

Shortchanging the Joint Doctrine Fight One Airman's Assessment of the Airman's Assessment

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It is imperative, however, that Airmen avoid—at all costs—creating the impression that they are advocating a counterinsurgency (COIN) solution that involves Airmen or airpower for their own sake.

--Major General Charles J. Dunlap, Jr.

The traditional, often bitter inter-service battle for resources has been taken to a new level in a senior Air Force officer's recent assault on service doctrine. In late December, 2007, Air University published a 111-page monograph written by Air Force Deputy Judge Advocate Major General Charles J. Dunlap, Jr. entitled *Shortchanging the Joint Fight? An Airman's Assessment of FM 3-24 and the Case for Developing Truly Joint COIN Doctrine*. The study analyzes the pitfalls of accepting Army and Marine tactical doctrine as the joint solution and offers an Airman's perspective to deliver "fresh" alternatives for joint counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine development.¹ This heavily referenced monograph (438 end notes) relentlessly attacks the Army and Marine Corps doctrine for its almost exclusively ground-centric perspective and failure to reconcile the full potential of today's airpower capabilities.² Although General Dunlap discusses several interesting ideas regarding how the Airman's perspective can help shape joint COIN doctrine, his undue criticisms of Army philosophies, conventional approaches and dogmatic mindset distract from his argument and recommendations. Readers will likely focus exclusively on the unwarranted and erratically referenced land-power condemnations and accuse the Air Force of advocating a COIN solution that involves Airmen or airpower for their own sake, which the author half-heartedly adds as an imperative at the end of the essay. This Airman's assessment of "an Airman's Assessment" will provide an alternative perspective of Field Manual 3-24 and offer counter arguments to many of the monograph's criticisms.

Shortchanging the Joint Fight

General Dunlap's primary concern in *Shortchanging the Joint Fight* is that "FM 3-24 appears poised to become the centerpiece of the new joint COIN doctrine whose development has just begun."³ However, this alarmist statement is referenced only by an article he himself wrote and one other article written by Elaine Grossman. He alleges the US Army and Marine Corps are attempting to "shortchange the joint fight" by deliberately ignoring or misunderstanding airpower's contributions and unique capabilities. Furthermore, General Dunlap asserts that they intend to bully the Air Force into accepting joint doctrine that ignores airpower. He seems to believe that joint doctrine cannot be developed without first criticizing service-specific doctrine

for failing to be joint-minded. He argues that FM 3-24 is incomplete and deficient doctrine for the COIN problem because it undervalues technology, misunderstands key aspects of 21st century warfare and marginalizes airpower.⁴ General Dunlap states “Airmen and airpower will be most effective in the COIN fight if they are accepted as equals on a genuinely joint and interdependent team.”⁵ He declares “If we fail to bring the best thinking of the whole armed forces—along with the available capabilities of all the services—appropriately to bear in Iraq or any COIN conflict, it is the American people who are being shortchanged.”⁶

Many COIN and Irregular Warfare experts argue population control, legitimacy of the government and isolation of insurgents are key elements of success. Contrary to what General Dunlap suggests, airpower is a critical enabler that is absolutely necessary, but it is by no means sufficient to defeating insurgencies. While criticizing the commitment of massive numbers of American boots-on-the-ground, he fails to discuss any historical COIN case studies where airpower replaced land power as the dominant military effort. From Malaya, to El Salvador, to the Greek Civil War to Vietnam, to Algeria, insurgencies are rarely, if ever, successfully crushed by an overwhelming *foreign* military force alone and there has never been an insurgency crushed by the overwhelming application of airpower alone. Ground forces, whether they are host nation security forces or external combat forces assisting the security forces, are necessary but also not sufficient. Of all the discussions about the best way to counter insurgencies, only General Dunlap argues airpower is necessary *and* sufficient. The harsh reality is that our Joint Force will be called upon to conduct many difficult missions and we must prepare for them together with the resources we have available. Advocating the types of wars the Air Force should fight (no ground troops) by only preparing for the wars they want to fight (airpower centric conflicts with peer competitors), while ignoring the type of fight our enemy wants to fight (al-Qaeda’s global insurgency) and the wars our President orders us to fight (Afghanistan and Iraq), is a terrible mistake. Our nation must be prepared to succeed in conventional, irregular, and hybrid conflicts such as Iraq and Afghanistan. If funding for new equipment and forces is constrained, the Air Force should be willing to consider some risk in capacity (not capability) for Major Combat Operations to increase the capability and capacity to conduct Irregular Warfare and COIN, while convincing our civilian leaders to supply adequate funding for all our threats and requirements. Our services shortchange the joint fight when they organize, train, and equip for only one type of conflict. General Dunlap shortchanges the doctrine development process by discrediting sister service doctrine and military operations to protect service’s budget equities.

