

Small Wars, Small Investments, and Big Dividends:

Clarifying Airpower's Indirect Approach Amidst New Strategy and Controversy



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Reactivated in 1994, Air Force Special Operations Command's (AFSOC) 6th Special Operations Squadron is the Department of Defense's only standing Aviation Foreign Internal Defense unit. The squadron is comprised of 38 AFSCs and deploys small Operational Aviation Detachments-Alpha (OAD-A) to assess, train, advise and assist partner nation (PN) aviation forces. The 6 SOS has conducted innovative, low-cost, small footprint engagements with more than 40 countries over the past two decades.

Following these engagements it is customary for OAD-A leadership to conduct thorough debriefs with PN military leaders to assess progress and discuss concepts for future engagements. The following conversation occurred between a PN Group Captain (O-6), 6 SOS CAAs, and US Embassy military personnel during one such debrief. The Group Captain's words are instructive regarding the trajectory of economy of force approaches to multinational engagements directed in the latest defense strategic guidance in a coming era of fiscal scarcity:

Group Captain: *Is the 6 SOS coming to the next combined exercise with our Air Force?*

CAA: *No, that will be the unit that you trained with last year. They are much larger than us and very different, but they are very good too.*

PN Group Captain: *Yes, I am familiar with that larger unit and they are fine... You know that we love spicy food in our country. All of the large military units that come here are like big peppers and the 6 SOS is like the tiniest hot pepper we have here – very small but very potent. The big peppers just don't do much for my people.¹*

- Extracted from 6 SOS After Action Report Dated December 2011

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“Building partnership capacity elsewhere in the world also remains important for sharing the costs and responsibilities of global leadership... *Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives*, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities.”²

- US Defense Strategic Guidance Statement, January 2012

“Outside of the Air Force’s small community of advisors and a handful of policymakers, innovative, low-cost, small-footprint irregular warfare approaches are unlikely to be understood in a manner that will facilitate their proper funding and support. This is why the Air Force will never grow more than a company(+) equivalent dedicated to FID while the Army has several regiments worth of career special forces advisors.”

- Anonymous Air Force Combat Aviation Advisor

The second anonymously-posed reflection on aviation foreign internal defense (AvFID) and building partnership capacity (BPC) reflects valid sentiments within the “White SOF” community, but is misplaced for two reasons. First, the Air Force is making adjustments to meet the BPC imperative, though they are minor, greatly insufficient, and existentially threatened at the time that this text is being written. Second, the community of Air Force advisors is not alone in terms of facing hardship in advocating their mission within a service oriented towards conventional mindsets and a command focused on direct action. Career Army Special Forces (SF) advisors voice similar frustrations.³ The debate between “Black SOF” and “White SOF” proponents is one marked by emotion and parochialism. Much like any passionate quarrel, there is some logic to each party’s position. Hegel, master theoretician of dialectic, summarized this state of affairs best by noting that, “In a true tragedy, both sides must be right.”⁴

This mission has faced an existential threat tantamount to tragedy in the eyes of AvFID proponents over the past year in light of looming budget cuts. Despite early and repeated reference to the importance of this approach in the most recently-released strategic guidance, there seems a very real possibility that the Air Force's tiny capacity for these missions is in existential jeopardy. A continuity spanning nearly a decade's worth of strategic guidance urges the expansion of the US Military's ability to conduct Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (AvFID) and Building Partnership Capacity (BPC). Nonetheless, Air Force Special Operations Command's (AFSOC) 6th Special Operations Squadron (6 SOS) remains DoD's only standing organization with the charter to conduct AvFID to include flying operations. In reaction to the demand to train and equip partner nation (PN) aviation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, the USAF established the Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT) and Combined Airpower Transition Force (CAPTF) in Iraq and Afghanistan; nonetheless, these are ad hoc organizations which draw from the general purpose Air Force out of hide, and are not projected to endure beyond the termination of OIF/OEF operations. Much like the material capabilities established specifically for IW during the last decade, these organizations are easily reversible – they are defined by small investments and detract negligibly from the Air Force's overwhelming conventionally-oriented capabilities. Air Mobility Command (AMC) has established two Mobility Support Advisory Squadrons (MSAS). This is a step in the right direction, but one that has been plagued by administrative and budgetary shortfalls. Plans for the Light Mobility Aircraft (LiMA) and Light Attack and Reconnaissance Aircraft (LAAR) have been cut in light of the current budgetary environment. How could this be the case in light of clear and consistent strategic direction?

At first glance, looming defense cuts and a coming age of fiscal scarcity may seem to be the most obvious answer. After all, why would the Defense Department direct funding and manpower towards bolstering the capabilities of foreign aviation forces when there are shortfalls in our own? This line of reasoning highlights the first of several conceptual errors regarding FID and BPC: that they are conducted out of international goodwill and not self-interest. The past decade has been marked by consistent pronouncements in official guidance, and also significant academic attention to the AvFID and BPC capabilities. For a brief period of time, FID was vogue in military intellectual circles. Numerous articles and reports have been published urging the expansion of these capabilities and providing guidance for their growth – many of them will be referenced in this text. Most of these reports share two common qualities: (1) the reiteration of commonly-held assumptions regarding contemporary geopolitics and an inferred relevance for indirect approaches to irregular warfare (IW) approaches, and (2) specific courses of action for the organizational growth of these capacities. The first characteristic is at the root of significant misunderstandings regarding the strategic AvFID and BPC employment. Much more fundamental issues must be dealt with prior to discussing the second issue regarding organization – these misunderstandings deal generally with strategic employment and operational assessment.

During 2005, a highpoint in terms of attention towards FID in academic and policy circles, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) published a report entitled *Military Aviation: Issues and Options for Combating Terrorism and Counterinsurgency*.⁵ Therein, the often-unquestioned assumptions spoken of hitherto were plainly laid out: “The need for indirect involvement of military aviation such as aviation foreign internal defense in conflicts with non-state actors is widely accepted... (and) could reduce the chances that US forces would have to get directly involved.”⁶ The contemporary issue is that this assumption is *not* widely accepted,

and the indirect approach is typically misunderstood, except in the minds of those who have been involved in it. As recently as 2011, another CRS report opens with the following two quotes:

“The most important military component of the struggle against violent extremists is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we prepare our partners to defend and govern themselves.”⁷

“The United States is unlikely to repeat another Iraq or Afghanistan – that is, forced regime changed by nation building under fire – anytime soon. But that does not mean it may not face similar challenges in a variety of locales... In this kind of effort, the capabilities of the United States’ allies and partners may be important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important, if not more so than, the fighting the United States does itself.”⁸

Ignoring these two quotes may be warranted had they been borrowed from a high-minded intellectual or IW zealot. The problem, however, is that the first was transplanted directly from the 2008 National Security Strategy, and the second was spoken by the Secretary of Defense. Despite such recent and official affirmations, the USAF’s IW capability pales in comparison to its conventional strength and the direct action component of its special operations force. While the Air Force maintains 31 fighter and bomber wings, it sustains only *one* standing squadron to conduct AvFID.⁹ Similarly, while the Army fields 350 Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs), the AFSOC has only 12 equivalent detachments and funds AvFID disproportionately with less than \$15 Million annually including aircraft leases.¹⁰

Two related areas of misconception regarding FID employment characterize the AvFID debate – they emerge primarily from within the direct action (DA)-oriented element of the SOF community and the general purpose Air Force. The first breed of misconceptions assumes that working by, with, and through foreign militaries is *necessarily* less productive than equally-resourced developments of organic US capabilities, and that it may even be harmful to US defense policy. Strategic employment of FID is generally misunderstood. Additionally, those advocating this line of thought sometimes erroneously equate large-scale COIN to Irregular

Warfare, which is far from accurate. Both traditionalists and futurists warning of the looming anti-access area denial (A2AD) threat emerging from state competitors like China and Iran are apt to note irregular warfare as a mere distraction from issues of vital national interest. The second point of confusion is associated with *measures of success*. To understand the second point of confusion, an elucidation of some of the internal politics of the special operations community is in order.

Within this community, a distinction exists between what are unofficially referred to as “Black SOF” and “White SOF”. This paper is not an indictment or opposition to Black SOF. Black SOF describes those portions of the special operations forces that are typically associated with direct action, but also conducts other important missions like special reconnaissance. Black SOF encompasses forces and capabilities such as the Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, AC-130 Gunships and the aviation assets supporting their mobility. White SOF is focused on the indirect approaches of FID and unconventional warfare (UW). Personnel assigned to these units typically receive advanced cultural and language training and qualify in a variety of foreign weapons systems. White SOF encompasses forces such as the Army Special Forces (SF – Green Berets), military information support specialists, civil-military affairs personnel, MARSOC advisory elements, and AFSOC’s 6 SOS.

Two common mantras are expressed to critique the White SOF approach to aviation: (1) There is no empirical evidence or metrics illustrating that AvFID works, and (2) that SOF is about killing people, not about helping people. These critiques are seldom voiced officially. They are typically expressed by word of mouth, and cannot be cited in an unclassified forum. Nonetheless, they are worth examining based on their underlying logic alone, regardless of the source. Both of these critiques are borne from misunderstandings regarding the effects created

by indirect approaches. Building a PN force's tactical capacity in a way that achieves US objectives by, with and through those forces is the most obvious sort of effect - though it is often poorly understood by critics and even some practitioners of FID.

Several commentators have voiced the necessity to measure the success of BPC missions, though little has been accomplished in terms of systematically delineating between effective and ineffective missions.¹¹ The reason for this is twofold. First, FID's effectiveness has seldom been questioned during the academic height of FID's popularity. Assumptions regarding the approach's utility were allowed to be taken for granted; subsequently indicators of success were treated haphazardly. Secondly, despite the craving for metrics demonstrated by the majority of military personnel, most FID and BPC effects are properly conceived not as measurements of capabilities established or strengthened, but rather anecdotally.¹² This is problematic to many military thinkers and calls on the inductive and reflective faculties of both military and diplomatic leaders – a concept which, while uncomfortable to many empirical purists, is nonetheless acknowledged in joint doctrine and prominent military theory alike.¹³ Civilian and uniformed leaders who understand missions that are geared and these non-quantifiable effects have a challenging task when it comes to advocating their utility to others who do not – this task demands a degree of tact and grace, but of equal importance an understanding of relevant military history, doctrine and theory.

When dealing with these misunderstandings, a series of recognitions must be acknowledged to save the dialectic from devolving into thoughtless parochial bickering. First, one does not have to oppose “Black SOF” to advocate “White SOF” – the reverse is true as well. DA-oriented elements of the SOF community have been at the forefront of the nation's most important missions and have sacrificed much in their pursuit. Second, FID and BPC missions

are conducted out self-interest, not international goodwill. Based on these two realizations, AvFID can be conceived as a mission that complements traditional SOF activities and contributes meaningfully to US foreign policy in manners emphasizing partnership, but for reasons subservient to American strategic objectives.

Purpose

This paper's intent is to elucidate complicated and often misunderstood issues of AvFID's **strategic employment** and **measures of success** in light of recent challenges to the mission's viability and effectiveness. The comprehension of strategic employment of the indirect approach and the conceptualizing of FID's effects are at the root of misunderstandings that led to these challenges - they will continue to stunt efforts to develop robust USAF FID and BPC capabilities if not understood in a particular way. Section II of this paper will examine the commonly-used rubric of the *Phoenix Cycle* and its descriptive value. It will be suggested that while the Phoenix Cycle is an outstanding paradigm for understanding the historic plight of traditional SOF units, a different dynamic is actually at play in the case of standing FID units. Section III will examine sources of doubt and criticism regarding AvFID's effectiveness, dividing these into popular literature, conventional military thought, and critique from within the SOF community. Section IV will deal with problems emerging from an overemphasis on quantitative assessments of military operations. Section V will address challenges specific to estimating effectiveness in FID and recommend a broad repertoire of considerations for assessment. Finally, Section VI will make recommendations for the future development of AvFID and BPC capabilities within DoD based on new guidance and the conclusions reached throughout this text. This topic has faced consistent change, is changing at the time of this writing, and specific recommendations will be eluded by the dynamism of the field – therefore, a

few specific recommendations will be made, but primary used as vehicles to express more general assertions regarding FID and BPC.

The intent of this paper is not to systematically justify AvFID and BPC in light of the aforementioned critiques, though several successful missions will be detailed. This text does suggest that AvFID and BPC are highly viable modes of airpower employment; however, it does not suggest that these missions have been executed without flaw. Significant improvements can and should be made in terms of how aviation FID and BPC missions are conducted. This paper must be read with consideration for the context that it was written within – an era marked by strategic direction urging the growth of the indirect approach, but where the capability is threatened institutionally. Various periods in the future may be defined by capabilities that are declining, nonexistent, reemerging, or growing. Some will assert that AvFID is “yesterday’s” discussion if one of the prior two conditions exists. However, just as capabilities are hastily dismantled so they may reemerge – this has been the history of special operations. Additionally, while the principles and themes highlighted in this text deal almost exclusively with examples from aviation’s indirect approach, the author has attempted to crystalize them into some abstract conclusions regarding FID, BPC and SFA that will apply equally to land and maritime engagement.

