

Air Force Special Operations Command
White Paper

USAF
Irregular Warfare Concept

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Foreword

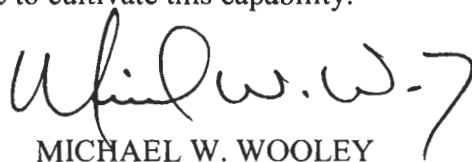
This white paper proposes a United States Air Force (USAF) Irregular Warfare (IW) concept which will enhance the USAF's ability to conduct critical IW operations and enable *prioritized partner nations* to do the same, thus improving our ability to contain and defeat regional challenges before they pose threats to US national security interests.

The Office of Secretary of Defense depicted four persistent and emerging challenges the Services must plan against to meet current and future threats: traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive. The irregular challenges stem from those employing "unconventional" methods to counter the traditional advantages of stronger adversaries. This paper discusses force structure requirements and recommends aircraft, command and control, and employment options necessary for the USAF to support global IW. The IW capability needs identified in this paper are consistent with existing and emerging shortfalls recognized in Department of Defense strategic documents, studies, as well as feedback from Theater Special Operations commanders.

According to the 2006 QDR Report, the United States is involved in "a Long War that is irregular in its nature. The enemies in this war are not traditional conventional military forces but rather dispersed, global terrorist networks that exploit Islam to advance radical political aims.... This war requires the US military to adopt unconventional and indirect approaches... [We] must also remain vigilant in an era of surprise and uncertainty and posture to prevent, deter, or defeat a wider range of asymmetric threats."

To tackle this global threat, the USAF must possess properly organized, trained, and equipped forces that can be directly applied to IW in countries where USAF conventional forces are not permitted due to legal, political, or strategic constraints. America expects the USAF to maintain the capabilities necessary to ensure successful execution of the most difficult air and space missions and minimize national security risks. To realize this, we must incorporate the vast capabilities of our total force. Our aircraft portfolio must be sufficient in range and depth to not only meet traditional threats and requirements, but to conduct numerous disparate global air and space operations to satisfy the needs of the GCC and enable partner nations to share the load. Meeting the IW operational needs by enhancing USAF capabilities described in this paper will demonstrate USAF commitment in the Long War.

The IW roadmap mandated by the QDR directs development of IW capability. While there are several components to IW, the USAF must focus its efforts in areas where we can make our greatest impact: conducting support to counterinsurgency operations and training and enabling partner nations through aviation foreign internal defense activities. This paper recommends a USAF IW Wing construct capable of meeting both of these key IW components. Based on history and current operations, AFSOC is a logical choice to cultivate this capability.



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1. Purpose

The purpose of this white paper is to advance a concept that supports and implements guidance contained in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Report (QDR). In the 2006 QDR, the Secretary of Defense directed that Department of Defense (DoD):

- a. Develop IW capability and capacity throughout DoD to defeat terrorist extremism in the Long War
- b. Build partner capacity for IW¹

This paper is founded on this guidance and incorporates it throughout the concept. Meeting the IW operational needs by enhancing USAF capabilities and building partner nation (PN) capacity will demonstrate USAF continued commitment and success in the Long War.

2. Scope

Most Air Force capabilities support IW effects in some fashion. This white paper seeks to integrate the 2006 QDR guidance into a dedicated Air Force IW capability portfolio balanced across multiple mission areas that include indirect, asymmetric, and direct approaches to IW. This paper identifies USAF capabilities that support IW, including Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (AvFID) / Combat Aviation Advisory (CAA) and other Military Training Teams (MTT), language and culture, Military Education and Training Teams (METT), International Affairs Strategists, IW strategists and campaign planners, and the AF Coalition and Irregular Warfare Center of Excellence (CIWC). At the core of this paper is the need for a USAF IW Wing properly organized, trained, and equipped to operate by, with, and through PNs where US Airpower cannot be directly employed and to build partner nation capacity. The 2006 Rand Study, *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era*, observed that creating a wing-level organization for aviation advising “is likely to be the single most important initiative the USAF can take to enhance its own counterinsurgency capabilities.”²

3. Background

Since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the world has been and continues to transform in immeasurable political, military, economic, and informational ways. The former Cold War standoff which shaped the DoD strategy, planning, and budgeting process for over 50 years has been replaced by a far more uncertain and dangerous world consisting of both traditional and nontraditional threats. Prior to the turn of the 21st Century, US military capability and capacity was unmatched; no adversary could realistically wage and win war against the United States Armed Forces. However, since September 11, 2001, the American way of war has significantly transformed to counter not only remaining conventional threats, but emerging nontraditional, irregular challenges as well. DoD planners must now consider a nontraditional adversary that has no borders, wears no uniforms, does not subscribe to the Geneva Convention, exploits information technology, hides behind religious symbols, consistently targets noncombatants, and sees greater benefit in death than life.

¹ 2006, Quadrennial Defense Report, Feb 2006

² 2006 Rand, *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era Study*, pg. xviii

According to the 2006 QDR Report, the US is involved in “a Long War that is irregular in its nature. The adversaries in this war are not traditional conventional military forces but rather dispersed, global terrorist networks that exploit Islam to advance radical political aims.... This war requires the US military adopt unconventional and indirect approaches... [We] must also remain vigilant in an era of surprise and uncertainty and prepare to prevent, deter or defeat a wider range of asymmetric threats.”³ In light of this global threat and economic realities, the DoD cannot meet today’s complex security challenges alone. Current efforts on five continents demonstrate the importance of being able to train and work with partners, employ surrogates, operate clandestinely, and set security conditions for the development of civil society and the establishment of effective governance in ungoverned and under-governed areas. The DoD must also be able to sustain a persistent but low-visibility presence in countries where US forces have not traditionally operated.⁴

National and military strategic guidance is clear. The DoD cannot effectively meet the global challenges of this irregular threat without increasing our IW capability and capacity. We should understand that this is a global war of ideas, and that traditional platforms and conventional military methods may not be suitable to meet the challenge. The US requires a new focus and approach to thinking about the problem. In addition to new organizations, tactics, techniques, and procedures, military planners must consider new and innovative material solutions as well. Planners must reason outside the traditional margins to redefine the “tool kit” needed to fight the Long War. Nonmilitary as well as nongovernmental capabilities must also be considered in the mix. While the necessity to remain prepared for traditional adversaries remains, planners must also recognize the need to engage the adversary with nontraditional capabilities which can also be used to enable partners to defend themselves from internal threats which affect regional security. As we enable partners, we strengthen regional security ties, ensure access, develop habitual relationships, and prevent potential tactical problems from evolving into regional strategic concerns which may later require the introduction of US forces.