The true significance of FM 3-24, along with most of the recent and historical COIN concepts, is the recognition that while population security is the first requirement in counterinsurgency, economic development, good governance, and the provision of essential services, combined with effective information operations and a commitment over a long period of time are all required for success. Alan Vick in *Airpower in the New Counterinsurgency Era* remarks, “Popular doctrinal concepts, such as rapid decisive operations that emphasize the merits of winning quick victories or achieving strategic-level shock and paralytic effects against conventional military opponents are intrinsically inconsistent with this reality, and seeking to apply them in counterinsurgency will often be counterproductive.”⁷ FM 3-24 is controversial because it emphasizes the indirect approach, a concept historically and regularly rejected by conventional-minded direct action traditionalists. The main objective of COIN is fostering effective governance by a legitimate government, not reducing casualties, minimizing contact or destruction of the enemy.

General Dunlap's critique of operations in Iraq is unusual and alarming, coming from an active duty general officer *while* the conflict is ongoing. He accuses our senior military leaders in U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), including the senior Air Force officer, Lieutenant General Gary North, of failing to effectively integrate airpower effects into operations in Iraq because Army and Marine Corps COIN doctrine does not consider air-mindedness. He asserts that deployed joint leadership blindly uses FM 3-24 to develop strategy, operations and tactics. He states "The entire effort {developing FM 3-24} was supervised by...General David H. Petraeus, who is now implementing FM 3-24 as commander of Multinational Force Iraq"⁸ and "...operations, however, always ought to reflect careful consideration of not just the technology and capabilities of the whole joint team but also the unique war-fighting perspective each service and component brings to the analysis."⁹ The premise of *Shortchanging the Joint Fight* is that our nation is failing in Iraq because FM 3-24 does not consider air-mindedness. He argues that if his air-centric ideas are included in joint COIN doctrine, uninformed leaders and decision makers will be adequately educated with air-minded ideas to develop more effective strategies in Iraq and other COIN fights. He suggests that joint force combat leaders disregard air-minded ideas. These ideas include reaching out to women, shutting down anti-American television broadcasts, distributing altered pictures of Saddam Hussein, disrupting insurgent command and control systems, de-emphasizing human intelligence collection, training Iraqis in America, airdropping supplies, securing airfields, creating "gated communities" and imposing psychological stress on insurgents with devastating attacks from unmanned vehicles. His underlying argument for these air-minded ideas is that they do not require boots on the ground and can be accomplished from secure, distant airfields. Some suggestions, like creating "gated communities" that can be patrolled by the air and don't require ground troops are illogical. Others are only marginally useful to the joint force commanders in Iraq because they are formed from the unrealistic viewpoint that ground forces are not necessary and counterproductive to the COIN fight. Unfortunately, adding his specific air-minded considerations to joint COIN doctrine will not provide our combat leaders with a better understanding of joint force employment. His recommendations will only discredit "air-mindedness" as unrealistic and add to the perception that the Air Force contribution to joint COIN doctrine advocates only strategies that use high technology airpower instead of ground forces.