Notes on Terminology

Works related to irregular warfare tend to begin with a cursory overview of terms, and this text is no exception. The field of IW is plagued by contradicting and overlapping terminology – in some cases this is an acceptable reality based on the fact that such manifestations of conflict are notably complex – as French counterinsurgency theorist David Galula notes by paraphrasing Clausewitz, “Insurgency is a continuation of politics by *all*

means.”¹⁴ Irregular warfare is a messy intermingling of violence and non-bellicose policy and of tangible and intangible factors. An acceptably-confused taxonomy mirrors a similarly-chaotic state of affairs without tautological error. In other cases, confusion in terminology is the symptom of contradicting doctrines and is natural to an evolving body of thought. This text does not seek to remedy these challenges, but some clarification is in order based on the fact that these misunderstandings often lead to mischaracterizations regarding the general nature of IW, FID and BPC.

The terms FID and BPC will both be used intermittently throughout this text. Many of the assertions regarding FID are also applicable to BPC – the latter term will occasionally be omitted for reasons of brevity. Additionally, many of the lessons from AvFID will translate to any other sort of foreign internal defense. As the focus of this paper deals with standing FID organizations, most of the lessons come from the recent history of the 6 SOS, which focuses on the three interrelated mission areas of FID, UW, and Coalition Support; nonetheless, many of the similarities between FID and BPC will be inferred. The following definitions from joint doctrine and other noted sources will be adhered to in this text:

FID: 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, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security. (*JP 1-02*)

BPC: Assisting domestic and/or foreign partners and institutions with the development of their capabilities and capacities – for mutual benefit – to address U.S. national or shared global security interests. (*Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Policy Memorandum, Joint Capability Areas*)

SFA: The Department of Defense activities that contribute to unified action by the US Government to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions. Also called SFA. (JP 1-02, SOURCE: JP 3-22)

Irregular Warfare (IW): A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Also called IW. (JP 1-02, SOURCE: JP 1) Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.

Counterinsurgency: Comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances. Also called COIN. (JP 1-02, SOURCE: JP3-24)



Section II

A History of Marginalization: Phoenix Cycle, or Something Else?

Several outstanding studies have been published detailing the history of USAF AvFID. Detailed history is beyond the scope of this paper – several publications are end-noted for reference. These works tend to focus almost exclusively on the history of units which share a lineage to the 6 SOS: notably the 4th Fighter Squadron-Commando, 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron, FARMGATE, and JUNGLE JIM. Key elements of this history will be revisited; however, several often-unnoticed elements to the history of US SOF, AvFID, and Irregular Warfare are in order. Their review will highlight the following thesis: The Phoenix Cycle accurately describes historical events associated with Black SOF and ad hoc FID units established in times of crisis; however, the plight of standing FID and unconventional warfare (UW) organizations is characterized by a different dynamic and must accordingly be understood in a certain manner. The recent history of the standing AvFID unit is one described not cyclically, but through a process of tactful steady-state marginalization.

The history of American special operations is one that is typically characterized as an episodic affair. The need for specialized forces is recognized in a time of crisis, established ad hoc, and then disestablished in the wake of conflict termination. This rubric is used to describe the inattention to specialized forces following World War II during the doctrine of massive retaliation. It was during this era that the prevailing view within the military at this time was that, “the best preparation for limited war is proper preparation for general war.”¹⁵ The early 1960s saw the accelerated generation of Special Forces upon direction by President John F. Kennedy. This was followed in the next decade by the virtual cleansing of SOF and Counterinsurgency from of military organization and education after the Vietnam War. Operation Eagle Claw, the failed Iranian hostage rescue attempt, constituted the crisis that

ultimately led to the Goldwater-Nichols act and resulted in the establishment of Special Operations Command (SOCOM) by virtue of the Nunn-Cohen Amendment in 1987. Colonel George Monroe (Ret) has famously described this as the “Phoenix Cycle”, playing on the mythical bird’s rapid ascent, followed by an incineration to ash only to be eventually reborn from the wake. The Phoenix Cycle can be crystallized into the following iterative process¹⁶:

- 1. In response to an international crisis, the president directs the services to conduct FID and/or direct-action operations, either as an independent operation or as part of a conventional war.**
- 2. To be executed successfully, the FID/direct-action operations require major changes in the way a part of each service is organized, trained, equipped and employed.**
- 3. The services resist change and insist the FID/direct-action missions are just a “lesser case” of the conventional operations they already do. Operational results prove unsatisfactory.**
- 4. The president or secretary of defense orders the armed forces to specialize a part of its force structure for FID/direct-action operations.**
- 5. The services finally increase their FID/direct-action capability by scrambling to find people who remember how to conduct these operations. Sometimes it requires bringing back retired officers and noncommissioned officers. The services finally specialize a relatively small part of their overall force in these operations — with dramatically more effective results.**
- 6. The FID/direct-action operations end.**
- 7. The services declare the need for FID/direct-action forces a one-time event.**
- 8. The services gut their FID/direct-action capability and throw the “lessons learned” book into the trash.**
- 9. Repeat.**

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This process is iterative and cyclical, and it is not new. George Washington was particularly outspoken in his disdain for irregulars. Despite the noteworthy accomplishments of Robert Rogers’s Rangers and Francis Marion’s Carolina swamp guerrillas, such units were not nurtured within the Army of newly-independent America.¹⁸ The American Civil War was marked by the irregular methods of John Mosby and Nathaniel Bedford Forrest, but the reputation of unconventional tactics was marred by William Quantrill’s excesses along the Missouri-Kansas border. Again, units dedicated to irregular methods were disestablished following the war.¹⁹

The Air Force’s role in limited conflicts has historically met a similar fate. USAF IW units were completely stood down by 1957 following the Korean War. They were resurrected in 1961 by President Kennedy’s decree in light of growing global insurgencies and the increasing

advisory commitment in South Vietnam, Thailand and Laos. By the time the drawdown was complete, these organizations were disbanded again. “Counterinsurgency” was struck from the military doctrine and education.²⁰ Apparently, it was believed America could selectively chose to ignore certain manifestations of conflict, and that they would therefore become unimportant and bear no impact on things like training, education and weapons system procurement.

The Phoenix Cycle is a useful construct and applies well to units hastily established in light of the demands of major operations, but it fails to accurately describe the situation of standing forces dedicated to FID and Unconventional Warfare (UW). While JUNGLE JIM, CAFFT and CAPTF were hastily established to respond to crises, standing FID units are designed to engage during steady-state Phase-0 operations – not as a reaction to a sudden crisis. FID tends to be most successful when executed by repeated or continuous engagements or long-term presence with PN forces. Unlike DA or conventional operations, results are seldom come in the immediate aftermath of specific advisor activities. DA missions with easily recognizable, tangible, and quantifiable results fit cleanly into the basic rubric of the military planning process: plan, execute, assess, and repeat. This not so in the case of ongoing steady-state or Phase-IV operations where the most substantive results are often qualitative in nature and not subject to discrete measurement. FID and BPC units such as the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron (CCTS), CAFTT, and CAPTF are stood up and stood down in accordance with the sorts of international crisis that Monroe identifies; but contemporary FID as directed in strategic guidance is not necessarily geared at these sorts of large-scale capacity building efforts (though it may be on a case-by-case basis). On the contrary, these actions are geared at ongoing influence with key PNs facing insurgencies in their early phases or towards establishing relationships that can pay geopolitical dividends in the future. Thus, there is no readily recognizable crisis, except

the one that looms based on the assessments of the PN and the US Mission in country. FID of this brand does not fall victim to the Phoenix Cycle – it is instead misunderstood as being ineffective or only marginally relevant.

Many contemporary observers believe that the failure to expand AvFID capabilities despite official guidance to do so is a 21st Century phenomenon occurring in the milieu of the global war on terror (GWOT) and subsequent overseas contingency operations (OCO); but it actually predates 9/11. During the early 1990s when the 6 SOS was being considered for reactivation, commentators recognized this mindset at work. An AFSOC working paper written in 1991 notes the following: “The lack of a sustained, coordinated effort by individuals dedicated to the FID mission is the principal reason we have failed to achieve long-term changes in the way developing countries support, sustain, and employ airpower.”²¹ This mindset was not only perceived as being an Air Force problem. Dr. Larry Cables criticized DoD in a 1991 report for its “superficial acknowledgement” of the requirements of low-intensity conflict. The use of the word “superficial” will resonate with any observer who has seen a decade’s worth of strategic guidance urging the AvFID capability’s expansion followed by token enhancements to the capability. What is more instructive, however, is that the period between the early 1990s and FID’s academic apex in the 2000s is bridged by similar policy statements. Guidance urging FID’s growth is not as new as some commentators assert. Consider the following passage from the 1995 National Security Strategy:

“Our leadership must stress preventative diplomacy – through such means as support for democracy, economic assistance, overseas military presence, interaction between US and foreign militaries... in order to help resolve problems, reduce tensions and defuse conflicts before they become crises. These measures are a wise investment for our national security because they offer the prospect of resolving problems with the least human and material cost.”²²

This recognition grew from observations regarding the successful US intervention in El Salvador during the 1980s, which was limited to a few hundred advisors conducting FID, including AvFID. It was not until the establishment of the 6 SOS that an enduring capability was created for something other than a crisis on the order of Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan. The 6 SOS remained the only standing AvFID unit dedicated to this economy of force approach, and was not authorized to grow beyond 95 personnel until after the turn of the millennium.

Ontologically, marginalization is a steady-state activity; but when hard choices come it will be tempting for those with lacking enthusiasm for a marginalized capability to go a step further.

Making Sense of AvFID Demand

Some within the AvFID community feel that the capacity to conduct the mission is maintained to “answer the mail” in terms of conducting a mission that has been mandated by civilian leadership, but marginalized in a manner limiting its growth in a manner that draws resources from more favored capabilities. The scope of the capability’s necessary and prospective growth is often associated with the issue of *AvFID demand*. Numerous studies of AvFID demand have been conducted over the course of the last 6 years arriving at varied conclusions; but one thing that is universally agreed upon is that the demand for AvFID far exceeds the Air Force’s ability to meet it.²³ The 6 SOS was only able to meet approximately 50% of requested missions in 2006. Demand has increased to a level which, depending the survey referenced, results in the 6 SOS being unable to meet 50%, 58%, 80%, or 82% of AvFID requests.²⁴

These numbers are stark regardless of the survey that is referenced; but the concept of AvFID demand must be investigated more thoroughly to frame the meaning of these numbers. Two general types of demand are spoken of: *PN demand* and *TSOC demand*. PN demand is

important when advisors are working by, with and through those forces – A PN’s ability to conduct operations provides an indirect means by which US policy agendas may be pursued. However, the desires of foreign militaries are not direct and unmitigated determinates of US actions, nor should they be. Theoretically, all potential partners could ask for the comprehensive provision of aviation equipment and training – a set of demands that is obviously impossible to meet.

A unit is tasked by SOCOM to conduct FID with PNs. Theater requirements are identified at TSOC-level conferences and sourced through the Global Force Management program. Thus, requests are vetted in the planning process where staffs can consider demands in light of competing requirements. The problem trying to determine true demand by using requests made doctrinally through this planning process is that the results are *entirely artificial*. In the case of SOF FID, the majority of theater planners are accustomed to working with the relatively large Army SF community which has more than 350 ODAs to source demand, in addition to SEALs and MARSOC personnel. Therefore, a conversation regarding AvFID demand may occur along the following lines at the sourcing conferences:

TSOC Planner: “I could use AvFID engagements in Country-A, Country-B, Country-C, Country-D, Country-E and 2 in Country-F during the next fiscal year.

1 SOW Planner: “Unfortunately, we cannot come anywhere near to meeting those requirements. The 6 SOS is a squadron – it has the equivalent to a Company(+) to conduct AvFID across the entire planet. It only has 2 OAD-As for your AOR.”

TSOC Planner: “Wow. I did not know that. Okay, I will request what I know I can get, and a few extra in case there is windfall from another theater.”

Based on this dynamic, TSOC demand is artificially mitigated. Theater planners who see the benefit of employing AvFID in 8 countries across their AOR may only ask for three or four because they realize that higher-priority engagements in other theaters will trump them. Therefore, true demand is a mystery.

Realizing this, SOCOM conducted a study in November 2011 geared at capturing “Unrestrained AvFID Demand”. This study shows demand that exceeds capacity by more than 75%.²⁵ The initial response may be to expand AvFID capacity by 5 times. This would certainly be desirable; however, it is unlikely in the current environment of fiscal constraint. Nonetheless, the question must be asked: “do we have the right balance between other capabilities and AvFID?” Less than 5% of AFSOC’s budget is allocated to support an FID force 4% the size of the Army’s. The Air Force as a whole has more than 100-times the number of squadrons trained, manned and equipped for conventional warfare. The answer to the question of proper balance is clearly in the negative. However, it must be noted that using demand as a linear determinant for arriving at a proper level of US capacity is not necessarily a valid approach.

An economic analogy is helpful in understanding this dilemma. The standard economic model would indicate that if demand was high, supply should increase accordingly resulting in a market condition where both consumers and suppliers benefit. The field of AvFID, however, is not a free and unconstrained liquid market. The supplier (the USAF in this case) will not increase supply to meet theoretically endless demand due to constraint on the resources (people and money) needed to create the product (AvFID capacity). Nonetheless, the demand still exists. This market encourages other suppliers to offer their own products when the Air Force limits the provision of its own. Because import substitution is not an option, his alternative product comes in two forms: civilian contractors and the militaries of other major world powers.