Each Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) has developed a theater cooperation strategy focusing on assisting partners to combat specific internal threats enabling them to maintain secure and stable governments and societies. To meet these strategies, the US must maintain the ability to not only conduct IW operations but to assist and train partners, enabling them to resolve internal challenges at all stages of development. Failure to effectively combat these internal challenges in their nascent stages could result in future regional challenges or conflicts for the US.

4. Operations and Activities that Comprise Irregular Warfare (IW)

The February 2007 coordinating draft IW Joint Operating Concept (JOC) defines IW as "A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will." The JOC further states IW includes a wide variety of indirect operations and activities that occur

³ QDR Report, pg 1.

⁴ IW QDR Execution Roadmap, April 2006, pgs 2-3

in isolation or within traditional interstate combat operations. Some activities, such as terrorism and transnational crime, violate international law and are not conducted by US Forces. The following activities are included in the range of operations and activities that can be conducted as part of IW⁵:

- Insurgency
- Counterinsurgency (COIN)
- Unconventional Warfare (UW)
- Terrorism
- Counterterrorism (CT)
- Foreign Internal Defense (FID)
- Stabilization, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTRO) Operations
- Strategic Communications
- Psychological Operations (PSYOP)
- Information Operations (IO)
- Civil-Military Operations (CMO)
- Intelligence and Counterintelligence Activities
- Transnational criminal activities, including narco-trafficking, illicit arms dealing, and illegal financial transactions, that support or sustain IW
- Law enforcement activities focused on countering irregular adversaries

At the heart of IW are insurgency and counterinsurgency. The purpose of insurgency is to overthrow and replace an established government or societal structure. Terrorism and counterterrorism are frequently sub-activities of insurgency and counterinsurgency.⁶ Terrorism may be viewed as a means for terrorists to coerce or intimidate governments or societies “to take them out of the game” so that the terrorists can pursue revolutionary objectives.⁷ FID is thus the external support component of counterinsurgency; formerly known as support to counterinsurgency⁸ and is defined in Joint Pub 1-02 as:

*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.*⁹

⁵ Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (JOC), Version 1.0, February 2007, pg 8

⁶ Irregular Warfare JOC, pg 8

⁷ Conversation with Mr. Jerome Klingaman, 14 Dec 06

⁸ Irregular Warfare JOC, pg 8

⁹ JP 1-02, Dictionary of Military Terms

5. USAF Engagement Spectrum

USAF forces are organized, trained and equipped to function across the range of military operations, from humanitarian operations to global conflict (figure 1). Within this range is the need to address IW, which has been historically addressed by the USAF in an ad hoc manner. IW is no longer the exception but rather the norm. This change in the strategic landscape requires transformation from ad hoc responses to a more systematic approach in order to satisfy current and future IW mission requirements. The key concept advocated is the development of national options to meet airpower needs in regions or sovereignties where the deployment and execution of USAF conventional air operations are unfeasible due to legal, political, or other strategic limitations.

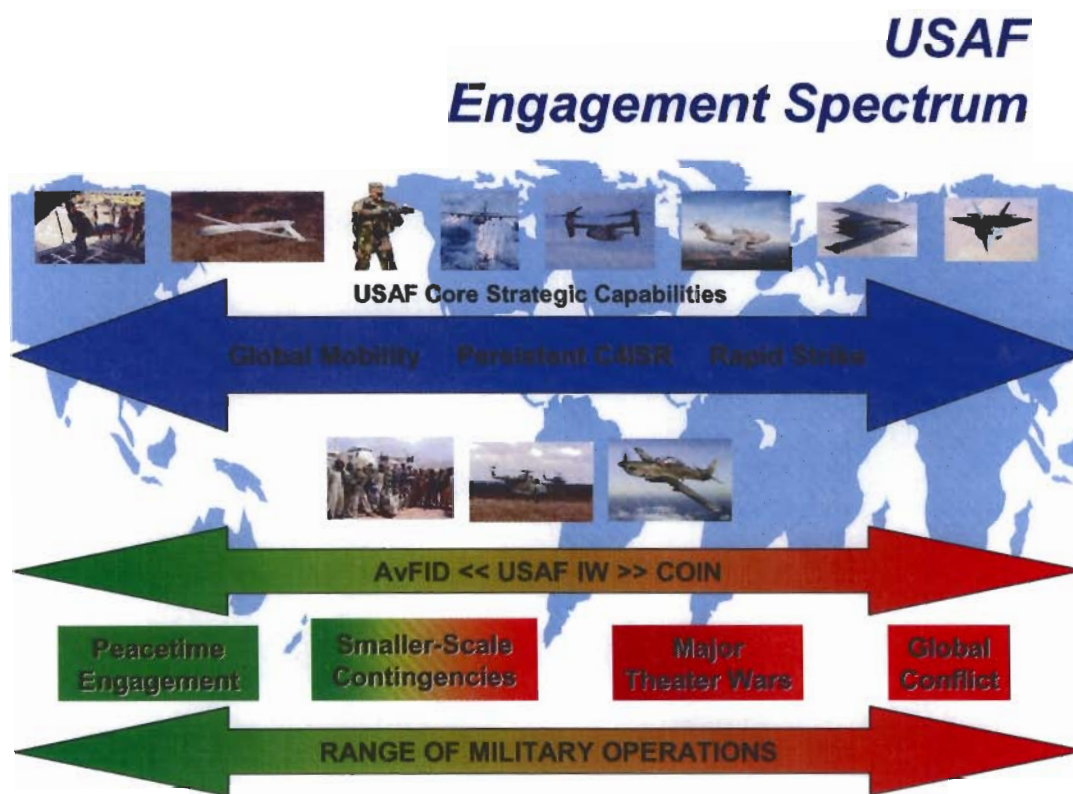


Figure 1. USAF Engagement Spectrum

6. Combat Aviation Advisory History

IW Operations, to include support to counterinsurgency and aviation foreign internal defense, are not new to the USAF. The USAF has a rich heritage and culture which have supported what we refer to today as IW. During WWII, the Flying Tigers, under the command of Claire Chennault, successfully supported the Chinese Government. From 1946-1954, Combat Aviation Advisors

