



## ASSESS-TRAIN-ADVISE-ASSIST MISSION SET

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A variety of personnel throughout the Air Force can accomplish the assess, train, advise, and assist mission set; however, the need for these skills worldwide exceeds the number of specialized forces available. This is especially true in cases when training and advisory forces must maintain presence and persistence for extended periods of time. Commanders should consider all available options for enabling foreign aviation forces through [foreign internal defense](#) (FID) training and advisory initiatives.

Training and advising support is conducted at both the operational and tactical levels. When tasked, Air Force training and advisory personnel deploy to a designated country, collocate with [host nation](#) (HN) aviation elements at squadron, wing, or headquarters levels, and assess, train, advise, and assist counterpart personnel in the employment and sustainment of airpower operations.

In appropriate instances, US instructor aircrews fly with foreign counterparts at the deployment location, generally using HN aircraft, to assess capabilities and determine current levels of proficiency and safety. The instructors may then train HN aviation personnel in required tactics, techniques, and procedures for joint and combined warfare.

The mission set of assessing, training, advising, and assisting is based on [critical sequencing](#). All training and advisory efforts involving flying should be preceded by an assessment of the airworthiness and safety of the HN unit's aircraft and crews. The assessment is required for familiarization with HN aviation capabilities and procedures before commencement of multinational operations. It is also required as a basis for conducting risk management and for estimating possible levels of multinational interoperability.

Tactical flying training may be required to bring HN aviation forces to the point where they can be advised in airpower applications supporting campaign or air operations objectives. The basic steps in this process are sequential—assess, train, advise, assist. Commanders should issue directives or operating instructions clearly defining which steps are authorized and tasked.

Upon appropriate direction, tactically qualified aircrews may be required to fly with HN counterparts on certain critical missions to provide the needed margin of safety and reliability, especially when supporting other US or US-advised forces. To facilitate multinational air planning, aircrews also advise appropriate US command elements (based on first-hand experience) of foreign aviation capabilities and limitations. Conventional Air Force forces can be brought into such programs as security assistance-funded mobile training teams, advisory support teams, and military transition teams (MiTT) that train, advise, or simply mentor foreign aviation forces. These teams provide a means of reaching outside the special operations-oriented arena to train and advise in a broader range of airpower functions and supporting tasks for FID and counterinsurgency.

While such teams can be created for specific purposes, commanders should take appropriate steps to ensure that members deploying to overseas locations are properly trained and equipped for the task. As an example, during the late summer of 2006, 105 Air Force MiTT members were trained by Air Force Special Operations Command [combat aviation advisors](#) (CAA) forces and deployed for extended duty as embedded advisors with the Iraqi Air Force.

FID training and advising has traditionally focused on tactical flying skills and associated sustainment capabilities at the squadron and wing levels of foreign aviation units. Historically the most significant challenge during Air Force training and contingency operations involve senior HN air force leaders effectively organizing and training their forces and their inability to create regulations and operating instructions in order to establish operational boundaries. The problem affects operational-level sustainment in such areas as administration, resource programming, training, aircraft maintenance, logistics, force protection, standardization and evaluation, and certification of skills.

**Commanders should seek opportunities to elevate Air Force training and advisory efforts to higher levels of HN military leadership and address such issues as basic air force infrastructure, organization, training, command and control, logistics, and procurement processes.** The effort should focus on building effective foundations for a lasting and competent self-defense, rather than a temporary capability that swiftly erodes with the exodus of external support. In most cases, this larger perspective is needed before evaluating, recommending, and funding specific tactical weapon systems, technical capabilities, and training.

The task of training and advising foreign aviation forces in large-scale infrastructure changes and initiatives is a significant challenge for Air Force training and advisory personnel. Air Force special operations forces air advisor or CAA resources and skill sets do not usually include mechanisms for assisting foreign aviation forces with broad, fundamental changes to basic administrative processes and logistics infrastructures. The skills and level of experience needed to accomplish this task generally reside within the more experienced levels of the Air Force community.

The Air Force approach to foreign assistance and advisory efforts should integrate with

the joint and interagency levels. Commanders should consider ways and means to identify qualified senior-level officers and noncommissioned officers to carry out well-defined FID airpower infrastructure-building initiatives on their own.

The level of success achievable in Air Force FID operations is contingent on the training and performance of the people performing this specialized mission. Foreign area and geopolitical expertise, language ability, cultural intelligence, and advanced force protection capability are indispensable tools in the FID toolkit.

## **TRAINING VERSUS ADVISING**

There is an important difference between training and advising. Training, a form of [indirect support](#), can provide a doctrinal or procedural foundation for military operations and activities. Advising is a form of [direct support](#) that may or may not include combat. It involves the practical application of operational doctrine and procedures in the host country. Advising is real-world, situation-specific, and can directly implicate the US in a given HN contingency or operation. Generally, the step from training to advising crosses a critical political threshold requiring Presidential approval. Commanders should ensure that clearly-defined [rules of engagement](#) containing operational guidelines and parameters are available to tasked Air Force training and advisory personnel.

Training enables foreign aviation forces to accomplish a variety of airpower functional tasks, roles, and missions. Instructional programs impart employable capabilities ranging from technical skills, sustainment functions, and tactical flying skills to knowledge of airpower doctrine. Training includes operational planning and employment methods; combat tactics, techniques, and procedures; sustainment methods; and operational support activities including design and employment of communication structures. FID training activity tailors to fit an analysis of human factors as well as the technological and financial limitations of HNs.

Advice on airpower application is often most effective when applied at top decision-making levels within the host government. Advice on strategic matters, operational-level planning, joint operations, and the integration of multiple governmental agencies is appropriately directed at higher levels of the military command structure. In addition, advisory efforts may have a more lasting effect and can carry considerably more weight when acted upon by senior members of the host military.

Advisors should help HN commanders apply an operational-level perspective to such issues as air base planning and construction, air base defense, logistics, intelligence, [command and control](#), and training. Field advisors should help local subordinate commanders ensure that tactical air support planning follows joint operational-level guidance and that tactical operations are properly coordinated and integrated with other military and civil activities. Field advice should focus on such issues as air base security and operability, resource conservation, munitions safety, and ground-handling procedures as well as providing technical assistance operating and maintaining US defense equipment. Advisors also should help HN air force commanders focus on the

political and psychological implications of combat operations.

Air Force advisors are often in the best position to identify requirements for additional security assistance efforts or more direct forms of support because of their close contact with in-country [internal defense and development](#) operations. When properly tasked they should coordinate US direct support activities with host authorities and help analyze and interpret US-provided intelligence.

## **FID ASSISTANCE**

FID assistance extends the duties of Air Force trainers or advisors to directly assisting a foreign counterpart in accomplishing their technical specialty. Some examples include an Air Force maintenance technician helping a foreign counterpart maintain an aircraft or an Air Force security forces advisor directly assisting a foreign counterpart to establish and maintain base security.

Escalating from advising to assisting generally crosses a political threshold, requiring Presidential authority when the tasks are in conjunction with HN tactical operations. Assisting in the capacity of aircrew member under hostile-fire conditions is an example of combat operations in [direct support](#) of FID.

Commanders should ensure that clearly-defined rules of engagement available to Air Force training and advisory teams.

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