General Dunlap's criticizes American ground-force commanders by saying they "often do not understand how to use airpower effectively and efficiently."¹⁰ Perhaps his suggestions are better aimed at the senior Air Force leaders in USCENTCOM, not the ground commanders. As the airpower experts, the responsibility is ours to ensure the joint force properly employs airpower. Blaming ground force commanders for ignorance in a domain they are unfamiliar with, and expecting ground service doctrine to substitute for airpower expertise on the joint force sets unrealistic expectations for reading doctrine. The fact that the joint force air component was not involved in the planning of Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan highlights the limitations of "controlling" airpower from a base hundreds of miles away from the ground component commanders and planners. Benjamin Lambeth, in *Air Power Against Terror: America's Conduct of Operations Enduring Freedom*, observed "For their part, some senior leaders at CENTCOM headquarters reportedly felt that the leading Airmen in the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) were overly service-centric in their orientation and were seeking, in effect, to fight their own private air war."¹¹ Ground force commanders don't fail to make the most of potential synergy of air, space, and land power because air-mindedness is lacking in their own service doctrine or airpower concepts are absent in joint doctrine. They fail because Airmen

on the joint force fail to effectively integrate their expertise into the joint plan. Criticism may be better directed towards the Airmen on the USCENTCOM staff, or failure to place talented, influential Airmen in key positions on the USCENTCOM staff. Placing all air expertise in the geographically isolated CAOC, rather than on the higher headquarters staff, and in division, brigade and lower ground force planning staffs, may limit airpower effectiveness more than incomplete doctrine. The unique, non-doctrinal command and control arrangements employed in Iraq (Multi-national Force – Iraq not reporting directly to COMUSCENTCOM) further complicate the integration of the USCENTCOM Air Force component, Central Air Forces (CENTAF) assets into the fight. The Navy's think-tank Deep Blue and the Air Force's Checkmate are working on proposals to "push" air expertise down to the Division and Brigade level in Iraq and Afghanistan. Combat leaders are not satisfied with the synergy and integration of air and ground effects, and plan to remedy the situation by providing living, thinking airpower experts on planning staffs, not by adding air minded ideas to Army Field Manuals.

Combative Background

General Dunlap has written many articles, opinion pieces, and blog postings in the past several years and his unabashedly pro Air Force opinions prompt colorful replies. In a January 2007 New York Times Editorial, *We Still Need The Big Guns*, he wrote, "Unfortunately, starry-eyed enthusiasts have misread the manual (FM 3-24) to say that defeating an insurgency is all about winning hearts and minds with teams of anthropologists, propagandists, and civil-affairs officers armed with democracy-in-a-box kits and volleyball nets."¹² He conveniently misrepresents FM 3-24's advocacy for indirect approaches and focus on the population by referring to unfortunate misunderstandings by idealistic readers, but he fails to offer intelligent counter arguments. FM 3-24 draws upon lessons learned from historical case studies (Algeria, Malaysia, Philippines, and Vietnam), well-established counterinsurgency theory and principals (Galula, Nagl, Sepp, Taber, Corum and Wray), and contemporary analysis (Hammes, Hoffman, Killcullen, Metz, and Sageman). The phrase "hearts and minds" has origins from a statement by General Sir Gerald Templer, Director of Operations and High Commissioner for Malaya, who in 1952 said, "The answer lies not in pouring more troops into the jungle, but in the hearts and minds of the Malayan People."¹³ The phrase "hearts and minds" is frequently used by critics to discredit COIN efforts and to mischaracterize the indirect approach FM 3-24 discusses. However, the phrase is only mentioned in FM 3-24's Appendix A *Guide for Action*. "Hearts" means persuading the population that their best interests are served by COIN success. "Minds" means convincing the population that their government can protect them. Neither persuading nor convincing is concerned with whether the population likes Soldiers and Marines. Calculated self-interest, not emotion, is what counts."¹⁴ Unfortunately, General Dunlap joins the mistaken readers who characterize supporters of the COIN Field Manual as ill-informed enthusiasts who actually think volleyball nets defeat insurgencies.

In an Armed Forces Journal article *America's Asymmetric Advantage*, General Dunlap says "In the sober analysis of the zero-sum calculus of national security decision-making, the weight of the effort must go to America's asymmetrical advantage, that component of the national security establishment that has the most flexibility, effectiveness, and deterrence value — as well as cultural compatibility."¹⁵ General Dunlap unapologetically advocates funding Air Force programs above land-based programs and increased force structure. However, in this most recent monograph, he disguises his constructive criticism for the joint COIN fight, while

consistently advancing arguments that our nation should invest more treasure in the Air Force and less in the Army. Although this overall effort may be preferred by many airpower advocates, criticizing service-specific doctrine to accomplish it is detrimental to the effort.