(CAA), commanded by Col Ed Lansdale, supported the Philippine Government against the Huk insurgency. During the 1960s-70s, ad hoc Aviation FID and CAA operations were conducted in Southeast Asia, Central and South America. Air Force trainers were also busy at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy (IAAFA) teaching maintenance, supply, and logistics disciplines both in the US and with mobile training teams in Latin American countries. During the 1980s, CAA supported operations in Columbia, Honduras, and the Philippines. In 1993, the CAA mission was placed in Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). During the 1990s and into 2000, CAA personnel supported counterdrug and counternarcotics operations in South America. Since 1990, CAA personnel have supported a number of Cooperative Threat Reduction Initiatives in the Former Soviet Union. Finally, since 2001, CAA personnel have supported GCCs on five continents, and are significantly engaged in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Republic of the Philippines.¹⁰

Presently, the 6th Special Operations Squadron (6 SOS) forms the core of the USAF aviation FID capability as the only Air Force unit organized, trained, and equipped to function as CAA flights. The squadron's 110 authorized advisors (QDR increased unit manning by an additional 120 authorizations),¹¹ broken down into regionally oriented flights, are focused on supporting host-nation counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and counternarcotics efforts through building indigenous tactical airpower capabilities. CAA flights are organized, trained, and equipped to function as an integrated, interdependent team to train both operators and support personnel.¹² AFSOC has a historical track record of supporting what we now refer to as IW and should be the leading candidate to further cultivate this maturing capability.



CAA during Vietnam Era



CAA in Africa (2005)

7. Role of the US Air Force in Building Partner Nation Capacity

Successful efforts to combat IW threats require international cooperation and commitment. Building Partner Capacity (BPC) is the best strategy for achieving this. BPC is defined as “targeted efforts to improve the collective capabilities and performance of the Department of

¹⁰ AFSOC History Office

¹¹ As of 30 Sep 06, Conversation with 6 SOS/CC

¹² Klingaman, pg. 62

Defense and its partners.”¹³ In conducting BPC activities, the US works by, with and through others: enabling allied and PN capabilities, building their capacity, and developing collaborative mechanisms to share the decisions, risks, and responsibilities of today’s complex security challenges.¹⁴

Integral to BPC is the ability to conduct support for counterinsurgency operations and to provide Combat Aviation Advisors to support foreign internal defense activities. Purists would argue that support to counterinsurgency, by definition, is a subset of FID. These two activities alone do not equal IW but represent the areas where USAF can achieve its greatest impact in the Long War. Some traditionalists reject the role airpower plays in conducting these activities because they may not appreciate nor fully understand the role and value that airpower brings to shaping “this battlefield.” The reality is airpower brings an absolutely critical dimension that cannot be generated by surface forces. The key to effective joint counterinsurgency operations is seamlessly integrating airpower into a joint strike, mobility, ISR capability to provide friendly forces the tactical and operational advantage that only air and space power can bring to the fight.

Effective IW strategy demands air and space power not play a subordinate or stand-alone role to counterinsurgency activities. In a paper written for the 2005 Air and Space Power Strategy Conference, Mr. Jerome Klingaman, 6th Special Operations Squadron, Director of Strategy and Plans, writes, “A question that might arise is; why is FID an Air Force issue when most developing nations do not even possess viable airpower capabilities? Most of the military organizations the United States trains in the developing world are ground-based forces and have very little, if anything, to offer in terms of airpower capabilities, except possibly helicopters. Simply put, partner nations lack the critical tactical skills and equipment necessary to effectively integrate into counterinsurgency operations. So why don’t we just plus up US Army Special Forces and SEALs for a ground-based FID effort?” Mr. Klingaman observes:

A principal reason many of our partner nations cannot effectively deal with terrorism and guerrilla insurgency is precisely because they only possess ground-based militaries and because they have little, or nothing, to offer in the way of airpower to find, fix, and finish critical terrorist and guerrilla targets.¹⁵

The implication is that many of our partners lack both capability and capacity to effectively deal with terrorism and other internal threats. These partner nations cannot adequately prepare a hostile target set or lift their surface forces into attack position when and where they choose, essentially agreeing to meet the insurgents on a level field of battle. This strategy will always result in stalemate or failure. The insurgents have no reason to mass for a conventional fight unless guaranteed overwhelming superiority. Nor are the insurgents easy to find, fix, or finish when dispersed.

¹³ BPC QDR Execution Roadmap, May 2006, pg 4

¹⁴ AFDD 2-3, Irregular Warfare (Draft), 21 Mar 2007

¹⁵ Vantage Points: The use of Air and Space Power in Counterinsurgency Operations and the Global War on Terrorism, Jerome Klingaman, Chapter 4, Foreign Internal Defense and the Role of Air Force Combat Aviation Advisors, pg 60

The reason these partner nations cannot sustain, protect, and evacuate their forces in the field is because they have lost focus on their air forces and have not made investments in the capability. As a result, these air forces now consist of small air units flying infrequently in marginally capable aircraft. Accordingly, their overall national defense force is "ground based" and are likely to remain ground-based as long as the USAF allows others perpetuate the myth that airpower plays no part in this type of conflict or that "a few helicopters can take care of it." That argument essentially denies the efficacy of airpower and the capabilities and cost effectiveness of fixed-wing aircraft.

Viable airpower capabilities specifically structured for counterinsurgency and CT operations are needed in those developing nations for exactly the same reason any defending force needs them--to apply flexible airpower initiatives through such functions as reconnaissance, surveillance, close air support, interdiction, mobility for surface forces, medical evacuation, and battlefield air operations to fill the gap between CAS and interdiction. Airpower adds a vertical dimension to friendly force capability, setting the conditions that allow friendly forces to seize and maintain the initiative and prevent terrorists and insurgents from shaping and pacing operations.