There are drawbacks to both alternatives from the perspective of American interests. Numerous TSOCs are using civilian contractors to conduct AvFID based on the lacunae of capability within the USAF. One TSOC planner makes the following observation: “We have contracted training occurring in two PNs. Obviously, we would prefer for this training to be

done by an active duty unit - i.e. the 6 SOS; but after years of basically no availability of 6 SOS rotary wing FID for our AOR we had to go with a different solution.”²⁶ This planner is content with the job being performed by the contractors in his AOR at this point; however, problems have been encountered in other theaters.²⁷ Many other significant drawbacks come with using civilian contractors. First, they do not answer to the US Government outside of their contract’s stipulations.²⁸ Regarding the use of contractors for AvFID, one observer notes, “The problem with contractors is not a matter of capacity – it is a matter of control.”²⁹ Additionally, the military-to-military contacts and partnerships emphasized in strategic guidance are only possible when they are conducted by US military personnel. Regionally-oriented AvFID units engaging continuously with the same key PN leaders offer the fulfillment of this objective in ways that contractors cannot. Contractors can be an outstanding choice to conduct BPC tasks in many cases; but there are certainly exceptions.

Other countries, namely China and Russia, are major providers of arms and training to a variety of countries throughout the world. Stated strategic objectives of presence, access, and relationships become competitive in this context. This is one area where the high-technology conventionally-oriented concerns associated with traditional state-on-state conflict merge with creative approaches to BPC and IW. This is particularly the case in the PACOM AOR. The US has emphasized relationships with key partners in this region, ostensibly geared at preserving influence vis-à-vis a rising China. This increased presence includes plans for rotational deployments to the Philippines, and more major bilateral exercises with Indonesia and Thailand, to mention a few examples. American strategy may selectively steer away from “large-scale counterinsurgency” in the wake of OIF and drawdown in Afghanistan; however, PN military personnel in places like Mindanao and Jolo in the Philippines and Thailand’s southern provinces

wake up in a war zone every day. While IW may not be perceived as an existential threat to some US observers, these nations do not have the choice but to fight insurgencies. Internal security in these key strategic countries (among many others) will have very real implications for US foreign policy in terms of how they affect those country's domestic politics and the potential force protection concerns they raise for US troops.³⁰

AvFID demand is a confusing topic – but it is one that is structurally quite similar to other issues of supply and demand that emerge from the history of airpower. Lt Col Clint Hinote notes that during operations in Sadr City Iraq, Army commanders asked to assess the effectiveness of supporting airpower only said, “You guys are doing great. We just need more of it!”³¹ This is a familiar statement to anyone who has planned AvFID missions at the theater level. Suggestions that supply should be equal to demand in this case do not see the reality of the matter – as soon as that is the case, demand will rise artificially again. The most appropriate way to deal with this issue is to assess geopolitical priorities. At the present time, a certain level of demand-fulfillment has been accepted. Strategic guidance has clearly identified that the “cut-off” line for the priority of AvFID missions to be met must be lowered and has determined more theater demand should be met. This necessarily means the commensurate growth of AvFID capacity to a degree that lives to the spirit of executive guidance – not continued evasion.

Section III

Killing and Creating: Three Breeds of FID and BPC Misconception

“SOF is about killing people, not about helping people.”

- Unattributed³²

“The art of creation is older than the art of killing.”

- Andrei Voznesensky³³

“The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson³⁴

Properly conceived, BPC and FID are geared not only at training and equipping PN militaries, but employing “train-the-trainer” approaches. This means training instructors in foreign militaries so that skills can be spread throughout their force in a cascading manner with proportionally-low US investment and a higher degree of ownership on the PN’s part. Is the indirect approach actually indirect if it trains and equips partners to kill? This paradox highlights a breed of errors that resides at the root of ontological misunderstandings regarding FID employment, and does so at numerous levels. These errors primarily have to do with the academic and doctrinal creation of false categories and dualities regarding IW employment.

Three broad categories of error can be detected and respectively associated with the groups that they most often emanate from. These critiques are so diverse that they may be couched in theories ranging from pacifism to the structural realist school of international relations theory popular among military personnel. The **first category** asserts that irregular warfare is almost-categorically characterized as a losing fight for the state, and that it can only be won by methods too brutal to be accepted by the modern liberal democracy. This critique comes from a wide range of sources, but is increasingly being voiced in outlets of popular culture. The **second category** posits that IW is a losing and costly mode of employment that diverts the military’s attention from more vital interests and associated capabilities associated with conventional interstate warfare. This approach is often associated with the structural realist approach to international relations. The first two are skeptical of irregular warfare altogether, and sometimes oppose FID by virtue of that skepticism. The **third category** suggests that resources and effort appropriated for FID would be more appropriately directed towards DA and units dedicated to its support – this approach typically emanates from the Black SOF community.

It is necessary to review and internalize a short series of dictums dealing with false categories before proceeding into this section. These may be obvious to some readers; but their elucidation is necessary based on some of FID's common critiques:

- *Irregular Warfare and COIN are not synonymous*
- *Foreign Internal Defense is not "Nation Building"*
- *IW is not exclusively a SOF mission, and SOF does much more than just IW*
- *One does not have to oppose Black SOF to Advocate White SOF, and vice-versa*

In Strange Company: The Wide Range of General Opposition to FID

(1) Growing Opposition to Irregular Warfare in Popular Culture

The most harmful opposition to FID comes ironically from within the SOF community; but before dealing with this brand of opposition, it is necessary to examine a more general sort. This category of opposition suggests that irregular warfare is a lost cause in general and concludes that it should be avoided altogether; thus, it necessarily discounts FID. The popularity of these positions has grown greatly over the last two years as a counter-reaction to the celebrity-status of the "Coindistas" and the resurgent interest in irregular warfare theory in light of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. An examination of this skepticism for IW in general is important to AvFID in particular because of its increasing prominence within the US Air Force. As it pertains to AvFID, criticism along these lines tends to represent one or more of the following sorts of error: (1) **Failure to distinguish between COIN and IW**, (2) **Assuming that OIF and OEF represent prototype COIN operations**, and (3) **Making sweeping conclusions based on a poor understanding of irregular warfare history**. These claims tend to emanate from each of the extreme ends of the political spectrum, both in popular culture and military academia.

One of the anti-COIN movement's recent texts is Michael Hastings' January 2012 book *The Operators* - a sensationalistic critique of US Military strategy in Afghanistan.³⁵ Hastings

sets his sights on the *Coindistas*, most notably for their attachment to French theorist David Galula, in a chapter entitled “A Short History of a Horrible Idea”. Therein, Hastings asserts the following: “Galula is part of the school of French military officers associated with *guerre revolutionnaire*. The school’s ideas are completely discredited in France.”³⁶ Hastings goes on to refer to these French theorists monolithically as “the counterinsurgency gang”. It is asserted that these officers collectively formed the *Organisation de l’Armee Secrete* (OAS), a fascist and terrorist group that sought to assassinate Charles de Gaulle and seize control of the French government. Hastings goes on to note that, “...there’s evidence of this thinking in some of the Vietnam War’s biggest debacles and boondoggles, including the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support Program (CORDS)... and the controversial Phoenix Program, which assassinated more than 20,000 suspected Vietcong sympathizers.”³⁷ Hastings goes on to conclude that Galula-inspired counterinsurgency doctrine dealt with insurgents by, “...physically separating them from the local population in the Strategic Hamlet Program, which required the forcible removal of peasants from their villages... leaving 3 million Vietnamese dead and 58,195 American soldiers killed...”³⁸ Finally, Hastings points to the apparent hypocrisy of a national leadership that campaigned on the promise of no “nation building”, and then embarked on one of history’s most extreme misadventures in that very activity.³⁹

The first problem with *The Operators* as a history is that it is outrageously inaccurate; but Hastings does do a laudable job of serially committing each of the major errors characteristic of contemporary irregular warfare critics in a space of just nine pages. These errors are instructive for comprehending misperceptions regarding irregular warfare which may carry over into the FID debate. First, Galula’s approach to counterinsurgency contrasted starkly with other French theorists, most notably Roger Trinquier and Marcel Bigeard. The entire history of French

counterinsurgency has been a pendulum, oscillating between the “population-centric” approach advocated by Galula, and the “enemy-centric” approach espoused by the latter two theorists. Additionally, not only was Galula not part of a fascist conspiracy, but was a Jew of Moroccan descent who was significantly at odds with the movements that Hastings speaks of.⁴⁰ The notion that “58,195 American soldiers killed and millions of Vietnamese dead” as the result of Galula’s approach is blind to the fact that population-centric strategy only defined a part of a war with a larger conventional context. Galula’s popularity grew from his presence as a counterpoint to the very theorists that Hastings forces him into the “gang” of “fascist terrorists” with. Here, Hastings makes the common error of framing counterinsurgency as a monolithic idea. Counterinsurgency *is not* a strategy; it is a form of warfare which may be approached in fundamentally different ways. Accordingly, if a single approach to counterinsurgency is unsuccessful, it is not necessarily the case that the entire form of warfare is somehow unwinnable for the state. Second, the CORDS, Phoenix, and Strategic Hamlet programs are actually several of the few Vietnam War programs that exhibit some empirically-supported success and did not rely on massive and counterproductive firepower resulting in excess civilian casualties.⁴¹

One outspoken critic who opposes foreign internal defense specifically is *Washington Times* correspondent Dana Priest. Priest suggests that FID is an endeavor carried out by runaway military personnel who are not subject to proper State Department checks, focusing in particular on American aid to the Indonesian Military (*TNI – Tentara Negara Indonesia*). Priest notes that the TNI’s excesses in East Timor during the 1970s were aided by OV-10s dropping napalm supplied by the US, among other accusations. Priest goes on to cite how the TNI used US training to suppress civil protests during the latter years of the Suharto regime in the 1990s.⁴² Times have changed, however. In fact, it was out of the Indonesian situation that the Leahy-

Amendment requiring human rights vetting for all units receiving US aid and training emerged. Bilateral training with the TNI was suspended for several years, until that organization underwent serious reforms – now it is being productively engaged in a manner considerate of human rights.

Another recent book on the New York Times best-seller list is Rachel Maddow's *Drift*, a text that may even surpass *The Operators* in terms of historical inaccuracies. Maddow's main point is similar to Hastings' – Counterinsurgency strategy is a fraud and does not work. Referring to Petraeus mockingly as "the smartest man in the Army", Maddow absconds the *Coindistas* for deciding that "the military was not going to simply win the war, it was going to win a country."⁴³ This fails to recognize that many of these same individuals (the *coindistas*) are on record questioning OIF's strategy prior to intervention.⁴⁴ One must realize that the *coindistas* did not create the insurgencies in Iraq or Afghanistan; but they did offer a way to confront them in manners more suitable than applying more of a repertoire of conventional approaches.

It may be noted that Hastings, Priest, and Maddow are writers typically associated with liberal American political commentary. The point of the assessments of the writers made heretofore is not to force any critic of irregular warfare into a unified or coherent camp – the most vociferous come from within the military and ostensibly hold overwhelmingly distinct views on American politics and defense issues in particular. However, in terms of critiquing irregular warfare and FID specifically, their arguments follows logic familiar in the protestations of military thinkers wishing to dismiss these capabilities in a post-Vietnam fashion, failing to see the difference between large-scale COIN and IW in general. The fact that military personnel cannot make this distinction is worrisome - recent defense strategic guidance makes the

difference quite clear and gives clear mandate to move forward with irregular warfare's nuances and continued relevance in mind.⁴⁵

(2) Military Academia and Irregular Warfare Opposition

Irregular Warfare has met significant recent opposition from within academia and some circles of the US military as well. As one commentator notes, it is becoming popular within the walls of the Pentagon to deride counterinsurgency as “yesterday’s war”.⁴⁶ These critics sometimes emphasize realist approaches to foreign policy, noting the futility of “interventions” in Afghanistan and Iraq, and deemphasizing the importance of failed-states as overblown hype.⁴⁷ It must be noted that FID is not mutually exclusive with some brands of realist thought – however, this may be the case in terms of extreme versions of structural realism. Several theorists attack irregular warfare based on the assertion that it is futile and inconsistent with realist tenets of foreign policy. One writer notes that, “Contrary to public opinion, there is nothing small about these ‘small wars.’”⁴⁸ Referencing the noteworthy expense of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan a reasonable conclusion may be made that “small wars” are a passing fad.

Theorists on all sides of the IW debate have found Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* to be a useful source to pluck aphorisms from. In the case of those opposing IW, one quote in particular is employed repeatedly: “No nation has benefited from a protracted war.”⁴⁹ The notion of protraction will be dealt with critically in a following section – for now, it suffices to say that protraction is not merely an issue of duration, but also a matter of the size of the commitment. Protraction in conflict does not seem to be an overwhelming concern when the mode of US intervention is so small that hardly anyone in the American public is aware of it and its cost is comparatively miniscule.

More thorough histories of irregular warfare indicate that it is not exclusively (or even predominantly) a losing fight for the state. American high school, graduate, and post-graduate core curricula focus on the major world wars and almost-categorically omit non-Western history. These curricula rarely deal with insurgency beyond the Vietnam War. In the milieu of OIF and OEF, this means that most Americans are only familiar with operations in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Each of these campaigns has in common the fact that they are large-scale counterinsurgency efforts waged primarily by an outside power (the US in these cases). These wars are significantly different from most irregular wars – even those in the case of American history. The late Sam Sarkesian has commented on this in the appropriately-titled book *America's Forgotten Wars*⁵⁰, along with former *Wall Street Journal* Editor Max Boot in *The Savage Wars of Peace*.⁵¹ Successful American irregular employment in the Revolution, Seminole Wars, Dominican Republic, Samoa, Haiti, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Colombia, Georgia, and the Philippines (multiple times) are relatively unknown.