Airpower's Strategic Monopoly

Perhaps the most disturbing concept discussed by General Dunlap is the statement that only Airmen think strategically or specifically that “Airmen *tend* to reason in strategic terms and Soldiers are intellectually disposed to favor close combat and *tend* to think tactically.”¹⁶ He accuses FM 3-24 of not considering strategic anchoring and equates a manpower-intensive approach to inadequate consideration given to strategic concepts. In contrast, he maintains that an Airman's strategic thinking leads to defeating an enemy before the close fight, reducing casualties and causing intractable political issues.¹⁷ He declares only air-minded thinking can develop strategy and operations that pacify Muslim populations without troops, overlooking the fact there are more than the 25,000 Airmen currently deployed to the CENTCOM area of responsibility (AOR). Implying that only an Airman's strategic analysis would advocate a strategy less reliant on ground troops and more open to substituting technology for manpower, he says joint doctrine which specifically cautions against large ground forces will improve the strategic decision making of our most senior combat leaders. He says, “Rather, it is a call for the full potential of airpower to be integrated into a more complete joint and interdependent COIN doctrine to address the conundrum of Iraq.”¹⁸ However, he fails to provide sufficient evidence that this air-minded strategic analysis would produce operations that would actually succeed in the COIN fight.

Implying Soldiers and Marines lack a strategic thought, General Dunlap says the “central difficulty with FM 3-24's construct for COIN operations involving US forces: *COIN operations rarely mobilize national will because they almost never involve existential threats.*”¹⁹ He adds, “Although succeeding in Iraq is extremely important, nothing an Iraqi insurgent does can jeopardize the very existence of the United States as other security threats can.”²⁰ If the nation's leaders give the COIN mission to our military forces, we must know how best to understand the enemy, the mission, our own forces, the terrain, the time available, and our own troops. Drafting our joint COIN doctrine to address the possible reluctance of national will, or the degree an insurgency threatens US national interests is inappropriate and dangerous. Wishing away certain types of wars to only prepare for one type of war is a common lesson learned from the defeat in Vietnam and a dangerous way to prepare for future conflicts.

A major theme of General Dunlap's monograph is that Airmen understand the casualty tolerance of the US public so Airmen should drive strategic decision making. He uses CNN poll data to show the American public was intolerant of the war in Iraq in March 2007. He further asserts that all military plans that involve ground forces will cause high US casualties and universally not be supported by the US public, so our air-minded strategic planners should develop options that don't involve large ground forces.²¹ FM 3-24 discusses principles and imperatives to reveal the complex and unfamiliar nature of COIN. They include “Sometimes the more you protect your force, the less secure you may be”, “Sometimes the more force is used, the less effective is it” and “The more successful the counterinsurgency is, the less force can be used and the more risk must be accepted”²² Wishful strategic thinking aside, the complex nature of an insurgency, the unstable nature of the security environment, the ineffectiveness of the partner nation

government, the ferociousness of the enemy, and the population's support for the government determine the level of effort, troops, and resources that will be required to defeat an insurgency. Simply recommending air-minded considerations and air-centric courses of action because the perceived political situation at home may demand keeping the cost of blood and treasure as low as possible, will not come close to delivering the mission success we are charged to deliver. Avoiding military casualties should not be the primary consideration when developing strategy. Our nation has a tremendous tolerance for the sacrifice of blood and treasure if the war is fought for the right reasons and it is fought to win.