The AFSOC Vice Commander summed up the requirement to build partner nation capacity in a Feb 2007 memo to the Air Staff:

"Experience suggests there is no shortage of patriotic intent or courage by partner nations who seek to control and destroy terrorist networks within their countries. Their problem is generally a lack of technical skills to complement their human intelligence capability, inadequate command and control to orchestrate efforts, intentional aversion to joint operations, poor maintenance, lack of adequate and timely mobility, and the inability to strike appropriate kinetic targets with precision and low collateral damage. In some scenarios, a very small number of properly trained aviation advisors placed in key nodes are enough to grease the wheels of the machine. In others, our presence and training provide the tools to orchestrate success. Where permitted and appropriate, aviation advisors in partner nation cockpits enable more-difficult missions to be executed sooner as we help partner nations develop their own capacity for counter-terror operations."

CAA / Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (AvFID) operations primarily involve support to PN counterinsurgency, combating terrorism, and counternarcotics programs. CAA operations properly executed complement other joint special operations force (SOF) component operations involving ground, maritime, and riverine advisory assistance and training conducted with PN forces within various theaters of operation. In the case of FID, operations can be employed to encourage and support PN solutions to the problems of internal subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency, and should be conducted prior to the onset of crisis or war, thus supporting the strategic goals of conflict prevention and deterrence as well as regime and regional stability.¹⁶

Figure 2 illustrates the symbiotic relationship between the US and partner nations relating to building partner nation capacity. To fully enable partner nations to tackle their internal threats,

¹⁶ Klingaman, pg 60

operations must be accomplished by, with, and through the cooperative efforts of the partner nation. Successful COIN strategy can only be realized when the partner nation is able to assume the lead. To fully integrate a partner nations air capability into this strategy, the US must properly assess, advise, train, and assist partner nation air forces. This will require efforts in both the host nation and from the CONUS. In those instances where a PN has an operational air force, the US Air Force can provide the necessary technical and professional skills to enhance operational capacity and effectiveness. In situations where an indigenous air force does not exist or is in decay, the US Air Force, through proper security assistance and US government channels can help the PN obtain the materiel and financial support it needs to build, equip, train, and sustain a viable airpower capability.

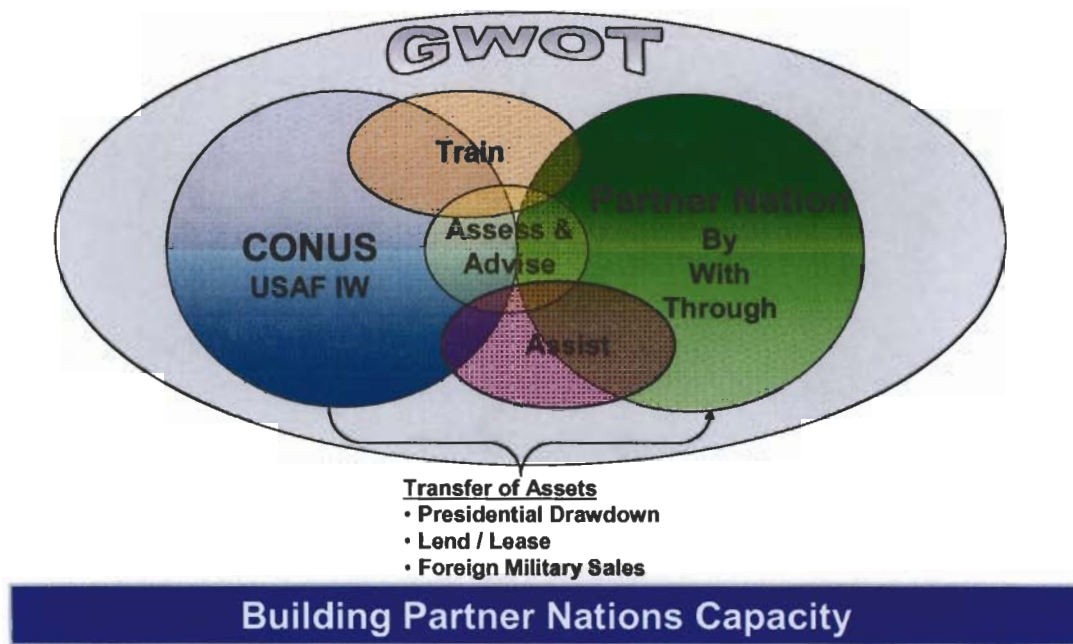


Figure 2. USAF IW Concept

AFSOC's 6 SOS has been extremely successful in supporting a limited number of theater requests; however, with competing theater requirements and the prospects of a Long War, the numbers of Air Force CAA and equipment are simply insufficient and inadequate to conduct sustained operations in a truly global sense. While the 6 SOS does not maintain official records of unfilled requests, squadron personnel have estimated that at least 58 percent of the formal requests for forces were unsupported, primarily due to a lack of manpower.¹⁷ While AF Special Operations Forces are capable of effectively conducting unilateral missions, the full spectrum capabilities needed by a PN to defeat internal threats are dispersed across the USAF.

¹⁷ Rand Study, Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era, The Strategic Importance of USAF Advisory and Assistance Missions, Alan Vick, Adam Grissom, William Rosenau, Beth Grill, Karl Mueller, 2006, pg 125. This does not include the daily, informal phone requests

The first step in developing PN airpower is developing the right organizational model for a PN air force. Planning should identify gaps in the partner nation's ability to command, control, and employ airpower in COIN operations. The next step is to help the PN develop its aviation infrastructure under a long-term plan. Most developing nations need considerable assistance to develop an effective organization; logistical infrastructure; recruiting, training, and education systems; suitable force structure and basing plans.

Planners should consider PN economic base and technological capabilities when selecting equipment. In most cases, the PN acquires, or the US and multinational partners provide, a small air force. Although this air force often has limited resources, the PN must still be capable of effectively operating and maintaining its aircraft and supporting systems. US aircraft have tremendous capabilities, but they can be too expensive and complex for developing nations to operate and maintain. Multinational partners with capable, but less expensive and less sophisticated, aircraft can often help equip the PN. There is one thing we should be careful about. There are some who would start down the path of COIN specific airframe development. That is not required; the ideal solution should consider commercial off-the-shelf aircraft with simple but creative weaponry, ISR, and C2 adjustments. The key is not high-tech or low-tech but the right-tech that gives the PN affordable, sustainable, and capable airpower.