An astute historian may point out that in some of these conflicts the notion of “victory” is contentious and possibly arrived at by means unacceptable to a modern liberal democracy. John Nagl’s popular book *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife* highlights British successes in Malaya – critics may similarly be quick to point out that the conclusion of this fight was followed by British granting independence to the Malaysians. “Victory” in the superficial sense reinforced by American education, may be defined by officers signing an armistice on a US Ship or on a train car in Versailles – this is rarely the case in irregular warfare. Dr. James Forsyth borrows Dr. Everett Dolman in noting that, “... strategy is not about winning but about achieving some continuous advantage.”⁵² Withdrawal in most of these cases was foregone – it was the terms of withdrawal that were at stake. Viewing wars as discrete phenomena with a clear end, while

useful for historians and the establishment of clear objectives, denies that they are political affairs escalated by other means – as Clausewitz said, a “pulsation of violence”. They are followed by a tomorrow which must be considered as part of the same stream of reality. These wars may be fought to effectively reduce an enemy from being a full-blown insurgent army into a mere criminal threat – this has been the case of the FARC in Colombia, a conflict involving significant American FID, including AvFID.⁵³

Most wars are irregular wars. Additionally, the underlying factors that lead to intrastate conflict are not going away – on the contrary, they are increasing.⁵⁴ Few opponents to irregular warfare deny that irregular war is more common than conventional war. This is empirically impossible, so the relevance of the irregular must be downplayed.⁵⁵ In constrained environments it would clearly seem imprudent to divert resources towards small-wars capabilities at the expense of means geared at fighting for national survival in large-scale interstate conflict. But to deny the importance of irregular conflicts in light of US foreign policy ignores the negative practical effects emanating from unfavorable changes in ruling parties, denied access to key terrain like deep-water ports, transnational crime, and harmed trade relations. The cumulative effect of whole-sale retrenchment would deny many low-cost opportunities to shape foreign affairs in high-payoff engagements. Most importantly to the American serviceman, the most recent defense strategic guidance continues to emphasize the importance of irregular war, contrasted with “large scale counterinsurgency”.⁵⁶

The fact that interstate wars have much graver consequences than small wars is certainly valid as a general statement (though not as a categorical statement) – nonetheless, small wars do have consequences that matter, even in ways reconcilable with realist foreign policy paradigms. Robert Greentree makes several points regarding intervention in El Salvador that illuminate

rational cost-benefit considerations for FID. Greentree notes that, “Unprecedented Soviet Naval access to ports in the Eastern Pacific would have been especially valuable for extending ballistic missile on-station time and extending the operational range of hunter-killer submarines.”⁵⁷

Intervention in seemingly-irrelevant developing countries may seem like “overstretch” to some; however, the “stretch” in most cases is miniscule compared the cost of an OIF, or even a single B-2 bomber. Of course, the Cold War may not have been lost with Soviet access to El Salvador’s ports in light of an FMLN victory; but the risk to CONUS was considerable.

Greentree summarizes the FID engagement dynamic noting that, “The danger of making too small an investment remained roughly in balance with the risk of failure.” Congressional limitations on troop strength in El Salvador were specifically emplaced in the spirit of “no more Vietnams”. These restrictions were initially construed by commanders and some politicians as overly restrictive - they ended up being a paradoxical advantage. El Salvador was, in fact, not another Vietnam – it was a success at low cost. The realist claim that large-scale counterinsurgency should be avoided is *actually consistent* with a position advocating FID.

Whether or not large-scale counterinsurgency *can be* foreseen in a manner with the omniscience suggested by such a position is another story altogether. Vietnam, OIF and OEF were not initiated with the intent to fight large, prolonged counterinsurgencies – but they developed nonetheless. While avoiding OIF and OEF-like engagements in the near future is desirable, their emergence is far from predictable. One commentator has recently testified to congress regarding his concerns about the aftermath of a conventional conflict with North Korea – the question must always be asked: “*what next?*”⁵⁸

(3) An Unnecessary Duality: SOF Schizophrenia

Opposition to FID from within the SOF community tends towards two primary misconceptions. First, AvFID tends to be critiqued through the selective employment of failed FID missions and the superimposing of those results onto the whole enterprise. Second, FID is misconstrued as a mission conducted out of goodwill, which necessarily comes at some expense to the relative power of our own force. Criticism of FID from within the SOF community is so diverse and nuanced that it will be dealt with throughout the body of the text; thus, this short segment is not comprehensive and these criticisms will be dealt with throughout this work.

Critics tend to selectively latch on to failed FID engagements and carry their results over to the entire FID enterprise in a manner that is persuasive to kindred opponents, but unsupportable in logic. In AvFID's case, one engagement in particular is often cited by AFSOC-insiders. For purposes of operational security this country will be referred to as "PN-X" - The case will be immediately recognizable to almost anyone involved in recent debates regarding AvFID's effectiveness.

Continuous AvFID engagement was conducted with PN-X for a period of more than six years. This engagement entailed a considerable amount of money and significant personnel-strain to establish a specific aviation capability. This capability was intended to be employed by the PN in a manner consistent with US objectives in an ongoing counterinsurgency effort. After millions of dollars spent and years of deployment, the capability was used only 7 times in combat (and in a very limited manner at that). There is disagreement in terms of whether or not this mission was a failure based on tangential agendas associated with the engagement; however, by the author's assessment, it was.⁵⁹

Two elements of this failure are instructive both to advisors and other personnel seeking to fairly assess AvFID. First is the reason for failure. It is necessary to understand that in this

case a single plan of instruction (POI) was pursued inflexibly for more than half-a-decade. Several minor branch plans were formulated through the initiative of advisors – their execution was not permitted. Second, failure and success are not monocausal – a fact that will be elucidated in the following section.

Actions directly linked to enemy KIA removed only by one order of effect are desirable – again, the intent of this text is not to criticize that approach. If HVT #1 were suddenly to emerge in Country-X, action will and should be taken if it is within the national interest to do so. However, this will eventually pose a math problem that exceeds even the US militaries ability to service targets. It would be too costly to fly hundreds of missions that are individually less spectacular but cumulatively significant in terms of bringing about favorable solutions in a place like the Southern Philippines. This is how direct action and FID can complement one and other. But when effects enabled by US FID are removed several degrees (and months) from the action of US personnel and funding, they lose their luster.

Some may assert that AvFID has not achieved major successes over the past decade, despite the hype. Considering this, it must also be realized that the capability has not grown commensurate with strategic direction. Criticizing a mission's shortcomings in terms of productivity is a tenuous position to take when noting that it has not been expanded in a manner commensurate with strategic direction. This would be tantamount to demanding that a fighter squadron prosecute 100 targets with 100 bombs, and then complaining that they could not once they were only given 30 bombs – then declaring their mode of employment irrelevant based on the outcome and remissioning the squadron.



Section IV

Estimations of Success in FID and BPC: When Counting is not what Counts

“Show me AvFID’s metrics... There are none.”

- Unattributed⁶⁰

“It is even more ridiculous when we consider that these very critics usually exclude all moral qualities from strategic theory, and only examine material factors. They reduce everything to a few mathematical formulas of equilibrium and superiority, of time and space... If that were really all, it would hardly provide a scientific problem for a schoolboy.”

- Carl von Clausewitz⁶¹

Clausewitz penned the statement above as one of his many thinly-veiled critiques of positivist military theorists including Antoine Henri Jomini and Dietrich von Bulow. These theorists, caught up in the spirit of the scientific revolution, sought to transpose the predictive power of Newtonian physics onto warfare. By Clausewitz’s estimation, they had excluded a most critical consideration from their theorizing on war – the intangible and uncountable factors borne of human agency. In making estimates and comparisons of social affairs, there is a temptation to *count* – numbers carry with them the psychological comfort of apparent-objectivity in assessment. However, in war as in most social affairs, it is the intangible things that *really count* in the end. Few contemporary military academics and practitioners would claim that they believe conflict to be a matter reducible to numerical comparisons - but evidence tells us otherwise.

The discrepancy between effects that can be counted and those that cannot has several serious implications for AvFID. First, in both the Army and Air Force, FID units reside within organizational structures where they are outnumbered by other elements which produce “paying” (countable) effects. Thus, when military and civilian leadership must choose between provisioning these two species of organization, those with countable and immediately-recognizable results may appeal to a desire for objective comparison that is numbers-based. Moreover, the results of FID activities are seldom immediate – the time that they require to materialize is often best measured in years. This is further complicated by the fact that many of FID’s intended effects do not neatly cohere with traditional military understandings of success.

FID's effects often deal with diplomatic relations, situational and cultural awareness, partnership, and presence.

This section will first examine the futility of fixating on the quantifiable results of military operations, emphasizing the distinction between what is *quantifiable* and what is justifiably valid. Next, the notion of qualitative anecdotal assessments of success will be examined and critiqued. Finally, several considerations for understanding BPC and AvFID success will be outlined. **Output** will be distinguished from **outcomes**: the prior refers to the results of military actions (often quantifiable) and the latter to subsequent effects on the strategic environment (qualitative, but ultimately more important).⁶² Throughout this section, it will be posited that FID outcomes must be conceived of in a manner more consistent with diplomatic assessments than traditional military measures of success; however, along with this mode of evaluation comes the risk of careless assessment. This can be mitigated by measures that quantify output in manners informed by an inductive and reflective understanding of qualitative results.

Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes: Quantifiable and Empirically-Valid are not Synonymous

The need to assess the effectiveness of AvFID is widely recognized; but the means for this assessment are often unclear. Prior to the provision of a Congressional update on AFSOC's AvFID program, the House Appropriations Committee (HAC) and House Armed Services Committee (HASC) made several requests for information. The first request demanded an "Overall description of the program including its goals and proposed metrics of performance." This was requested specifically by the HAC, which is understandable given the body's appropriations charter. While this is reasonable given the committee's responsibilities, the notion of metrics is problematic in AvFID's case for reasons stated before. In reply to this

query, AFSOC responded by noting that, “training is evaluated in various formats to include daily situation reports to leadership, training folders, and exercises... The tactical measure of success will be... evaluated by the CAAs with the PN planning and executing the mission.” In other words, there are both quantitative and qualitative elements to the approach. Some aviation performance standards are measurable (Number of pilots trained, a PN pilot’s ability to hover a helicopter within so many feet using NVGs, etc). However, most are subjective, left to the discretion of an experienced advisor. This is a step in the right direction because specific numerical metrics were not proposed; however other problems emerge and will be dealt with in upcoming sections.

In clarifying AvFID effectiveness, a clear distinction must be made between **inputs**, **outputs**, and **outcomes** – as stated before; the last of those is the only one that actually matters strategically. A cursory examination of 6 SOS mission reports dating back more than 10 years reveals an overwhelming emphasis on the first two variables: input and output. Input includes the human and material variables dedicated to an effort on the part of the US Advisors and Government. Examples extracted from several actual mission reports include measurements of days deployed, hours of classroom instruction, number of NVG hours flown, and type and quantity of equipment transferred to the PN. Output includes the direct result of input. Examples of output from mission reports tend to deal with the establishment of new capabilities or the growth of those which already existed. For example: Number of NVG pilots produced, number of newly qualified forward air controllers, or the establishment of an NVG rotary wing detachment.⁶³ Measurements of input and output are useful - the problem is that without being attached to a specific US objective, they are also entirely irrelevant.

Conventional and DA-oriented strike platforms can produce quantifiable results in terms of vehicles destroyed or body counts. Mobility platforms yield measurable results including volume of materiel moved, and the maneuver of forces to an objective area. Much like FID input and output these measurements may be useful, yet irrelevant – unless they make an appreciable contribution to Joint Force Commander objectives and end states. Killing an insurgent or destroying his vehicle may or may not have an appreciable effect on the strategic resolution of a conflict. Those outcomes can actually be counterproductive depending on context. For example, if the insurgent was of relatively low significance and his death came along with collateral damage that helped enemy recruiting and hurt the US position from an public-affairs perspective. In this case, the results may have been countable, but certainly not productive. Likewise, training a foreign pilot may be wasteful or even counterproductive if his skills are used to strafe villages. On the other hand, it may be useful if that pilot proceeds to contribute to multiple operations consistent with US strategic objectives. The problem is that when small teams are operating in relatively-obscure areas of operations, *almost nobody cares*. Unless an individual has a particular interest in a given conflict and understands the utility of an indirect approach, they are unlikely to be convinced that in any case it is more valuable to train a dozen foreign pilots than to kill a single insurgent. The metrics produced by strike and mobility aircraft are not categorically more relevant to US strategic objectives than those yielded by FID; however, they certainly appeal to most military personnel's emotional and epistemological dispositions towards metrics.