Myth of Collateral Damage

General Dunlap passionately argues against what he calls FM 3-24's Airpower Myths. He accuses the doctrine authors of an outright anti-airpower theme and a flawed treatment of airpower's strike capability. In a classic straw man argument, he deliberately overstates and misrepresents his opponent's position and then easily refutes it. He then spends the next eight pages discrediting the imagined assertion that air attacks cause excessive unintended casualties. General Dunlap specifically criticizes FM 3-24 for admonishing commanders to exercise exceptional care when using airpower.²³ However, the actual text of FM 3-24 says "Precision air attacks can be of enormous value in COIN operations; however, commanders exercise exceptional care when using airpower in the strike role."²⁴ This is a statement of fact, not an admonishment. The rationale that follows the statement explains why commanders exercise exceptional care. Later FM 3-24 explains "The proper and well-executed use of aerial attack can conserve resources, increase effectiveness, and reduce risk to US forces. Given timely, accurate intelligence, precisely delivered weapons with demonstrated low failure rate, appropriate yield, and proper fuse can achieve desired effects while mitigating adverse effects."²⁵ General Dunlap unfairly accuses the authors of FM 3-24 of being excessively influenced by historical myths about airpower and its association with civilian deaths. The myth he describes is Myth #14 from Phillip Meilinger's *Airpower: Myths and Fact*. Meilinger says many airpower critics believe "that despite all the talk by Airmen, the employment of airpower remains an indiscriminate use of military force that deliberately targets civilians."²⁶ Interestingly, General Dunlap charges that despite the efforts of Airmen to correct the record, these myths persist. However, he offers no actual proof, whether it is statements by ground forces, reports by senior officers or research by academics, and unfairly accuses the authors of FM 3-24 of believing these so-called myths. He continues his argument by describing precision munitions, effective targeting processes, procedural innovations, media biases against airpower, media biases favoring ground forces and sordidly, the effects of Abu Ghraib abuses. Remarkably, he references a blog article written by Bill Arkin asserting that the history of an airpower civilian-casualty incident was reported and recorded quite differently than those caused by land power. The article is titled *Shock and Awe Worked, God Help Us*, and actually cautions readers against overconfidence in airpower application effectiveness. "That is airpower's continuing allure: military engagement with no commitment... But in Iraq, and even in Afghanistan, where ground forces struggle, airpower seems so effortless and trouble-free. That is why it is so alluring, and so dangerous." Arkin warns "Given the current ground quagmire in Iraq, airpower will be even more our downfall in the future."²⁷ General Dunlap selectively uses out of context phrases from mass media reports to bolster his argument that airpower minimizes collateral damage, while ignoring the airpower criticisms in the same reports.

Continuing to defend against FM 3-24's strawman "attack" on airpower, General Dunlap states "Aerial fires typically result in unintended civilian casualties, while deliberate killings only occur with ground forces. While it is not clear what impact civilian deaths resulting from unintentional actions may have, those that seem to result from the deliberate actions of ground forces plainly create negative opinions."²⁸ Unfortunately, the impact of civilian deaths, intentional or unintentional, is very clear. Media reports criticizing civilian casualties from air strikes are numerous and unmistakably describe the impact of civilian deaths, unintentional or intentional. A December 2006 article in Christian Science Monitor said, "But with so few boots on the ground, the increased reliance on air power has led to thousands of civilian deaths. The devastating air offenses are undermining support for the Afghan government, say human rights workers and Afghan officials, and are turning public opinion in the four southern provinces of Afghanistan against NATO forces, who took command of the south from the US in August." Afghan President Hamid Karzai told reporters in Kandahar "We are extremely worried - it hurts us, it hurts Afghan civilians. We are worried by it, NATO is also worried by it, and we are working together to reduce such casualties. We know that is damaging to our image, and more importantly we do not want to harm innocent people."²⁹ Unintended civilian casualties resulting from airstrike collateral damage, or stray bullets from ground fire fights, undermine the efforts to diminish support to insurgency. FM 3-24 addresses this by saying, "Soldiers and Marines require an innate understanding of the effects of their actions and weapons on all aspects of the operational environment. Leaders must consider not only the first-order, desired effects of a munition or action but also possible second- and third-order effects-including undesired ones. For example, bombs delivered by fixed-wing close air support may effectively destroy the source of small arms fire from a building in an urban area; however, direct-fire weapons may be more appropriate due to the risk of collateral damage to nearby buildings and noncombatants."³⁰ FM 3-24 also adds "Proportionality and discrimination applied in COIN require leaders to ensure that their units employ the right tools correctly with mature discernment, good judgment, and moral resolve."³¹ It seems as though General Dunlap failed to fully comprehend the intent of FM 3-24's supposed admonishments and overreacted to the practical statements regarding restraint.