Developing capable air forces usually takes longer than developing land forces. As a result, air force units, advisors, and trainers will likely remain after land force trainers and advisors have concluded their mission. Often partner nations rely on US air liaison personnel, land controllers, and aircraft for an extended period. Thus, COIN planners must consider the long term US air support requirements in comprehensive COIN planning.¹⁸ This commitment cannot be sustained without a USAF organization dedicated to the IW mission.

8. US Air Force IW Construct

The USAF requires an IW organization capable of high-density operations to meet both GCC operational requirements and theater security cooperation strategies. Successful IW requires a long-term sustained effort and level of competency that cannot be accomplished as a secondary or ancillary mission. Personnel who assess, advise, train, and assist foreign air forces must not only be experts in their career fields – they must be skilled teachers, role models, and communicators. The USAF investment in recruiting, selecting, training, and educating these personnel cannot be justified for a “secondary” mission. Nor will the mission be successful without this investment in our Airmen.

Initially, the USAF should establish an IW wing capable of providing assistance to partner nations across the full spectrum in developing and employing indigenous air and space power to defeat irregular internal threats. This wing should have a self-contained capability to assess, advise, train, and assist in all areas of institutional and operational air force activities. This force should serve as a model for partner nations to adopt in structuring and operating their air force.

¹⁸ FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency, December 2006, Appendix E, *Airpower in Counterinsurgency*.

To be most effective, the USAF must incorporate the considerable capabilities resident in the USAF Reserves and the Air National Guard. By leveraging the total force, we capitalize on their strengths to meet the dynamic and demanding challenges of the new IW landscape. To maximize partner nation training, the wing should possess representative aircraft they are likely to encounter in partner nations. Additionally, the USAF IW Wing should be equipped with permanently assigned, relatively new, low tech, inexpensive, and easy to maintain aircraft. Similar types of these inexpensive aircraft can be sold or transferred to partner nations through appropriate security assistance channels. The USAF must use this dedicated force to conduct GCC operational requirements and to assess, train, advise, and assist partner nations in the sustained use of airpower to effectively deal with internal threats that challenge their security and stability. This force increases USAF participation in the Long War with a focus on counterinsurgency operations and develops partner nation capability to combat internal threats. Lastly, this force will help build enduring relationships and ensure continued access and influence in key strategic areas.

The wing should consist of sufficient range and depth of aircraft to meet anticipated global requirements. The wing (see figure 3) should be comprised of aircraft capable of six distinct functions: light mobility; medium mobility; heavy mobility; light strike; rotary wing; and manned intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). Initial platform numbers are conservatively based on sound military judgment and experience considering GCC operations, partner nation training, and schoolhouse requirements. Aircraft and corresponding force structure can be adjusted in the out-years after mission maturation and a thorough global analysis. Additionally, the wing will maintain an organic capability to integrate support requirements such as aircraft maintenance, airbase defenders, communications, intelligence, survival, and other critical combat support functions. While the wing will consist of distinct capabilities and functions, these aircraft and advisors (operators and support personnel) must be organized as regionally oriented units, comprised of individuals encompassing a broad range of aviation specialties, which train and deploy as cohesive, coordinated, interdependent, compositely structured teams. This allows the units to train, deploy, employ, sustain, redeploy, and reconstitute as cohesive independent teams, thereby avoiding the problems associated with the ad hoc nature of the former “Jungle Jim” units of the Viet Nam era.¹⁹

The wing will have a twofold mission. First, provide US specialized airpower necessary to conduct IW operations in environments such as Afghanistan and Iraq, trained to find, fix, and finish high value terrorist and guerrilla targets. Secondly, train and enable partner nations to develop, sustain, employ, and fully understand the role airpower plays in combating internal threats. As we assist partner nations, we enable them to defend their homeland during internal conflict. As an example, in the summer of 2003, had USAF deployed personnel from this wing, the Iraqi Air Force may have been trained and prepared to support their maturing ground forces with ISR, mobility, strike, and other airpower capabilities necessary to counter the insurgency. As we build partner nation capacity to defend their own resources, we may eventually reduce or eliminate the need for costly large-scale deployments of US forces.

¹⁹ Conversation with Mr. Jerome Klingaman, 14 Dec 06

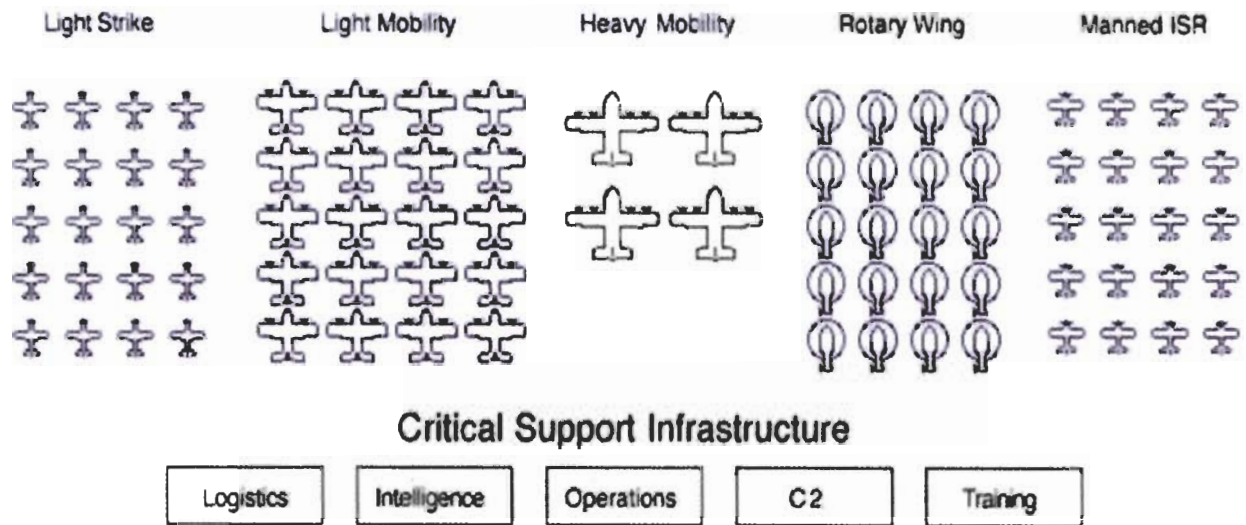


Figure 3: Notional IW Wing

a. Mobility²⁰

For surface forces, tactical battlefield mobility is probably the most important airpower function in the counterinsurgency and combating terrorism arenas. Airpower provides PN forces the critical advantage in capabilities that allows them to outmaneuver the insurgents and assume the initiative. Fixed and rotary-wing aircraft both play vital roles. Fixed-wing transports are best suited for carrying ground assault forces into forward staging areas for tactical insertion by helicopters, although some situations may require direct delivery to the immediate objective area, not necessarily on top of a defended target. Additionally, mobility is critical to demonstrating government presence in rural areas. Helicopters are ideal platforms to carry ground assault teams into the immediate target area or employment site. Aircraft should be fitted with precision, semi-autonomous navigation capabilities; e.g., inertial navigation systems (INS) or global positioning system (GPS).