Metrics are a luxury – they are easy to understand. Hy Rothstein (Col, Ret) notes that in the case of irregular warfare, "... success is often difficult to measure. That this happens to be the antithesis to the Pentagon's long-standing preoccupation with rapidly-achieved, measurable

effects should help explain the lack of enthusiasm for unconventional warfare (UW) in senior DoD circles.”⁶⁴ Operations research analyst Betts Fetherson notes that, “The problem with developing lists of criteria is that much potentially-rich qualitative ‘data’ are passed over.”⁶⁵ Recalling Clausewitz’s observation, the seductiveness of metrics can even become dangerous. Nonetheless, the obsession with metrics-based measurements of outputs without regard to outcomes prevails – it even takes on extreme forms. One noted operations research analyst has even suggested that, “A predictive model could be constructed that would allow policymakers to evaluate precisely the impact of individual variables of success.”⁶⁶ The author goes on to assert that complex dynamic systems theory may be employed to predict the future; all it would take is disciplined number crunching.⁶⁷ While this may seem to be a caricature, it is worth considering that high-ranking USAF officials have advocated a similar approach very recently.⁶⁸

Military planners and strategists must become comfortable with inductive approaches to dealing with phenomena that cannot be assessed with numerical certainty. Part of doing this is recognizing that ontologically, what is quantifiable describes only a fraction of what exists, and warrants to greater portion of faith:

“We have prided ourselves, in all these centuries since Newton and Descartes, on triumphs of reason, on the absence of magic. Yet like the best magicians of old we are hooked on manipulation. For three centuries, we have been planning, predicting, and analyzing the world... We have raised planning to the highest of priestcrafts and imbued numbers with absolute power. We look at numbers to describe our economic health, our productivity, and our physical well-being... Without them, we would be lost among the dragons. We have been, after all, no more than sorcerers, the magicians of our own time.”⁶⁹

This does not assert that numbers are not useful – it is impossible to conceive of life without them in today’s military and an absurdity to deny the usefulness of numbers. “Planning, predicting, and analyzing the world” will (and should) continue to be important parts of military art and science. Deductive approaches have an important place in problem solving – but

assessing whether or not military activities serve strategic and political end states is not a math problem, and one mode of employment is not invalidated by its inability to serve the sorts of metrics that people are craving at a given point in time.

Metrics cater to comparing programs in the spirit of the cherished virtue of efficiency; but they also offer a fragmented vision of reality based on the human disposition towards the countable – a disposition that research demonstrates to be culturally pervasive in the American case.⁷⁰ History is replete with examples of leaders obsessing over measurable results while losing sight of grander objectives. The body counts of the Vietnam War are likely to be the first example that comes to mind, but there are plenty of others.

The Countable is not Synonymous with The Good

By measurable standards, the US outdid the North Vietnamese Army and Vietcong in almost all accounts: personnel killed, vehicles disabled, and infrastructure depleted. But countable tactical victories did not lead to strategic success. This is well-captured in the famous conversation between Colonel Harry Summers and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Colonel Tu during post-war meetings to determine the fate of missing American servicemen. Summers remarked during an intermission, “You know, you never beat us on the battlefield,” to which Tu responded, “That may be true, but it is also irrelevant.” A striking reverse-corollary is demonstrated in the case of US intervention in El Salvador during the 1980s,

“Some of the American commentators would complain that the military strategy had failed and that the Salvadoran armed forces were never able to defeat the FMLN on the battlefield. That might be true, but in retrospect, the program of military aid to El Salvador was a genuine success for the United States. The primary objective of keeping El Salvador from becoming a communist state was realized.”⁷¹

The Vietnam War is not the only case of counting gone bad; this sort of error is common in many irregular wars. A study on the Rhodesian War notes that, “Until the very end of the war,

‘body-counts’ and ‘kill ratios’ continued to preoccupy Rhodesian officers and public opinion.” The Rhodesians achieved a dazzlingly commendable level of air-ground integration and capacity to kill enemy fighters in counter guerrilla operations. One of the study’s main findings is that Rhodesian officers esteemed brilliant tactics and battlefield courage; but tactical and operational output were never linked to strategy by a military that shunned higher education and critical thought.⁷² To claim that killing an insurgent may have actually been harmful to the Rhodesian cause would have immediately drawn ire, and even accusations against one’s patriotism – the same is true in our own military today. While it is too early to write the formal history of OIF and OEF, there have been numerous cases of operations that have yielded countable results, but completely offset qualitative progress.⁷³

Overemphasis on quantifiable results often leads to the construction of *forced-metrics*. Forced-metrics are numbers that are sought out simply because they are numbers, but prove to be essentially arbitrary under scrutiny. This phenomenon is not new to air forces. British Chief of Air Staff Hugh Trenchard famously propagated the notion of the “moral effect” of strategic bombing. Trenchard noted, “At present the moral effect of bombing raids stands undoubtedly to the material effect in a proportion of 20 to 1.”⁷⁴ Historian Tammy Biddle has reflected that, “If he had faith in his own mathematics, then bombing for moral effect would have been the most effective strategy no matter how many bombers were available.”⁷⁵ While Trenchard’s math was completely unfounded and perhaps even comical, it is worth noting that the logic was picked up by Sir Arthur Harris and reapplied during World War II.⁷⁶ While the early RAF’s example of forced-metrics is sad and extreme, it is worth noting that forced metrics are pervasive in the USAF today in a manner that is both highly insidious and influential: through awards, promotions, and performance-rating constructs. Raters and award writers are urged to include

“quantifiable results” in these reports. Consider the following phrase extracted from the actual OPR of a CAA regarding his effectiveness in executing the AvFID mission:

“Deployed 145 days commanding FID mission in high-priority country, qualifying 6 NVG aircrew; flew 46.7 hours.”⁷⁷

All of these numbers, while admirable, are just input and output without context that links them to a strategic end. Without this attachment, the numbers of days deployed, foreign aircrew trained, and hours flown may be irrelevant, wasteful, or even harmful in light of competing demands on manpower. These numbers are valueless unless the reader has an understanding of the engagement’s broader context.

FID missions lend to qualitative anecdotal measurements of success – this is the case for all modalities of warfare, but it must be reinforced in light of the discourse hitherto. Successful AvFID engagements in El Salvador, Colombia, The Republic of Georgia, and the Philippines all had countable outputs, but what actually mattered were qualitative outcomes. The fact that the newly introduced AC-47 killed thousands of FMLN rebels is significant, but was not in and of itself.⁷⁸ It is significant because it contributed to victories for the El Salvadoran Air Force in that battles which combined with many other disparate activities resulting in an outcome generally favorable in terms of US foreign policy - not because of the number of enemy killed. El Salvador has become a stable democracy, a loyal US ally, and even contributed forces to OIF.⁷⁹ A CRS report to Congress geared at assessing whether or not AvFID efforts were successful in Lebanon noted that the LAF has used its UH-1Hs to conduct CT and CASEVAC missions and that armed Cessna Caravans have given the LAF a “qualitative boost” in terms of being able to execute missions consistent with mutual objectives in the Levant.⁸⁰ The establishment of Georgia’s UH-1H capability is not significant in terms of how many pilots were trained, but the fact that the capability was used to eradicate AQ-linked Chechen fighters from the Pankisi Gorge

region.⁸¹ Finally, OEF-P AvFID is not successful because of the number of UH-1H or OV-10 crews trained, but because they have actually been used in operations that can be empirically linked to outcomes strategically desirable to US theater objectives.⁸²

The Promise and Peril of Qualitative Assessments

Strategic success is typically anecdotal and qualitative in nature: this is critical to understanding AvFID success, but it comes with some noteworthy conceptual traps that can present significant problems for advisors. Firstly, this can lend to highly undisciplined approaches to assessment. One analyst notes that, “‘Success’ and ‘failure’ are often not well defined... as a result, the terms often take on an elastic meaning that leads to analyses and conclusions that are not well reasoned.”⁸³

Deliverables are malleable or non-existent in the case of AvFID and BPC efforts involving bilateral training but no transfer of materiel – this often means that success in the “relationship” is gauged based on all parties being *content* with the outcome. While feelings of contentment are important, they do not constitute a satisfactory approach to assessment. AvFID missions are often unfortunately classified in terms of two binary criteria for success: (1) “Did anyone get in trouble?”, and (2) “Was the mission conducted within the allotted budget?” Unfortunately, these are *absolute minimum* criteria: a negative answer in either question could have *legal* ramifications. An engagement’s strategic outcome is often discussed among advisors, TSOC personnel, and Country Teams; but they are poorly documented. It is not desirable to “air dirty laundry” in situation reports and AARs circulated among hundreds of readers, so it is often dealt with verbally, but documented poorly (or not at all). One analyst dealing with the similarly-challenging task of evaluating the success of peacekeeping missions noted the following: “The UN has been trying to do more of this sort of detailed ‘lessons learned’ analysis,

but finds it difficult because after action reports at this level of specificity inevitably tread on toes.”⁸⁴

This came to haunt the 6 SOS in a time of existential crisis. The fact of the matter is not that anyone within the 6 SOS has problems with candid feedback – on the contrary, such feedback is almost systematized in mission “hotwashes”. However, the AvFID mission’s viability was never seriously questioned until recently - measures of success had been taken for granted. Thus, the first unattributed quote was correct in one sense: there *were* no metrics, or any other indicators of success for that matter. The results of engagements were not tracked in a meticulous way over the long term and could not be used to advocate the AvFID mission. Currently, the reporting process is being improved with an emphasis on storyboards; but a much more deliberate operational assessment process is in order and will be dealt with in the following section.⁸⁵

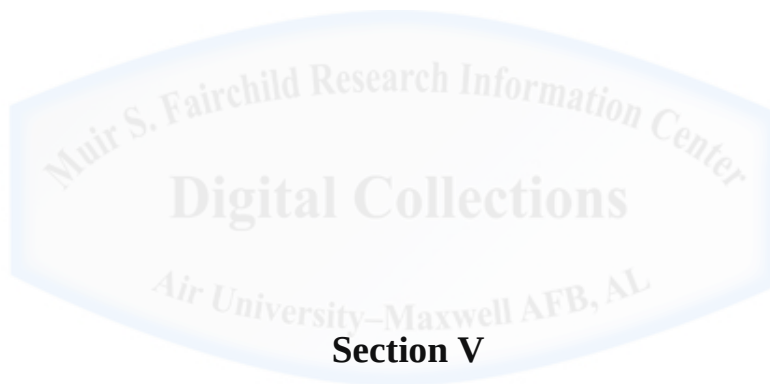
A pervasive conceptual error in assessment emerges from the noted binary criterion for success – that which does not discern between what is “good enough” and higher levels of quality. Nobody is likely to tell a mission commander or a team that they have performed poorly in an engagement if they meet these two binary criteria. Performance simply seems to be too subjective relative to other forms of employment to justify any critique. Therefore, if a unit untrained and unfamiliar with advising is given an ad hoc FID or BPC mission, their performance will be deemed a success equal to any other given that no laws are violated and the given budget is adhered to. This will probably lead to a situation where more units are haphazardly tasked to conduct FID or BPC missions to adhere to the intent of strategic guidance. Their performance will be praised because nobody will know what else to do and this mode of employment will be continued – standing FID units were not necessary after all! The problem

that will emerge is twofold. First, personnel will inevitably fall into legal troubles, probably related to managing different types of funds, because they were put into positions that their superiors underestimated and which they were not properly educated and trained for. Second, merely staying out of jail and operating in accordance with a budget have almost no attachment to the actual success in meeting the objectives typical to FID or BPC engagements. Failing to provide the PN with quality training and advising will become the unfortunate modus operandi of the “big pepper” units improperly tasked to conduct capacity building work.

While AvFID’s proponents must be responsible in their treatment of anecdotal evidence, its critics must too. Significant criticism tends to be directed at individual failed operations, which are then superimposed on the entire AvFID enterprise. In terms of logic, this is similar to the approach that Hastings, Maddow, and the Realists take when transposing perceived failure in 2 or 3 counterinsurgency operations to the whole irregular warfare endeavor. One CRS report to Congress laments that, “Too often, Members of Congress narrow their foreign aid focuses to favorite or least favorite countries.”⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, the same is true among AvFID critics, particularly in the case of one least-favorite country in particular (The previously-described “PN-X”).

Individual failures should not be used to arrive at the futility of an entire mode of engagement – they should be adjusted from. Allied forces were routed at the hands of Rommel’s *Afrika Korps* in February 1943 during the Tunisia Campaign at the Battle of Kasserine Pass. Airpower had been employed in a highly ineffective way. Airmen assessed that this resulted from the inappropriate division of assets, precluding airpower from being employed with unity of command. In the wake of this failure, imagine if the following statement had been made: “Kasserine Pass was a failure; therefore, the general mission of supporting land forces with

aircraft is invalid.” Better yet: “Kasserine Pass was a failure; therefore we should not fight conventional wars anymore.” These statements are obviously absurd; but no more absurd than declaring AvFID a waste of time because of a single wasteful engagement which failed in a dramatic way. Clausewitz aptly recognized the error in reducing war to a mathematical equation, and also had something to say regarding the assessment of engagements – “It is legitimate to judge an event by its outcome for this is the soundest criterion. But a judgment based on the result alone must not be passed off as human wisdom.”⁸⁷ Outcomes are what count, as we have seen. But generalizing judgment based on the failed results of isolated missions without consideration for the causes of failure and broader context is not the mark of wisdom - it is a mark of bias.



