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## Health Engagement in Foreign Internal Defense (FID)

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Foreign Internal Defense (FID) is the “participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.”<sup>1</sup> Health engagement can be an invaluable component of all types of military actions and can be particularly useful in FID operations as U.S. joint medical personnel can be employed across the full spectrum of operations and span the entire spectrum of FID. Although it has played an important role in almost all conflicts dating back several centuries, health engagement is only recently being recognized as an important component of security cooperation. The type of health engagement employed will vary according to the current capabilities of both the partner nation military (and / or other designated security forces) medical forces and the partner civilian health sector and their respective roles in that nation’s Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) program. Health engagement by U.S. forces may include varying degrees of military-to-military activities as well as Medical Civil-Military Operations (MCMO) if indicated in accordance with the host military needs. Commander objectives will determine the appropriate balance given the situation at hand. In some countries the military and civilian health systems may be completely separate while in other nations the two systems may be integrated, necessitating a unified approach.

Health sector support to FID may be direct or indirect. Direct support often involves training and mentoring partner military medical forces and can occur at all levels: strategic, operational, and tactical. Training is focused to assist the development of a partner military health system that enhances the operational capacity and capability of its forces. Indirect support might include security assistance<sup>2</sup>, personnel exchange programs, and multinational exercises. The desired outcome is long-range, self-sustaining or self-perpetuating improvements in the host nation’s health sector that support and enhance the credibility and legitimacy of the host nation military. Accomplishing these objectives typically requires U.S. military medical forces to partner with other U.S. Government agencies to help address nation-specific political, governance, legal, economic, technological, and cultural aspects of FID, especially as they impact the health sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 12 April 2001 (As amended through 31 October 2009)

<sup>2</sup> Security Assistance: (DOD) Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. Also called SA.

In addition, mil-to-mil FID activities may indirectly impact the civilian health system; therefore, careful advance planning must be done to ensure that any indirect effects are accounted for appropriately. In addition to long-term efforts that build host nation health sector capacity; short-term support of critical areas by U.S. health forces, such as serving as health advisors in combat, can also be effective FID tools that meet critical temporary partner needs or catalyze capacity building actions by the partner.

When the U.S. Government is simultaneously involved in FID and other health sector activities, such as Civil Affairs Operations (CAO) and Foreign Humanitarian Assistance (FHA), then these efforts must be coordinated with FID activities under a single health engagement strategy that supports the partner IDAD health strategy and avoids duplication or, worse yet, undermining of the credibility of the host nation.

Health engagement in support of FID can take many forms. Health sector initiatives, for example, may be delivered by solo medical advisors or military training and mentorship teams, civil-military teams, contracted health experts, or partnerships with non-governmental organizations. The following list of health engagement activities should all be done in complete concert with the partner nation and can be used across the range of operations. Depending upon the partner country and the other variables most of them can be applied in FID specifically. The list is not exhaustive as new ideas are arising and being battle-tested in current operations. However, this list illustrates the wide variety, scope, and form that these health engagement activities might take:

- Provide public health activities in conjunction with partner counterparts, to include preventive medicine, veterinary care, food hygiene, immunizations of humans and animals, childcare, preventive dental hygiene, and develop paramedic capabilities (Force Health Protection in FID).
- Development of emergent and disaster response capabilities.
- Planning and execution of disaster response exercises.
- Combat exercises.
- Combat casualty care training and exercise support.
- Partner military field medical treatment and patient movement capabilities.
- Military and civilian medical logistic programs.
- Health worker education programs.
- Skill-specific mentorship.
- Military and civilian medical intelligence and threat analysis.
- Hospital and clinic system management.
- Sustainable infrastructure and equipment upgrade of existing facilities.
- Wellness and preventive care, including public information programs.
- Process and outcome measures in health systems.
- MEDRETE<sup>3</sup> or MEDCAP/DENTCAP/VETCAP<sup>4</sup> (including limited, appropriate direct patient care).
- Military personnel/Subject Matter Expert exchange.

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<sup>3</sup> MEDRETE – Medical readiness training exercise

<sup>4</sup> Medical, dental, or veterinary civic action programs

- Train the trainer (and help develop curriculum, materials, and development plans for their medical training).
- Support to military exercises.
- Health Needs Assessment & Facility Assessment (site surveys).
- Conferences/seminars/workshops.
- HAP Assistance (excess property, etc.), equipment donations.
- IMET (International Military Exchange Training Program).
- Disease surveillance.
- National Guard State Partnership Program.
- University partnership program (health sector academic exchanges).
- Medical Embedded Training Teams.
- Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

Health engagement activities that deliver direct patient care to host nation military or civilian patients may be useful and appropriate in some types operations, such as acute disaster response or in conflict situations. However, efforts that build capacity within the host nation health sector should be the rule, particularly in FID where developing partner military force health protection capability and capacity is the primary goal.

U.S. military medical forces should be employed in FID missions that are affordable and sustainable by the partner. This includes pursuing realistic training and acquisition programs. In addition to training partner personnel directly, medical education opportunities for partner personnel through IMET may be pursued that pays for these partners to receive training in the U.S. or elsewhere. Expectation management for the partner leadership, the population, and U.S. joint forces is critical to determine the best courses of action in a given country. Realistic, stepwise, multi-year planned progression of health sector and military health capabilities must be based upon the real and potential resources available. The partner military and civilian health sectors must be initially willing to take complete ownership and must also be able, within a reasonable period to time, to sustain the initiatives; this is absolutely necessary in order to gain and maintain credibility and legitimacy with their own population. In addition, all health engagement should have a set of outcome measures; for FID those outcomes should validate support to the partner IDAD program. Proper employment of military health engagement will build relationships as well as assist partners in establishing the medical capabilities that sustain their military or security forces. Efforts to strengthen both the military/security and civilian aspects of the health sector will enhance the sought after freedom and protection that is critical to a stable society.

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