In the fixed-wing arena, this force should consist of heavy, medium, and light airlift capability. The C-130 is the most prolific military aircraft in the world. It is capable of transporting large formations and vehicles. The wing would only require four C-130s to provide advanced tactical training to partner nations.

There are several candidate aircraft that could satisfy the light mobility requirement. The example aircraft presented here and elsewhere in this paper should not be construed as an official endorsement of a particular weapon system, but are meant to portray the general class of aircraft that are representative of the required capabilities for the IW wing. Examples of capable light mobility aircraft include the Cessna Cargomaster, Cessna Caravan, Twin Otter, CASA 212, and

²⁰ Information discussed in light mobility, heavy mobility, light strike, rotary wing, and manned ISR was derived from Mr. Klingaman's paper

G-222. For medium mobility, candidate aircraft could include the C-27, C-235, and the new Joint Cargo Aircraft. Possible rotary candidates for mobility airlift requirement could include the H-60 and UH-1, Bell 412, Bell 212, or other medium lift commercial helicopters.

b. Light Strike

IW strike is essentially a day-night force-application role with emphasis on precision engagement--both preplanned and immediate (troops in contact)--operations via CAS, battlefield air operations (BAO), and interdiction. The air attack effort flows in sequence from aerial ISR into air interdiction and BAO for target preparation prior to insertion of ground assault forces, and from there into CAS and, finally, air cover for extraction.

The air attack element should be equipped with aircraft specifically suited for the task of close-in air-to-ground ordnance delivery and capable of tight maneuver for operations in urban environments. Candidate aircraft could include helicopters as well as forward-firing fixed-wing platforms and gunships. Side-firing gunships are capable of "precision engagement" and, given a sufficiently permissive environment, offer advantages over conventional fixed-wing attack platforms, primarily in terms of mission flexibility and available time on-station. Fixed-wing attack aircraft, however, can deliver heavier loads capable of penetrating fortified and dug-in positions.

Precision air attacks can be of enormous value in COIN operations; however, commanders must exercise extreme caution when using airpower in the strike role. New, precise munitions with smaller blast effects can limit collateral damage. When considering the risk of civilian casualties, commanders must weigh collateral damage against the consequences of taking no action. Avoiding all risk may embolden insurgents while providing them sanctuary. 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 a demonstrated low failure rate, appropriate yield, and proper fuse can achieve desired effects while mitigating adverse effects. However, inappropriate or indiscriminate use of air strikes can erode popular support and fuel insurgent propaganda. For these reasons, commanders should consider the use of air strikes carefully during COIN operations, neither disregarding them outright nor employing them excessively.²¹

The use of unguided munitions reduces the attack aircraft's allowable proximity to friendly troops by a large margin in the air cover and CAS roles. Friendly and allied nations in the developing world possess few if any precision-guided munitions. In fact, most air forces in the developing world lack the basic capacity to place lethal fire close to friendly troops in contact at night. Many air forces are presently capable of "area engagement" but not "precision engagement."

Current attempts to transfer air combat skills for counterinsurgency and counterterrorism to foreign aviation units in the developing world generally fail to address the ordnance delivery aspect of the overall "find-fix-finish" equation. Various foreign training events and exercises

²¹ FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5, Counterinsurgency, December 2006, Appendix E, *Airpower in Counterinsurgency*.

conducted around the world focus on such missions as infiltration, exfiltration, resupply, combat search and rescue (CSAR), and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) to the exclusion of air attack. There are no efforts currently under way to build offensive air attack capabilities in those countries where the terrorist threats are perhaps highest. Mobility for surface forces is a critical factor in this equation, but so is the ability to neutralize or seriously degrade enemy resistance prior to inserting ground assault teams. Future attempts to impart “find-fix-finish” capabilities to foreign GWOT partners must take into account the implications of not including some form of air attack capability.

One possible candidate for the light strike role is the air to ground modified Raytheon AT-6B. Other candidate aircraft include the Tucano or Super Tucano. There is also the opportunity to employ aircraft traditionally used in other roles (i.e., light mobility) to conduct strike missions. Mounting hard-points on the wings with a plug and play targeting system may allow many types of airframes to be employed in a strike role. For example, the Cessna Caravan might be useful as a light mobility, strike, or ISR asset depending on its configuration.

c. Rotary-Wing

Rotary-wing aircraft, while inherently complex and maintenance intensive, are uniquely capable of satisfying a number of roles to include mobility, strike, ISR, CSAR and CASEVAC. Helicopters are best suited for this task because of their ability to land and take off in the immediate vicinity of the target area. Supporting helicopter gunships for the CSAR and CASEVAC roles should be included where possible. Careful consideration of the enemy threat is required to determine the rotary-wing capabilities required.

Possible rotary candidates include the UH-1, Bell 412, Bell 212, or other medium lift commercial helicopters.

d. Manned ISR Capability

The principal task of manned ISR is geared towards the special operations special reconnaissance mission profile, specifically line of sight, to locate and designate targets, in both rural and urban settings, for exploitation by surface forces. Aerial ISR is employed at the beginning of the find-fix-track-target-engage-assess cycle and continues throughout the mission against specific target sets. Platforms best suited for this mission are fixed-wing aircraft fitted with forward-looking infrared (FLIR) and deployed throughout the country’s interior and along its borders to detect, identify, and report maneuvering terrorist groups and cross-border traffic. Sensor, data delivery, and analysis capabilities are the driving factor here, not the sophistication of the sensor platform.