Section V

Challenges in Estimating FID & BPC Outcomes and Methods for Assessment

Outcomes are much more demanding to recognize and assess than output. As Rothstein aptly notes, “That is why people talk about metrics so much – they are easy to understand. That is not the case in terms of strategic endstates.”⁸⁸ Understanding the indirect approach’s outcomes is complicated by a number of factors that demand attention: *scope of time & time inconsistency, unified versus specific modes of assessment, and the counterfactual nature of assessment.*

Challenges in Assessing FID and BPC Operations

Temporal Challenges

Stereotypes may lead the outsider to visualize advisors standing next to a foreign Colonel wearing a beret in an exotic bamboo command center. The Colonel is talking on a radio provided by the advisor, relaying coordinates to one of his countryman-pilots. The pilot is flying a US-provided helicopter infiltrating a team led by a Rambo-like Green Beret to capture an HVT at a grid provided by an American ISR asset. While this scenario may bear a remote similarity to some actual events, anyone who has executed FID realizes that this sort of immediate impact on PN operations is atypical. FID is intended to make appreciable changes to the capacity of PN militaries in ways that are often measured over a period of years. Some deal in conflicts which, “may not be soluble for generations.”⁸⁹ The intended effects may not even occurring during the engagement itself. These spans of time often exceed the presence of an individual advisor, even one deploying for a year or more. This is further complicated by the fact that some of this information may not be shared by the PN for reasons associated with their own operational security. Reflecting on peacekeeping operations, it is noted that, “an observer could examine a conflict in the one-, five-, ten- and twenty- year periods after peacekeeping withdrawal.”⁹⁰ In AvFID’s case, the time intervals may be different – but long-term assessments are currently lacking. This is the purview of Embassy security assistance offices (SAOs), theater special operations command (TSOCs), and other theater military personnel; but these individuals cannot be expected to make sufficient assessments in missions that they are not familiar with, or through hearsay – advisors on the ground are currently the best assessors. This is a problem based on the potential for a conflict of interest between executors and assessors that can only be confronted by proactive involvement by knowledgeable TSOC and Embassy staff with an understanding of aviation. The same commentator goes on to note that “...these approaches provide interval

measures of success and failure rather than what scholars are stuck with now: dichotomous classifications.”⁹¹

Culturally reinforced desires for immediate results are a direct outgrowth of the phenomenon of *time inconsistency*, a term borrowed from game theory and economics which constantly pollutes conceptions of FID. Time inconsistency refers to the tendency to choose a benefit in the near term rather than commit to a decision that would ensure a superior benefit in the long term. For example, empirical research strongly supports that people will choose a half-day off tomorrow instead of a full-day off next month; but if this question was asked ten years ago, almost everyone would choose a full-day off ten years and one month from now instead of a half day off in 10 years.⁹² School children, presented with the choice for one piece of cake immediately given, or two given the following week, almost unanimously decide on immediate gratification. It may be objected that policymakers and strategists are vetted professionals with more prudence than these children; but we should not forget about Clausewitz’s proverbial “schoolboys”.

It may be argued that short-term investments in “high-payoff” means more likely to yield measurable results are preferable to long-term investments with uncertain results in a more distant future. After all, both FID and UW allude to endstates that are highly unpredictable. Commonly-referenced examples of undesirable BPC, FID and UW outcomes include arming the Mujahedeen with Stinger missiles, equipping pre-Ayatollah Iran or pre-Chavez Venezuela with modern US aircraft, and supporting dictators who end up using the assistance for inhumane purposes. *Why then*, would it be prudent to invest in FID when that money could instead be used for some US program that will yield immediate results?

There are two reasons why these critiques of FID and UW are unsound. First, short-term quantifiable outcomes are no more attached to a favorable shift in the strategic environment than more qualitative measures, particularly in IW. Second, each of these three cases is recognized specifically *because* they are unusual and dramatic – the broader field of FID and UW engagement tends to lead to outcomes that are far less spectacular. The notion of “dramatic outcomes” raises the third concern – properly-employed FID is geared at small investments which are minimally wasteful in the rare event of failure, but have the potential for large strategic success that is highly disproportional to the initial investment in some cases.

The last observation is dealt with in a 2006 RAND Corporation study confronting with AvFID. Analyzing the commitment of money and personnel to operations, RAND researchers compared FID operations in El Salvador and the Republic of Georgia to ongoing OIF operations. Consider the following passage:

“The key insight from this analysis is that the costs of an intervention skyrockets when US operational units become involved. The comparison between El Salvador and OIF is most instructive in this regard. Although considered expensive at the time, the American involvement in El Salvador was miniscule compared to our commitment in Iraq. In fact, the US could conduct one El Salvador-level effort (e.g., over \$1 billion in direct military assistance over most of a decade) in every nation of the world for far less than the cost of an OIF-level involvement in some future counterinsurgency. Likewise, the US could conduct 16 interventions at the level of the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP; \$64 million) for the cost of a single El Salvador-type effort. Stated another way, as of June 2006, OIF has already cost 4,500 times as much as the GTEP program.”⁹³

Put a different way, if OIF was approximately 10,000 times as expensive of the Georgian mission, then a Georgia-scale effort would be worth conducting even if it only had a 0.01-percent chance of success at averting an OIF-sized contingency at some later date. As of June 2006, \$292 billion had been spent on Iraq according to the Congressional Budget Office.⁹⁴ At the time of withdrawal in 2012, the cost was estimated at 757.8 billion.⁹⁵ In other words, a GTEP-like program could be conducted in every country in the world 36 *times* for the cost of a

single OIF. Ongoing operations in OEF-P are larger than GTEP was, but it is also worth considering that annual costs for that mission are less than 50% of one standard day in OIF or OEF-Afghanistan.⁹⁶ Like almost all other irregular wars, success in these cases was far from black and white; but all of these engagements yielded results more favorable than those emerging from Vietnam at fractions of a percent the cost – the same will likely be true when comparing them to OIF and OEF, but it is too early to write those histories at this point.

The point of this cost-comparison is not to suggest that it would be reasonable to have approached US strategic objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan by sending in a few hundred advisors. Those two operations are distinct from other FID missions in that a standing government was forcibly removed, leading to a large-scale nation building and FID effort – industrial scale FID. The other FID missions spoken of dealt with assisting PNs in their Internal Development and Defense (IDAD) plan in the pursuit of ongoing COIN operations. The US cannot simply “FID its way out of every problem,” but the cost-effectiveness and negligible influence on public opinion must be considered as favorable characteristics when choosing how to engage in an increasingly interconnected world. It would be prudent to conduct more FID and BPC, even knowing that some engagements will not yield appreciable results – the tiny investment certainly pays off when it does. This sort of engagement should contribute to a defense posture that appeals to policymakers and strategists seeking to acknowledge the importance of conventional military threats without summarily dismissing irregular warfare as a relevant concern, and has the capacity to do so in an affordable manner.

FID is an economy of force approach that allows policymakers and combatant commanders the ability to influence combat operations at relatively low cost and with little public attention. Small wars tend to be protracted, and the nature of that cannot be changed; but

by engaging by, with, and through the forces which *must* fight them, the US can forego the ills of protractions so often lamented by the critics of intervention by using small forces. Far different outcomes could be envisioned had US policymakers chosen to engage with a large occupying force in El Salvador, Georgia, or the Philippines. Greentree notes that this was certainly a possibility in the Salvadoran case. A negotiated approach was reached by American political authorities that resulted in a strict force cap limited to a few dozen to a few hundred advisors in El Salvador.⁹⁷ Had a large US force occupied El Salvador, a much less favorable outcome would be foreseeable. Consider ongoing success OEF-P success – then imagine a large US force occupying the Southern Philippine archipelago. Rothstein suggests that this would have been a “veritable terrorism magnet.”⁹⁸ Instead, OEF-P has been executed inexpensively and with notable success.⁹⁹

Consider another paradoxical question: Is FID conducted during Phase-0 (shaping) operations or Phase-4 (stability) operations? Consider OEF-P as an example: American personnel train and advise Filipino soldiers who are actively engaged in COIN operations at a time when US soldiers are not conducting combat missions. The immediate response may be to say that the US is engaged in Phase-0 operations while the Filipinos are engaged in Phase-4 operations. This is where an important and often unnoticed distinction between BPC and SFA (not in support of ongoing combat operations) contrast with FID. Peacetime SFA and BPC are clearly Phase-0 operations; but the latter must be conceived of as being a Phase-4 operation. This will be referred to as the “Phase Paradox” for the sake of brevity. This notion is captured in the title of Colonel Brian Petit’s article, *OEF-P: Thinking COIN, Practicing FID*.¹⁰⁰ FID is being practiced, which is significant for legal and fiscal reasons; however, US advisors must frame their actions cognitively as integrally being a part of Phase-4 operations. When operations are

conducted “by, with, and through” PN forces, *operations are still being conducted* – even if they are not direct operations - i.e. the indirect approach. Metrics commonly employed to assess COIN can be useful for FID when they are employed to gauge PN success, as long as too much faith is not put in those metrics alone.

The phase paradox is not highlighted for the sake of doctrinal pedantry: it drives to the core of why FID can be a particularly useful tool for policymakers, especially in the age of mass media. Phase-4 operations can actually be conducted indirectly in contexts where more overt or direct US involvement would be politically unacceptable or illegal. Consider the three following statements, often quoted during discussions regarding the utility of IW operations:

“Small wars are long wars.” - Frank Kitson

“Counterinsurgencies are protracted.” - David Galula

“No nation has ever benefited from a protracted war.” – Sun Tzu

The following inference is naturally made: “Nations do not benefit from protracted wars. Small wars are protracted. Therefore, nations should avoid small wars.” Of course, nations should avoid *any* wars if they can; but this inference is deceptively oversimplifying. First, some countries cannot avoid small wars. A Filipino waking up in Mindanao cannot decide whether or not a small war is to be engaged in – it is happening in his own country and is a matter of survival for the state, a very realist predicament.

A loss for the Philippines in this case would clearly be detrimental to US foreign policy, but perhaps not so detrimental that it warrants engaging in a major war – This may result in a “protracted” war and all of the *problems* that come with those. But an understanding of those “problems” is at the root of misunderstanding regarding the notion of protraction. Protraction is not undesirable as a matter of *duration* alone – it is a matter of resources lost and degraded public opinion. Most Americans (including military personnel) have no idea that OEF-P is

occurring, even though that fact is unclassified and news reporters are invited into the AOR. This is the case for numerous other FID engagements. It may be lamentable that most American servicemen and civilians are unfamiliar with some of the most successful irregular warfare engagements that the military has conducted in over the past three decades – but it is an ironic testament to their success. There are no significant cries to withdraw from the Philippines, just as there have not been in the cases of Georgia, Colombia, or El Salvador; yet they were all considerably successful. In summary, the US is effectively acting as a force-multiplier in Phase-4 operations working through a partner who has no choice but to fight, and doing so in a manner that mitigates the risks of “protraction” so often associated with small wars.

Challenges of Unified versus Specified Criteria

Should FID engagements be evaluated based on some universal standard or criteria specific to each given mission? Most often, **mission-specific criteria** are used based on the mandate of a particular deployment. In other words, deliverables are established in relevant directives – mission success is achieved when they are met. But this story does not end with deliverables being met, and this is not the sort of strategic outcome relevant to this investigation. Mission-specific criteria that are also strategic in scope tie to broad theater objectives. Specified criteria are necessary, but challenging because they often do not consider exogenous factors. For example, is a FID or BPC mission really a failure in a country that is curtailed because of a massive natural disaster?

It is tempting to apply **unified criteria** to FID in the pursuit of objective comparison between engagements. This is a worthwhile pursuit in terms of measuring *unit effectiveness* – in other words, how well advisors can advise. Metrics have been created to estimate things like general success in resolving conflicts, role-modeling, mentoring, persuading, and working

through interpreters.¹⁰¹ One of the MSAS units has been developing similar products.¹⁰² This is a good step, but must be taken cautiously. This may be a practice that the 6 SOS and other FID units could adopt as well; but there is a tendency for the act of quantifying accomplishments to be mistaken for understanding the broader contexts within which they materialize. Anyone who has conducted a numbers-based risk assessment sheet should be able to empathize with this – sometimes the numbers simply do not add up to what a reasonable individual assesses intuitively based on experience and reflective judgment. These sorts of metrics should be employed and tracked; but it would be unwise to begin including them in widely-disseminated after-action reports or PowerPoint debriefings to commanders above the squadron level.

An understanding of the merits of both specified and unified criteria is useful; however, to assert that one is generally preferable over the other is to miss a different conflict which muddies the issue of operational assessment more generally. This is a conflict between deductive and inductive means for appraising operational and strategic success. The military is highly populated by individuals who favor deductive reasoning, a position that is also reinforced by educational backgrounds in engineering and checklist-oriented professions – the authors of a 2010 *Joint Forces Quarterly* article term this “the deductive reasoning tilt.”¹⁰³ Consider the mantras listed heretofore which absconded approaches not geared at the immediate effect of killing the enemy and also critical of AvFID’s lacking metrics when reading the *JFQ* authors’ following statement on reasoning:

“Let us be clear on one point: deductive thinking is required in campaign planning and in airpower theory, especially when it comes to establishing quantifiable metrics and measuring against them. Pressed up against the realities of war, deductive thinkers do a great job at killing the enemy, but it is inductive thinkers who master how to discourage enemy forces from wanting to continue to fight. And it is inductive thinkers who are best able to determine how to achieve victory on a variety of battlefields against innumerable conflicts and challenges. The metrics to measure each are very different. One is an empirical count while the other *cannot be measured*.”¹⁰⁴ (Italics added)

The problem is not that unified or specified criteria are generally good or bad for FID – it is that deductive and inductive methods must be employed appropriately, and neither should tyrannize the other. Unified criteria should be pursued to compare the success of one engagement to another when resources demand that one be cut short – but the comparison cannot rest on metrics alone. Specified criteria are necessary when deliverables are issued – but those deliverables alone is not a yardstick for success in term of meaningful outcomes when they are not attached to some greater strategic criteria.

Challenges of the Counterfactual Nature

One of AvFID's main goals is to “prevent the necessity of a large-scale US military presence by helping the PN's government ‘free and protect its people from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.’”¹⁰⁵ This suggests a negative sort of success – FID is effective when certain things *do not* occur. This is known as a counterfactual argument and certainly brings several noted challenges with it; but in the case of FID, they are challenges that must be lived with.