General Dunlap observes that collateral damage is minimized by airpower because "the air weapon is largely under the control of highly-disciplined officer pilots who operate in relative safety above the fray."³² He insinuates that young ground forces cannot minimize casualties because they are not highly-disciplined, not officers, and not safely above the fray. He also erroneously claims that FM 3-24 expressly cautions about using airpower, but not ground force fires. This is simply not true. An entire section is devoted to Proportionality and Discrimination in the Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency Chapter. Perhaps General Dunlap created the misunderstanding of airpower strike effects to provide a forum of discussion for collateral damage myths that he suspects exist outside the Air Force. However, it was inappropriate to begin the diatribe against collateral damage consequences by accusing FM 3-24 authors and senior Army and Marine Corps leaders of having a "fossilized" take on current and emerging airpower capabilities. Air Force pilots safely above the fray, like their ground counterparts, have made many tragic mistakes when they perceive threats to either themselves or others. We must not casually dismiss the consequences of mistakenly dropping 500 pound bombs on coalition forces, unnecessarily destroying entire buildings based on inaccurate intelligence, mistaking wedding party celebratory fire for anti-aircraft fire or simply underestimating the long term effect collateral damage from airstrikes have on the population. While civilian casualties may be unavoidable, acceptable, and even essential in successful Major Combat Operations, collateral

damage must be minimized in COIN to maintain the legitimacy of the government. As FM 3-24 says, “In COIN environments, the number of civilian lives lost and property destroyed needs to be measured against how much harm the targeted insurgent could do if allowed to escape.”³³ General Dunlap accuses FM 3-24 of a fictional anti-airpower bias to strengthen his own anti-ground force approach, but fails to make a convincing argument that FM 3-24 advocates deliberate ground force collateral damage over inadvertent airpower collateral damage.

Ground-Centric Airpower Annex

General Dunlap says FM 3-24 “regrettably reflects a one-dimensional, ground-centric perspective almost exclusively, as evidenced by the fact the considerations of airpower are confined to a short, five-page annex.”³⁴ The fact an Army and Marine Corps Field Manual added an Airpower in Counterinsurgency Appendix in their COIN Field Manuals is proof of the importance the authors and the ground services place on airpower, rather than evidence of their ignorance about it. Although limited to a few pages, the airpower content was written by Airmen, is remarkable, and many Air Force officers and leaders would benefit from gleaning its insights. The opening sentences in the FM 3-24 airpower appendix are “Counterinsurgency operations are, by their nature, joint operations – and airpower and landpower are interdependent elements of such operations. As this appendix explains, airpower and spacepower are important force multipliers for US, multinational, and host-nation forces fighting an insurgency.”³⁵ Airmen should refrain from complaining about the location and conciseness of an airpower discussion and begin by carefully reading each section. The *Airpower in Intelligence Collection* section espouses fusing HUMINT with SIGINT, aerial surveillance and reconnaissance assets in joint intelligence centers. *Air and Space Information Operations* cautions commanders to preplan and de-conflict influence operations to ensure success. High-technology assets, including Predator, Remote Operations Video Enhanced Receiver (ROVER) and tactical air control parties (TACPs) are said to have proven their worth in COIN operations. A paragraph on low technology assets describes historical success of using light, slow, inexpensive civilian aircraft in Guatemala, Angola, and Iraq. This concept is rejected by many Air Force senior leaders, but FM 3-24 and numerous professional studies describe these high and low technology assets as proven effective.³⁶ The airlift section details the asymmetric advantage COIN forces get from rapidly deployable land forces using airpower, citing airlift, airdrop and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) advantages. The *Airpower Command Structure* section notes that during COIN operations, most planning occurs at lower echelons, recommending components at the operational level fully coordinate these plans. The current efforts to push air planners to the division and brigade level to more effectively integrate air operations into COIN is an excellent example of the joint force applying air-mindedness from FM 3-24. Finally, the *Building Host-Nation Airpower Capability* section is brilliant. Caught absolutely unprepared for the mission of rebuilding the Iraq and Afghani Air Forces, the Air Force is scrambling to prepare combat air advisors prior to deploying them in combat and seems reluctant to institutionalize the requirement to build capable host nation air forces. In many ways, FM 3-24 provides invaluable insight into how the conventional Air Force should use airpower in COIN.