Aerial surveillance of mountainous regions presents unique problems requiring even fixed-wing surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft to have relatively high performance capabilities. In the context of counterinsurgency/counterterrorism and the close-in fight associated with the find, fix, and finish scenario, the ISR function merges with battlefield air management/C2 capability. The ideal platform is one that can operate from unimproved sites, loiter for extended

periods, and remain in close proximity to surface forces during the attack. In most instances, helicopters are not the preferred platform to accomplish air surveillance.

Key to the ISR function is not just the aircraft capability but the training itself. We must not only train aircrews but support personnel as well. Intelligence personnel must understand how to analyze the raw data to develop an actionable plan. Unmanned ISR platforms have been considered but deemed inefficient after considering the steep ramp up costs associated with the unmanned systems support infrastructure.

9. Concept of Employment

The USAF IW Wing should be capable of providing a responsive, sufficient, and sustainable forward deployed force to meet global GCC requirements. This force requires the capability and capacity to deploy, employ, and sustain itself for extended periods to provide an initial, full-spectrum capability to deployed US forces or the PN, as well as to develop the PN's organic capability. Initially, the strike capability should be comprised of 20 x AT-6B air-to-ground or similarly equipped aircraft. The AT-6B is capable of conducting operations in most IW environments. The light mobility, medium mobility, and rotary-wing platforms should also use 20 as an initial baseline inventory. Additionally, this wing requires four C-130s for heavy mobility. These numbers should meet initial GCC operational, partner nation, and schoolhouse requirements. As the USAF (AFSOC) divests its MH-53 aircraft, consideration should be given to sharing responsibility of the IW rotary-wing mission with the US Army (USASOC) or other USAF elements.

The wing will provide GCCs with presence for purpose and contingency response options on a global scale by aligning to deployment schedules similar to the Air Force AEF rotation cycle or the emerging SOF Pre-deployment Training Cycle (SPTC) (see figure 4). Additionally, this force will be capable of supporting partner nations whenever and wherever invited. Depending on actual requirements, manning, and implementation of the SPTC, each phase could be either 90 or 180 days. Command and control could be through the theater Air Force Component Commander or the Joint Special Operations Air Component Commander, the air manager of the Theater Special Operations Command. One fourth of the authorized aircraft could be deployed at any given time to provide GCC operational requirements, training, and assistance to prioritized partners. The remainder of the wing would then be in post employment recovery, training, and pre-mission preparation/rehearsal for the next deployment/employment phase and schoolhouse training. Forces not deployed would be available for surge contingency requirements for assigned theaters.

Initially, AFSOC's 6 SOS should form the nucleus of this wing. The unit is highly qualified in conducting critical functions such as global planning, training, standardization and evaluation, and could establish the schoolhouse performance standards for both assigned and foreign student training. Additionally, the USAF Special Operations School (USAFSOS) could develop a training syllabus for initial and recurring training for CAA personnel. Currently, the 6 SOS doesn't possess the minimum capabilities described in this paper.



Figure 4: Representative SOF Pre-deployment Training Cycle

The notional wing depicted in figure 3 would provide the GCCs with the optimal IW force capable of conducting the broadest range of activities described in this paper. If a full up IW Wing is not attainable, a similarly comprised AF IW Group could provide GCCs capabilities on a lesser scale. At a minimum, the IW force must consist of a composite squadron with the full complement of IW capabilities. A notional IW squadron is depicted in Figure 5.

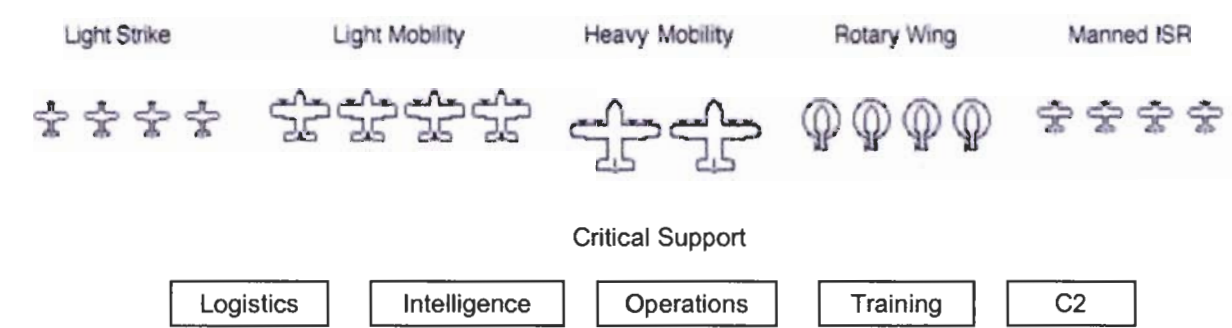


Figure 5: Notional IW Squadron

10. Existing US Air Force IW Capabilities

The unique environments encountered in the Long War will continue to create employment challenges and opportunities for Air Force leadership. If history is any indicator, the USAF will

continue to make major contributions to IW in a wide range of settings. Future IW operations will require the USAF to provide a broader and less sophisticated mix of airpower capabilities. To be prepared for these challenges, USAF general purpose and special operations forces need improved capabilities to better operate in the IW environment. Examples of USAF existing capabilities include:

a. Air Force Coalition and Irregular Warfare Center of Excellence (CIWC)

The CIWC is the USAF focal point for IW efforts and building partner nation capacity in the Global War on Terror. Its mission is to support and facilitate the development of airpower capabilities, capacities, and relationships in partner nations. In addition, the CIWC supports and facilitates the development of innovative application of USAF airpower in IW with an aim to:

- *Assess, prioritize, and build* relevant partner nation airpower capabilities and capacities in partnership with AFSOC and regional air components
- *Increase* relevance of AF General Purpose Forces (GPF) airpower in IW, in partnership with AFSOC and MAJCOMs
- *Provide* a central pool of experts and lessons learned in partnership with A-9s and the 561st Joint Tactics Squadron
- *Synchronize/coordinate* coalition air issues globally in partnership with the Air Staff and regional components

b. Military Training Teams (MTT)

MTT and similar capabilities are essential for supporting IW operations. Today, the USAF possesses only a fraction of the MTT required to fully support the Long War operations. There are several courses of action to meet this demand. One is to create a USAF Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (FID) organization, which is the focus of this paper. Another would be to establish permanent units in Air Combat Command (ACC) and/or the Air National Guard (ANG). A third option would be to establish USAF regional FID centers within various Geographical Combatant Commands. The optimum solution to fulfill the expected high demand for MTT would be a mix of these options.

c. Foreign Area Officers (FAO)

The Air Force's International Affairs Specialist (IAS) program is the AF component of the DoD Foreign Area Officer program and is designed to develop Airmen with insight on political-military affairs, proficiency in foreign language, and understanding of critical cultural issues in countries and regions in which the Air Force may operate. Air Force officers are identified at the mid-career point for deliberate development as either Regional Affairs Strategist (RAS) or Political-Military Affairs Strategists (PAS).

