets. Where needed, indigenous aviation forces may find it expedient to organize, train, and equip to support ground special operations surface forces in hostile, denied, or other politically sensitive territory with air mobility and resupply, insertion and extraction, CASEVAC, PR, ISR, and CAS. As with US forces, indigenous capabilities should be adaptive, fluid, and responsive to asymmetric threats and circumstances. For additional information, see AFDP 3-05, [Special Operations](#).