Research analyst Paul Diehl claims that there are “several flaws in the use of counterfactuals... We do not know what the absence of military intervention may mean for a given situation. Evaluating missions in this way leads to a ‘better than nothing’ standard that will almost always yield a positive assessment.”¹⁰⁶ Diehl goes on to note that using counterfactual standards make analysts hostage to, “assumptions and scenario construction – variations in these assumptions and scenarios can yield dramatically different conclusions with no way to validate such assessments empirically.”¹⁰⁷ An example of “assumptions and scenario construction” would be to suggest that in the case of a hypothetical nuclear power (Country-Z), insurgents will overthrow the government without US support to the PN. This assumption may

be reasonable and is certainly grave in its implications; *but ex pos facto, it could never be empirically proven that this condition was averted as the result of US intervention.* There is a commonly-used medical analogy applied to these sorts of cases: In the case of cures, it is easy to count how many patients have been saved – but in the case of vaccination, it is impossible to know how many were saved from contracting a disease that they had not yet been exposed too.¹⁰⁸ Traditional operations are analogous to cures. FID geared at the train-the-trainer approach is not just analogous to a vaccine; it is medical school for more doctors and nurses within the engaged PN.

Counterfactuals, despite the disdain of ultra-purist empiricists like Diehl, are the stuff of strategy. Policymakers and strategists must make judgments based on imprecise but informed estimations of likelihoods and trends in foreign affairs. In the case of El Salvador, Greentree assesses that, “Extensive counterfactual analysis is not required to demonstrate that decisive political intervention by the US at critical points prior to 1979 would have forestalled the development of a serious revolutionary challenge in Central America, making subsequent military interventions in El Salvador and Nicaragua unnecessary.”¹⁰⁹ Counterfactual analysis, while not the precise science that Diehl or Clausewitz’s “schoolboys” crave, must be a fact of life for the strategist.

Considerations for Assessing FID Outcomes

FID outcomes, like the results of all military missions, must be understood qualitatively. Indirect approaches yield results that differ significantly from those sought during conventional operations. In the case of BPC and FID, these outcomes can be conceived of as falling into several categories: Combat-related outcomes, situational-awareness outcomes, relational

outcomes, presence outcomes, diplomatic outcomes, and those outcomes benefiting US units engaging in FID.

Combat-related Outcomes, and Beyond

The most easily understood FID outcomes deal with the PN's development and use of new capabilities. Mr. Chris Jacobs, Chief of Regional and Cultural Education at the Joint Special Operations University, offers some of the following criteria:

- What capability/capabilities exist that did not X years ago?
- To what extent do they exist and have they been sustained (numbers of qualified personnel)?
- To what extent have they been utilized by the partner country?
- What have the effects of those capabilities been (number of terrorists killed, lives saved, etc.)?
- How much did the U.S. invest to build those capabilities?
- What has the return on investment been?¹¹⁰

The last four of these criteria may count as outcomes – the first two are mere output but worth tracking nonetheless. A thorough examination of 6 SOS after actions reports indicates that the introduction of new airpower capabilities to developing foreign aviation forces succeeds or fails based on general consideration for three critical factors aside from proficiency in the capability itself: *sustainability*, *higher-headquarters indoctrination*, and *integration*.

Sustainability refers to the ability to maintain new aviation programs through maintenance, supply, logistics, security, personnel management and training practices.

Sustainability is dealt with sufficiently in other sources and will only be addressed briefly in this text. Advisors at PN bases recurrently report stumbling into hangars and equipment rooms filled with the ghosts of failed AvFID programs-past: non-functional FLIR balls covered in dust, faulty NVGs and rusting machine guns.¹¹¹ In one case, a PN squadron pilot reported that most of the French NVGs that had been received a decade before were not working - but he enjoyed using

one of the few remaining serviceable pairs to ride around the island on his moped at night.

Another claimed that he could use them to see “ghosts”.¹¹²

Higher-headquarters indoctrination refers to the sufficient understanding, acceptance and support of relevant power-wielding levels of command and staff in foreign military organizations. This recurs in 6 SOS mission reports and in accounts from allied BPC efforts at the unclassified level. The following passage details this phenomenon as observed by British and Spanish advisors in Lebanon:

“... there was widespread agreement among donors that the Lebanese government, and the Lebanese Air Force in particular, needs to develop a national security strategy. In the words of a British defense official, thus far, the LAF’s approach has been tactical – built around the kinds of equipment and other assistance it has been able to receive from donors. His Spanish counterpart agreed, concluding that the contrary views sometimes expressed by the Defense Minister and LAF Commander were reflective of the absence of grand strategy.”¹¹³

This is reminiscent not only of the Rhodesian case mentioned earlier, but numerous anecdotal accounts from experienced advisors. A new capability, NVG flight for example, will often end up being neglected or even feared by a headquarters which does not sufficiently understand it.

In one case, a PN squadron at war was preparing to conduct a major company-sized infiltration to an area characterized by a significant threat. This nation’s aviation arm had been operating primarily in the day and had sustained significant battle damage and casualties. When squadron pilots recommended that the mission could be done under the cover of darkness using NVGs, the proposal was summarily rejected by higher headquarters. The NVG capability was confined to a single squadron and was poorly socialized among the staffs in this highly-bureaucratic military. What is also worth note is that the leaders who rejected the pilots’ proposal *were probably wise in their decision* – the squadron had almost-never trained with ground teams at night and no other air assets were night capable.¹¹⁴ Of course, this was the

leadership and staff's own fault; but it was too late for them or any advisor to remedy this deficiency once it was time for detailed mission planning.

Integration refers to the relationship between aviation capabilities and other elements of national power. Absent integration with other elements of national power, a military aviation unit is no better than a prestigious flying club wearing fashionable sunglasses and outfits with 30-inch zippers. While the US military struggles to become more joint, so do the rest of the world's militaries. Some PN militaries have established joint procedures that the US can learn from; but many developing militaries are divided between services to a degree that unexposed US personnel may even find astonishing. It is not unusual for some of these aviation arms to fly missions that are completely detached from the broader ground effort, never to train with ground forces (except in preparing for demonstrations for General officers), and to hold a level of disdain for other services which far surpasses US interservice rivalries. When a new capability is introduced, its integration with ground and maritime forces is as fundamental as the capability itself. Crews that do not understand NVGs as a tool that is to be operationally employed rarely treat them as more than a status symbol and are infrequently willing to fly beyond their own aerodromes to conduct missions. This should not be surprising. If BPC engagements are expected to yield combat results for the PN, they must go beyond basic flying skills. The fact that some USAF flying syllabi do not include integration with ground forces is mitigated by frequent CONUS exercises involving air-ground integration – this should not be assumed in the case of many PN aviation forces. It is essential for SAOs to take this into account when utilizing contractors to conduct training. If the contractor cannot instruct anything beyond new-equipment training (NET) that is often associated security assistance program deliverables, expectations of the capability's use should be very limited.

Engagement must be crafted to achieve the greatest effect possible per advisor. It is unclear whether the USAF's AvFID and BPC capabilities will shrink, remain static, or grow at the time of this writing. However, it is highly unlikely that it will grow to a level that comes close to matching Army and Marine Corps ground advising capacity or what was represented by the JUNGLE JIM program. This being said, AvFID assets must be considered high-demand/low-density assets and not employed frivolously. While this section will advocate the pursuit of "non-combat" outcomes associated with BPC and FID, it must be stated that planners must seek to aggressively place advisors into positions where they can have these sorts of effects – to do otherwise may lead to the unnecessary squandering of high-demand/low-density assets. Methods for the more aggressive approach will be dealt with in the final section of this text.

Considerable attention is paid to these most obvious and intended effects of AvFID. More obtuse and confusing are the "non-tactical" (but also intended) outcomes of FID. It is often unpalatable to advisors (author included) that in some instances the training, equipment, and advice provided is not the most important element of the commander's intent or , Department of Defense, Department of State guidance. Nonetheless, this is the case and is a source of significant confusion. One 1990 RAND report deals with FID missions in several PACOM, AFRICOM and SOUTHCOM PNs. This report concludes that based on the small level of effort, it was difficult to discern any appreciable success. This report looked exclusively at combat-results and is typical of the most superficial criticisms of BPC and FID employment.¹¹⁵ Other outcomes also matter in significant ways. These outcomes deal with relationships, presence, situational awareness, diplomatic effects, and benefit to the deploying US unit.

Relationships

AFDD 2-3, *Irregular Warfare*, notes that, “Interpersonal relationships built through sustained interaction with the people and partnered operations with indigenous forces are critical.”¹¹⁶ Commenting on “Arab Spring” events in North Africa, U.S. Army Lieutenant General James Dubik, notes “Relationships often are important in the discussions or negotiations between nations where the formal conduits may, for whatever reason, be less helpful.”¹¹⁷ Military personnel who have extensively worked abroad will note the importance of relationships anecdotally. There is also significant empirical data indicating the higher relative importance on interpersonal relationships in most of the countries outside of the NORTHCOM and EUCOM AORs.¹¹⁸ Combined with organizational structures and cultural dispositions towards authority, the importance of relationships in these militaries often takes on a nature that is difficult for the unexposed American observer to understand.¹¹⁹ Terms like DIRLAUTH and Coordinating Authority may dictate how individuals in specific job billets communicate to resolve problems in the US and culturally-similar militaries. However, many PN militaries do not have the same “plug-and-play” approach to inter-organizational relations between people. Who the person *is or knows* may matter more than his position.

Presence

Presence and relationships go hand in hand, but are distinguishable nonetheless. The terms “presence” and “access” are used 18 times in the newly-released defense strategic guidance.¹²⁰ Access, particularly in the Air Force, is contemporarily construed as being exclusively associated with the high-technology *AirSea Battle* concept geared at dealing with anti-access area-denial (A2AD) threat associated with proliferating precision guided munitions.¹²¹ This may certainly be valid, but there is also a less-dramatic but highly-important relational aspect to access, and especially to presence. At times, presence may be an objective in

itself; but not *mere* presence. Mere presence is cynically referred to by some advisors as the “green dot theory” of FID -- In the case of AvFID, perhaps the dot is a “blue dot”. A team may be in a particular location and not conducting any appreciable training, but “some colonel” is able to brief “some general” and point to a colored dot on a PowerPoint slide and say, “Sir, we are engaging in Country-X.”

Presence for the sake of placating superiors is never acceptable – however, while unpalatable to tactically-oriented advisors, presence of a certain quality can be an objective unto itself. All presence-related objectives should not be cynically declared to be “blue dot” taskings. Presence with established relationships can pay dividends in countries where relationships matter substantively. Shortly after the unexpected 9/11 attacks, US air planners were in a predicament in terms of identifying staging areas for mobility and CSAR missions supporting SF embedded with the Northern Alliance. Coincidentally (or not) a small team of 6 SOS advisors had been present at an airfield in a neighboring country conducting a small-scale advisory mission that relatively few people knew or cared about. These advisors knew the base commander, security forces leadership and logistics personnel. This airfield was Uzbekistan’s Karshi-Khanabad (K2), subsequently a major hub for US mobility missions into Afghanistan.¹²²

Situational Awareness and Interoperability

Presence also means situational awareness. Rationalization, standardization, and interoperability (RSI) are essential to multinational operations.¹²³ Interoperability means more than having compatible radios. Compatible radios do not allow for interoperability in aviation operations when those radios are broken or when the aircraft are not airworthy. Status of equipment cannot be ascertained by referencing *Jane’s* or *Wikipedia* for an air order of battle, or even querying the embassy about equipment that has been transferred through foreign military

sales (FMS) – functionality is verified by operation. Moreover, there are intangible aspects to RSI. PN unit standard operating procedures, terminology, habits, tactics, techniques, and procedures vary in ways that cannot be appreciated until combined training has occurred in a manner that covers the particular type of operation at hand.

A final relationship between presence and situational awareness deals with rapport and trust. Presence means stationing in country, establishing meaningful relationships and subsequently developing trust. Trust can lead to the PN sharing intelligence with US advisors, and vice versa. PN personnel have positional, lingual and cultural advantages that American's do not enjoy, regardless of disparity in "hard power". Conversely, US forces typically have access to technical intelligence capabilities far exceeding those of many critical PNs. Interdependencies can be crafted to improve situational awareness for both sides. The importance of cross-national interdependencies is even emphasized in the latest National Intelligence Strategy.¹²⁴

Diplomatic Effects

Another factor that US Embassy SAO personnel will highlight as a benefit to properly-executed BPC and FID deals with the diplomatic effects. It is worth noting that with one exception, the type of money needed to build appreciable aviation capacity is Security Assistance money (granted on Title-22 authorities).¹²⁵ Bilateral engagements may enhance the PN's tactical capabilities, but they also work to establish rapport and bargaining pieces for embassy personnel who deal with ministries of defense and PN political organizations on a daily basis.

Benefit to the US Unit

Exposure to combat is seldom cited as a reason for engaging in war. Accessing territory, rolling back aggression, securing lines of communication and neutralizing threats are all primary

reasons for warfighting; but along with war's sacrifices, combat exposure also undeniably offers certain benefits of experience to the troops engaged. In SOF's case, a unique provision in US Code allows for the training of PN personnel for the sake of benefiting our own Special Operations Forces – this is known as the SOF Exclusion. Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCETs) are conducted using Title-10 funding based on the rationale that the best (perhaps the only) realistic way for SOF personnel to train for the mission of advising foreign forces is to actually advise foreign forces.