RAS officers typically serve as major command (MAJCOM) and GCC staff officers, country desk officers, arms control officers, and attachés where their unique combination of professional military skills, regional expertise, or foreign language proficiency are required. PAS officers serve in similar positions, but perform duties that require a broad knowledge of political-military affairs rather than regional expertise and foreign language skills.

d. Language Training and Cultural Orientation

The 2006 QDR IW Roadmap tasked the Services to establish pre-deployment readiness standards for language proficiency and regional understanding. The USAF is complying with these tasks via pre-deployment training and a continuum of learning.

In pre-deployment training, cultural awareness briefings will be given prior to deployment; in addition, 2nd Air Force and AFSOC are coordinating with Air Staff for Defense Language Institute (DLI) MTT to provide instruction for Airmen requiring in-depth language and regional familiarization training.

For the continuum of learning, regional and cultural awareness training has been incorporated into officer and enlisted accession and pre-accession training, as well as into every level of officer and enlisted PME across the total force.

Creating a complete taxonomy of cultural categories is ultimately the key to success in developing Airmen with the right skills mix to meet the global IW challenges. Additionally, these capabilities should be tailored to the specialty, grade, and scope of duties. Different jobs necessitate different requirements and training tailored to provide fully qualified Airmen.

e. IW Strategists and Campaign Planners

To develop a cadre of strategists and campaign planners competent in IW, the effort is underway to mainstream IW into PME/JPME curricula and is making excellent progress. Both military and civilian academic institutions continue to update and improve the content of IW curriculum. This will ensure officers and senior enlisted members receive professional education in IW.

The center of gravity for producing USAF strategists and campaign planners is at the Service and joint advanced studies group courses such as the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS), the School of Advance Military Studies (SAMS), the School of Advance Warfighting (SAW) and the Naval Post-graduate School (NPS). However, the AF still needs to continue to incorporate IW into other education, training, exercises, doctrine and lessons learned initiatives.

f. Military Education and Training of Foreign Militaries

Building the capability and capacity of partner nations is a key objective of Air Force efforts in IW. The Inter-American Air Force Academy is one example of Air Force engagement to build capabilities in partner nation air forces in the USSOUTHCOM AOR. Other capability-building activities include military-to-military exchange tours and in-residence professional military education for foreign and allied air force officers. The Air Force educates and trains over 8,500

foreign students annually through developmental education, professional military education, language training, medical training, command and control training, logistics, maintenance, and flying training courses.

The National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program (SPP) links US states with partner countries for the purpose of supporting the theater security cooperation (TSC) objectives of the GCCs. State partners actively participate in a host of TSC activities ranging from bilateral familiarization and training-like events, to exercises, fellowship-style internships, and civic leader visits. All activities are coordinated through the GCCs, the US Ambassadors' country teams, and other agencies as appropriate to ensure that National Guard support is tailored to meet both US and partner-country objectives. Currently, 43 US states, two US territories, and the District of Columbia are partnered with 48 countries around the world.

11. Conclusion

The US and our allies face a determined adversary whose strategic goal is to impose their ideological beliefs upon us while destroying western societal values. However, the immediate fight is an internal military, social, and political struggle within other nations. This strategy will usually preclude direct, large-scale involvement of outside forces. This enemy has compelled the US Armed Forces to alter the way it examines and conducts every aspect of warfare to include changes in doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities. In light of this global challenge and economic constraints, we must adjust our thinking so that we are prepared for actions with traditional adversaries while maintaining the ability to conduct IW. Additionally, the US must enable partner nations to resolve their internal security threats before they escalate into regional challenges requiring US involvement.

The USAF plays a significant role in IW activities to include support to counterinsurgency and FID, providing unique capabilities that cannot be satisfied by the other Services. To complement existing capabilities, the USAF needs a dedicated wing capable of conducting IW operations with the ability to train and enable partner nations to combat their own internal security threats. This force should consist of medium and light mobility, light strike, and rotary wing aircraft multi-rolled with ISR capability. This wing should consist of a professionally trained total force and permanently assigned, low tech, relatively inexpensive, easy to maintain aircraft, with the potential to transfer or sell similar assets to partner nations through appropriate security assistance channels. Additionally, certain IW wing elements can eventually be placed in the Air National Guard for not only building partner nation capacity but homeland defense as well. As we employ this force, we strengthen regional security ties, ensure access, cultivate habitual relationships, add prestige and credibility to partner nations, decrease US personnel in harms way, and potentially prevent problems from evolving into strategic regional concerns which may later require the involvement of US forces.

America expects the USAF to minimize national security risks by maintaining the capabilities necessary to ensure successful execution of the most difficult airpower missions. Our portfolio must be sufficiently robust in range and depth to not only meet traditional threats and requirements, but to conduct the numerous global operations to satisfy the needs of the GCC.

The USAF must maintain a balanced approach to warfighting that allows it be as compelling in IW as it is in conventional warfare. Meeting IW operational needs by enhancing USAF capabilities and building partner nation capacity described in this paper will demonstrate USAF's continued commitment in this Long War while allowing Air Force major weapons systems to concentrate their warfighting skills on the traditional threats they were designed to defeat.

12. Recommendation:

USAF should create a wing dedicated to and capable of providing full-spectrum IW capabilities and assistance to partner nations in developing and employing indigenous air and space power to defeat internal threats. *This is Air Force business!* This IW wing should complement existing airpower capabilities and be equipped with medium and light mobility, light strike, and rotary-wing aircraft, multi-roled with ISR capability, and the necessary personnel and equipment to support the operational wing. Lastly, based on history and current operations, AFSOC is a logical fit to host this wing.