General Dunlap’s contention that the location of specific information in a document reflects a bias against the information is not apparent in AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*. This service specific doctrine comprehensively describes irregular warfare characteristics, unique Air Force capabilities in irregular warfare, strategy and planning considerations and an outstanding

appendix on understanding insurgencies. It is not surprising that “Boots-on-the-Ground Zealots” are not publicly commenting on why the Air Force decided to relegate the *Understanding Insurgencies* chapter to a 9-page appendix, suggesting that the location diminishes its importance. Some land power advocates could argue that the Air Force has no business discussing the common characteristics of insurgency in their doctrine. Critics could also point out incorrect information, inconsistencies, and accuse the Air Force authors of deliberately misunderstanding insurgencies to champion their own ideas since insurgent motivations, organizations, operations and strategies are complex, adaptive, difficult to predict and widely interpreted in past and current conflicts. However, the Air Force’s brief, insightful concepts in the appendix serve a very useful purpose. They provide the reader, primarily Airmen, a thin but broad understanding of insurgencies. FM 3-24 authors attempted to accomplish the same understanding with airpower in their appendix. The sizes of the paragraphs, depth of subject detail and service background of the writers are not as important as the intent of including airpower in the COIN doctrine. If readers can resist being overcritical and hyper-sensitive to specific language and ground-centric concepts, the multi-service doctrine actually has many useful insights for employing airpower in COIN.

Service Doctrine vs Joint Doctrine

Accusing an Army and Marine Corps Field Manual of being anti-airpower because it was not written with an Airman’s perspective is disingenuous. The Air Force rarely accounts for land or sea power in its service doctrine. In AFDD 3-07, *Special Operations*, US Army Special Forces are relegated to a mere definition in the glossary and Navy SEALs are not even mentioned. There is no discussion about the effectiveness of Operational Detachment Alpha teams, the history of special operations, or the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) organization. Air Force doctrine is frequently air-centric, since it is written specifically for Airmen. Conversely, Joint Publication 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* states “This publication provides the overarching doctrinal guidance for the conduct of joint special operations (SO) across the full range of military operations. It describes the characteristics of special operations forces (SOF), joint SOF core tasks; the typical organization; and command and control of SOF. It further provides a joint force commander (JFC) the guidance and information necessary to identify, nominate, and select missions appropriate for SOF. This publication summarizes support requirements necessary to conduct SO missions and defines the training and education responsibilities of the United States Special Operations Command, geographic combatant commanders, and the Services.”³⁷ The fundamental difference between the service doctrine and the joint doctrine is that joint doctrine provides the joint force commander guidance and information required to conduct joint operations while service doctrine is intended for a service-specific audience. General officers from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps or US Special Operations Command did not think it was necessary to criticize AFDD 3-07 because it is exclusively “air-centric.” Perhaps they refrained because they know the doctrine is intended for an Air Force audience. The joint doctrine development procedures are defined in CJCSI 5120.02A, *Joint Doctrine Development System*. Each service ensures its doctrine and procedures are consistent with joint doctrine established by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). All joint doctrine is coordinated with the services, unified and specific commands, and joint staff prior to approval. The professional officers working on the joint COIN doctrine are not parochial agents of their service, committed to securing future funding and force structure. They are dedicated, skilled Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and sailors committed

to producing the best joint doctrine possible. The COIN Joint Publication development process began in August 2007 with a Joint Working Group at United States Special Operations Command. Although the Army has the lead on the joint COIN doctrine, the development team includes officers from each service, respected airpower experts and COIN academic scholars. This team is working hard to produce a truly joint doctrine first draft by Summer 2008. Well-written service publications like FM 3-24 and AFDD 2-3 will greatly influence the authors of the new publication. Following a busy year of extensive service editing, inputs, coordination and approval, the joint publication should be released in May of 2009.

