



CURTIS E. LEMAY CENTER FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



ANNEX 3-22 FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE

AIRPOWER IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

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In general, Air Force [foreign internal defense](#) (FID) operations focus on support to [host nation](#) (HN) aviation forces. By Air Force standards, the scale of military [airpower](#) operations in lesser-developed nations is relatively small in terms of force size, total sortie potential, resource consumption and availability, and overall support costs. For example, the entire fixed-wing tactical air mobility capability of these nations may consist of only a limited number of small or medium transport platforms. The contributions of these HN aircraft, however, can be vital to the success of counterinsurgency or drug suppression operations. Because host governments possess so few aircraft, airframe availability, maintenance turnaround times, and sortie generation rates are critical.

Additionally, sustainment and supportability are difficult problems with small inventories. Because of funding constraints and supply shortages in host countries, small logistics problems can assume major proportions. The grounding or combat loss of one or two aircraft can seriously impair or neutralize an air effort.

Air Force commanders commencing FID operations should anticipate stark differences between US and foreign organizational structures and personnel policies. These differences must be taken into account in planning and executing FID training and advisory assistance. High degrees of centralization and division of labor are prevalent in the military cultures of lesser-developed nations where workers are viewed discretely as factors of production rather than thoughtful contributors of organizational output. Giving noncommissioned officers and company grade commissioned officers any significant degree of authority and responsibility is not a priority issue with most air force units in the lesser-developed nations, particularly in cases where decision making has traditionally been in the hands of a few senior leaders who maintain almost total control of political and administrative structures.

There is growing recognition among some countries that they must build new administrative structures, distribute authority and decision-making tasks, and institute new policies, or become militarily irrelevant. This is an important realization, as combating terrorism and insurgency requires organizational effectiveness and flexibility

not traditionally found in the military cultures of lesser-developed nations. Senior foreign air force commanders and staff members are approaching US Air Force authorities with questions concerning processes, systems, and operating procedures for running a modern air force. Questions range from how to manage aircraft maintenance to how to build complete air logistics systems. There are important opportunities at many overseas locations for senior Air Force officers and enlisted personnel to train and advise foreign counterparts on how to organize, direct, and supervise airpower forces.

However, Air Force personnel training and advising foreign counterparts on managing airpower need to understand that not all aspects of running a modern air force (especially the US Air Force's model) may translate readily into another nation's particular situation, nor may a complex organization be necessary in an entire air force comprised of fewer aircraft than a single USAF wing. What works for the US Air Force will frequently not be appropriate for a small, foreign air force using a less sophisticated, small, fleet of aircraft. Training and advice must be tailored to the country's needs situation, and environment, and not simply advocate recreating the US Air Force on a smaller scale.

Host nations threatened by insurgency and other forms of internal conflict usually require some form of outside financial or materiel assistance to acquire, operate, and maintain their air forces. In some cases, their military aviation programs are entirely dependent upon foreign assistance for major weapon systems, aviation support equipment, aircraft spares, training, advice, technical services, survival equipment, specialized clothing, munitions, and even consumables.
