AIRPOWER OPERATIONS

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Depending on the objectives and the general situation, airpower assets can work synergistically to support foreign internal defense (FID) operations, including counterinsurgency, counterterrorism operations and cyberspace capabilities. In all cases where airpower may be applied (combat or non-combat roles), 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.

To promote balanced development and mobilization through nation assistance, air transportation can be used to access remote regions and bring in resources and personnel to address a wide variety of problems and issues. Airlift, by fixed-wing or vertical-lift aircraft, for example, can carry specialists and trainers to remote regions to provide on-site technical training and assistance in specific areas like public services management, sanitation and hygiene, agronomy, agribusiness management and technology (marketing, supply, and distribution), 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. To support security and neutralization, air mobility can be used to deploy, sustain, and reinforce civil law enforcement agencies as well as military and paramilitary surface elements. Air mobility has even been used successfully to support 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. In the military realm, 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 or multinational operations, enable host nation 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 host nation aviation forces in such areas as maintenance, air base defense, medical, etc. FID operations and activities present challenges to commanders who should consider the following factors associated with 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

Host nation 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 robust intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. Airpower platforms

can provide intelligence collection capabilities for security and neutralization. These capabilities may provide intelligence to civilian law enforcement agencies engaged in insurgent, terrorist, or drug cartel undercover operations, or to military and paramilitary units engaged in combating terrorist and insurgent forces. In some cases, platforms equipped with signals intelligence (SIGINT) or geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) capabilities may be used to identify and assess insurgent, terrorist, or drug enterprise infrastructures. Further, SIGINT and GEOINT capabilities can provide real time battlefield awareness and battle damage assessments, and identify and pinpoint high value targets in real or near real time.

In many cases, the most useful intelligence in counterinsurgency and combating terrorism operations has proven to be human intelligence. Human intelligence (HUMINT) can tell a commander far more than what is happening during a given conflict or battle. HUMINT-derived information can yield insights into sources and potential vectors of destabilization and revolt before the situation spirals out of control. 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 (LOCs), 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. 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 reconnaissance and surveillance are rarely a suitable replacement for HUMINT, but ISR is the principal capability that enables governments' ability 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. Those platforms best suited for this mission are equipment fitted with forward-looking infrared and deployed throughout the country's interior and along its borders to detect, identify, and report maneuvering terrorist groups and cross-border traffic. The principal task of ISR supporting offensive security and neutralization is finding and identifying targets, in both rural and urban settings, for exploitation by HN forces.

Many ISR requirements can be satisfied through unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). However, there will continue to be a need for manned ISR platforms in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Training on predictive analysis, PED, and overall intelligence analysis skills should also be included as part of the overall FID ISR mission.

Counterland Operations

In a COIN operation, the counterland operations mission is essentially an air attack role with emphasis on precision engagement operations, both preplanned and immediate, via interdiction, close air support (CAS), and strike coordination and reconnaissance. Offensive air attack provides the ability to neutralize or seriously degrade enemy resistance before inserting ground assault teams. The COIN air attack 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 air attack for security and neutralization are in instances when hostile elements openly commit their forces during assembly and attack against friendly positions or when their command and control centers and logistics elements are exposed and identified.

Air attack 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), CASEVAC and Humanitarian Relief Operations (HUMRO). CSAR remains the primary mission and is the most difficult. For additional information, see Annex 3-50, *Personnel Recovery Operations*.

The availability of dependable CSAR and CASEVAC, especially at night, has dramatically improved the willingness and ability of host nation ground combatant forces to engage in operations they may otherwise be less motivated to perform. This was particularly noticeable in the Philippines in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, tragedy. 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 advisor.

Information Operations and Information Related Capabilities

The informational and psychological implications of using air assets can potentially have extraordinarily positive or negative consequences when dealing with others. The

information operations (IO) planning function ensures that these potential consequences are fully examined prior to taking actions. The effective planning and employment of information related capabilities (IRCs) can create lethal and nonlethal effects through kinetic and non-kinetic means to reach a desired end state and achieve specified objectives.

Whereas IO integrates IRCs to affect the cognitive domain, 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 typically include Operations Security, Military Deception, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), Public Affairs, Network Operations and Electronic Warfare Operations. IRCs may also include activities such as counterpropaganda, engagements, and show-of-force. IRCs can be employed individually or in combinations to create effects.

Airpower provides critical 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 be used to 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 inherent capabilities to produce influencing effects by demonstrating superior mobility, responsiveness, and firepower. The influence effect of air activities on the behavior of target groups may be pursued as a principal goal to weaken enemy resistance, capture public support, or both. MISO/influence operations may produce a secondary benefit 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 when development and mobilization actions are undertaken in isolated areas. Public affairs operations can be an effective tool to bolster a HN's public support for counterinsurgency operations.

As an IRC of IO, Electronic Warfare (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: electronic attack, electronic warfare support, and electronic 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 range of military operations (ROMO), EW can enhance the ability of operational commanders to achieve an advantage over adversaries. Commanders rely on the EMS for intelligence; communication; positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT); sensing; command and control (C2); attack; ranging; data transmission; and information and storage. Therefore, control of the EMS is an essential to the success of military operations and is applicable at all levels of conflict. EW considerations must be fully integrated into operations in order to be effective. Additionally, the scope of these operations is global and extends from the earth's surface into space. **Unfettered access to selected portions of the EMS is critical for weapon system effectiveness and protection of critical assets. EW is a force multiplier that can create effects throughout ROMO. When EW actions are properly integrated with other military capabilities; synergistic effects may be achieved, losses minimized, and effectiveness enhanced.**

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. Cyberspace plans and operational considerations are important to integrate into US FID operations.

Air Force Special Operations Forces

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 insurgent and terrorist threats are not amenable to large-scale conventional solutions. 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 Annex 3-05, *Special Operations*.