Conclusion

Shortchanging the Joint Fight serves as a convenient storage medium for classic, well-documented defenses of airpower utility. Perhaps because the Air Force is the youngest of the services, with the shortest history and fewest traditions, Airmen tend to be more sensitive to criticism, and to read disparagement in places it is clearly not intended, as in FM 3-24. Most rational-minded military experts agree that neither eliminating the Air Force, nor eliminating the Army, are smart courses of action. However, virtually all rational-minded, intelligent military experts will violently disagree on how much of our national treasure should go to each specific service. This argument is amplified by the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review's emphasis on irregular warfare capabilities. The Department of Defense is charged with providing a wide-range of capabilities to ensure the highest degree of success when called upon to defend the US and its interests. The fight for scarce resources belongs in the Pentagon, on Capitol Hill, and with the President. It does not belong in service doctrine and it should not shape joint doctrine. Indeed, creating the impression that Airmen need to advocate specific COIN doctrine to justify budgetary decisions benefiting only Airmen is something all Airmen must avoid at all costs. *Shortchanging the Joint Fight's* relentless criticisms of FM 3-24, condemnations of current operations in Iraq and harsh parochial undertones do too much damage to Air Force credibility to be constructive in the joint environment. Excessive use of mass media references and opinions, disproportionately few references to doctrine, current strategy and senior leader viewpoints, and selective interpretation of FM 3-24 discredit in my opinion General Dunlap's monograph and give the impression the Air Force advocates an airpower-only COIN solution. Drafting authentic joint COIN doctrine is of paramount importance, and FM 3-24 provides a solid ground-centric perspective. Unfortunately, General Dunlap's failure to articulate the widely held, historically proven COIN tenets, combined with his inflammatory, parochial rhetoric, distract from the primary objective of recommending effective joint doctrine development. The United States Air Force is the most lethal, flexible, overwhelming and feared military force in the world. Dominance in air, space and cyberspace is absolutely necessary for successful military operations; however, airpower is simply not sufficient alone in most COIN operations. The Army's Counterinsurgency Field Manual deserves far more credit than General Dunlap gives it and Airmen should take the time to truly understand its content.

Lieutenant Colonel Buck Elton, a career special operator, is a recent Air Force Fellows graduate from the Naval Post Graduate School and is en route to Air Force Special Operations Command.

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¹ Major General Charles J. Dunlap, Jr. *Shortchanging the Joint Fight? An Airman's Assessment of FM 3-24 and the Case for Developing Truly Joint COIN Doctrine*. Air University Press. Dec 2007.

(<http://aupress.au.af.mil/121007dunlap.pdf>)

² Ibid, page 1.

³ Dunlap, page 2

⁴ Ibid, page 6

⁵ Ibid, page 67

⁶ Ibid, page 67

⁷ Alan Vick, Adam Grissom, William Rosenau, Beth Grill, and Karl Mueller. *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era: The Strategic Importance of USAF Advisory and Assistance Missions*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, October 2005
(http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG509.pdf)

⁸ Ibid, page 5

⁹ Ibid, page 7

¹⁰ Dunlap, page 59

¹¹ Benjamin Lambeth. *Air Power Against Terror: America's Conduct of Operations Enduring Freedom*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006. Page 301. (<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG166-1/>)

¹² Major General Dunlap New York Times op-ed. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/09/opinion/09dunlap.html>) accessed 1 Feb 08.

¹³ Montgomery McFate, *Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of Their Curious Relationship* Military Review, March-April, 2005

¹⁴ Headquarters Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, December 15, 2006, para A-26
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²¹ Ibid page 35

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³⁵ FM 3-24, Appendix E

³⁶ See Counterinsurgency Ops May Require Modernized Airlift Fleet

(http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB227/) and Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era: The Strategic Importance of USAF Advisory and Assistance Missions

(http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG509.pdf)

³⁷ JP 3-05, page 2

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