The cross-cultural skills gained in actual military-to-military training are impossible to replicate and have serious underappreciated consequences. No thorough study has been accomplished to gauge the broad consequences of poor cross-cultural dealings in the case of the military; however, this phenomenon has been analyzed in the business sector. One study concludes that “cross-cultural blunders have cost billions of dollars in negotiations.”¹²⁶ Another study notes that American corporations working in Japan during the 1980s suffered an early-termination rate exceeding 40%. The cost of reintegrating terminated personnel and training and relocating their replacements cost tens of millions of dollars.¹²⁷ New strategic guidance notes that, “Across the globe we will seek to be the security partner of choice, pursuing new partnerships with a growing number of nations.”¹²⁸ While the overall number of personnel deployed and stationed overseas may decrease with drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan and personnel permanently assigned OCONUS, the number of partners engaged is likely to increase. This effectively creates a new dynamic that will emphasize politically astute personnel who can operate across a diverse spectrum of cultures. The return that the Air Force may collect from the experience of seasoned advisors must be recapitalized later in their careers by placing these individuals in career positions associated with international affairs.

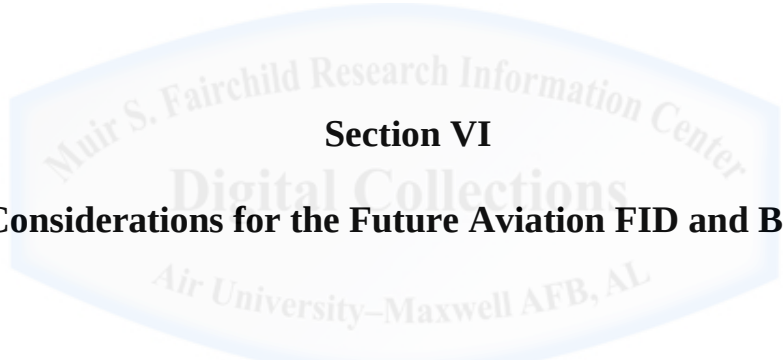
Conclusions

Success, whether dealing with conventional operations, direct action, or indirect approaches is not in the numbers – it is based on the creation of a better strategic condition in the long term. This condition is not measurable numerically. Rothstein notes that metrics reside in the realm of planners, but qualitative assessments of outcomes are the acme of strategists.¹²⁹ Commanders and statesmen must assess true success based on experience and reflective judgment – an answer that may be revolting to empirical purists, but consistent with Clausewitz's urging and the heuristic elements to operational design reinforced in joint doctrine.¹³⁰

FID, SFA, and BPC assessment must rely on a proper balance of inductive and deductive thought geared at meeting both unified and specified criteria for assessment. What is most important is that assessment is not limited to after action reports for individual missions. Desirable effects relate not only to combat capabilities and performance, but also relationships, presence, situational awareness, diplomatic effects, and benefits to the US unit involved. This process should be institutionalized at the GCC or TSOC level and effectively communicated to US Embassy country teams. Additional research is particularly needed to understand the ability to deliberately and effectively establish high-potential relationships with PN military personnel acting in of varied cultural and organizational constructs.

Metrics are not inherently bad. There is a place for metrics in FID and it has been underutilized. Metrics can be used to approximate unit performance and effects tied to mission objectives. One good example is the proposed MSAS matrix for evaluating and comparing BPC activities.¹³¹ Newly-emerging GP AvFID units have much to learn from the experiences of the 6 SOS – but in this case, the tables are turned. No equivalently-thorough tool for assessing advisor

effectiveness is in place at the 6 SOS. This is the outgrowth of the (correct) recognition that success is often too qualitative to be counted – however, it has led to under-thorough approaches to assessing advisor effectiveness in an unbiased manner. Without thorough analysis of advisor effectiveness, AvFID and BPC units risk devolving into “a bunch of guys traveling around the world doing exercises”.



Section VI

Considerations for the Future Aviation FID and BPC

Background

AFSOC’s current plan is to move the 6 SOS to Duke Field where it will collocate with the 5th SOS (USAFR) and the 711th SOS (USAFR). The latter unit will be remissioned to conduct AvFID and intratheater mobility, flying the Polish M28 Skytruck. These units will share 15 M28s. Three elements of three M28s will be forward staged in various AORs to support intratheater mobility and AvFID needs, with the ability to surge one more element. The remaining M28s will remain at Duke Field for CONUS training and currency.¹³² It is unclear what the organizational relationship between these units will be. It is likely that this proposed arrangement will change, but a discussion regarding its implications and developments that may emerge are instructive to the general discussion of AvFID and BPC.

Based on the observations detailed heretofore juxtaposed with others included in this section, several fundamental implications for AvFID development and employment emerge:

Implication #1: The selective engagement of key PN leaders must be approached more systematically.

Serious consideration must be given to engaging key PN personnel not only at the tactical-unit level, but in higher headquarters, ministries of defense, and – most importantly – key combat operations nodes. The 6 SOS, CAFFT and CAPTF have done a good job of deliberating involving leadership engagement into its concepts of operations; but there is room for improvement. Advisors are particularly aware that today's line instructor pilots may be Colonels and Generals in the not-so-distant future. In some cases, the skills granted by US advisors are career boosters which can reinforce the likelihood of promotion for these mid-level officers. However, this can have negative repercussions if the relationship is not pursued with tact in some countries where a more suspicious view of Americans is held.

While it is clear that CAAs and Air Advisors have recognized the importance of key-leader engagement, there is no evidence that it has been considered as thoroughly as it could be. Personal relationships are informal by definition, but that does not mean that the social and organization structures they reside within cannot be analyzed systematically to enhance the likelihood of fruitful partnerships. For example, the Human Terrain System (HTS) is used to make sense of tribal relationships in Afghanistan and Iraq. Similar paradigms could be employed to understand PN organizations in nuanced ways to mitigate superficial understandings based on mirror imaging from our own organizational and social constructs. This will likely mean that ministerial-level advising is necessary in the cases of many highly-bureaucratic PN militaries. It could be asserted that the job of coordinating with foreign

ministries of defense resides with the SAO and Attaches in the Embassy – however, Embassy staffs are often task-saturated and it would be naïve to assume that they have the background to communicate the very specific knowledge associated with some new aviation capabilities.

The practice of using small forward liaison elements has been highly underemphasized – In a time of fiscal scarcity this is one means by which advisors can have large impacts on ongoing operations with minimal investment in terms of funding, manpower, or aircraft. An overemphasis on the training aspect of AvFID has led some to perceive these “nickel-and-dime” commitments as detractors from the “bigger” engagements. This could not be more untrue and misses a key opportunity for economy of force engagement. Establishing these relationships will not be a simple process. Most countries are wary of having foreign advisors in forward areas – but some will permit it and the ability should be capitalized on in these cases. The Philippine Air Force Liaison Coordination Element (PAF-LCE) is an outstanding example. The British have had success with similar programs in various countries – British officers hold established billets in many foreign militaries as instructors, advisors, and even as commanders in some cases. Advisors are academically trained to understand the organizational structures of foreign militaries and the cultural mores that drive their interactions, but the *truly operational nature* of PN military organizational culture is vastly underappreciated.

Implication #2: AvFID must be employed in a manner that views fiscal responsibility as a key objective and funds must be properly balanced between ground and aviation FID units.

Small teams and even individual advisors can be employed in key situations to bring about high-payoff interactions with SAO personnel at extremely low cost – this primarily comes from targeted involvement in PN acquisition and FMS programs. Several examples from a 6 SOS mission reports illustrate this point well.

In one case, an officer from an embassy SAO met with a CAA by coincidence and told him that he had conversed with several representatives of a major American military equipment vendor. They had pitched a great plan to upgrade the PN's utility helicopters with new weapons and sensors. This upgrade included 2 GAU-16 miniguns, 1 fixed-forward GAU-19 .50 caliber Gatling gun, a rocket pod with laser guided 2.75" rockets, an infrared sensor with laser designator, a targeting computer and a heads-up display. This weapons and sensor suite would make any US utility or attack helicopter pilot's eyes water – the embassy was ready to arrange from the purchase. What they did not realize was that this was a capability that the PN's aviation force had no hopes of learning to use effectively or maintain based on fiscal and manpower constraints. US Marine Huey pilots learn to use similarly-advanced systems and related tactics by flying multiple times per week under the supervision of weapons and tactics instructors – this military's pilots were lucky to fly one basic sortie every two weeks. The funding was simply not available to support the level of skill necessary to employ such an advanced upgrade in equipment. More importantly, this made their helicopters *too heavy to hover or take off during the summer months* (when most of the fighting occurred). The total cost of the program would have been \$54 Million.¹³³

In another instance, an SAO had created a plan to furnish a PN with equipment to establish a rotary wing (RW) counterterrorism (CT) force. The equipment included FLIRs, electric miniguns, and some of the most modern navigation equipment. When asked how the equipment list was designed, the SAO replied that it was modeled off of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment – after all, they are the world's best RW CT force. They may truly be – but this is at least partly because of their selective recruiting processes and intense training regimen, (in addition to significant monetary resources). The PN in this case was one of

the world's poorest countries.¹³⁴ In both of these cases, SAOs “did their research” by looking to experts in the US defense community to determine which equipment was best for the PN RW force. The problem is that they initially looked to the wrong experts – individuals with business interests and personnel who were experienced operators, but unfamiliar with the PN's situation. Equipment is less than half of the capacity equation – the more significant aspect of this problem is the PN's ability to *absorb* the equipment. This was neglected in each case until a chance meeting with CAAs who had worked closely with these PN's aviation forces. An untold sum of money has undoubtedly been wasted in this manner. This could be mitigated by systematically including advisors who understand PN military dynamics at the lowest levels into the decision making process.

Doctrinally, it may be the place of the SAO to continually track the effects of FID operations in a given PN. This is possible in some cases where Embassy staffs are characterized by a robust SAO - The Philippines, Thailand or Colombia, for example. However, this is seldom the case, and airman-advisors are scarce in most Embassies and TSOCs. Even when airmen are present, their ability to assess meaningful progress is limited to their previous career background. Based on this scarcity of aviation knowledge in most embassies, a concerted, cooperative, and continuous relationship between SAOs and CAA units must be deliberately pursued. Combat and peacetime employment of trained capabilities must be tracked to the greatest degree possible to gauge whether or not FID missions meet intent in the long term. One-, two-, five-, and ten-year tracking of progress should not be the exception as it is now - it should be the rule.

The various types of money associated with FID and BPC engagements should be carefully balanced between air and ground advisory missions based on the unique nature of aviation capacity building. Ground FID is not easy and it is not the intent of this paper to assert

that it is; however, AvFID and BPC are characterized by aviation's unique materiel requirements if true capacity is to be built. This demands security assistance (Title-22) funds or National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section-1206 funding. These are the main types of money that can be utilized to purchase equipment and establish new capabilities. An overwhelming number of 6 SOS engagements over the last 4 years were JCETs (Title-10 money). The primary intent of a JCET is to train US SOF personnel – PN's are assumed to benefit from this training; but it is impossible to confront recurring issues of aircraft maintenance, parts shortage, and lack of tactical equipment that define developing aviation forces using JCET funds.

Implication #3: The indirect approach must be employed more aggressively.

AvFID must be employed more aggressively, shifting further towards the advise and assist end of the FID spectrum. If the force is going to be kept small, it must be used in the most assertive manner possible – this will entail additional risk. General William Westmoreland spoke of his reluctance to send small teams into threatened areas noting, “That would have been fragmenting and exposing them to defeat in detail.”¹³⁵ If AvFID's outcomes are recognized as being valuable, then some risk may be necessary to secure higher payoffs – this means higher likelihoods that CAAs will be put into high-threat conditions. Major General Norman Brozenick, current Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC) Commander, noted that, “Decades of listless discussion on the tactical role and mission of combat aviation advisors spawned a risk-averse comfort zone that continues to undermine efforts to grow capability.”¹³⁶ That was written in 2002 when Brozenick was a Lieutenant Colonel – the problem has not gotten any better. Improving this situation may mean seeking additional assist authorities for CAAs,

and more lobbying with PN governments for direct support to include combat operations where the need is clear. However, assisting does not *necessarily* mean conducting high-risk combat missions. One CAA notes, “Assisting can mean helping deliver money, ballots or medicine to areas inaccessible by road. It can also mean bringing aid personnel to areas in need of relief”¹³⁷

There are ways to conduct FID missions that historically tend to be highly successful – it is noteworthy that these sorts of operations differ from standard recurring FID missions in significant ways. Consider some of the FID success stories noted to this point: El Salvador, Colombia, Georgia and The Philippines. Each of these differs significantly from most of the engagements that Army SF, 6 SOS, or other small teams of advisors are engaged in because they are much larger in scale. While small when compared to conventional wars or large-scale COIN, these efforts involved dozens to hundreds of advisors engaged in persistent engagements. Compared to large-scale COIN, these missions were extremely affordable both monetarily and in terms of public opinion. But compared to typical Mobile Training Team (MTT) and JCET deployments, they were quite large. Based on the successes of those missions, similarly-scaled FID approaches should be considered in states where growing insurgencies threaten governmental legitimacy and American security. MTT events, JCETs and Subject Matter Expert Exchanges are not undesirable – but in the case of JCETs expectations should be limited, particularly when aviation is involved. The indirect approach’s merit should not be judged based on these sorts of engagements alone, but along a span of differently scaled approaches.

Within the special operations community, unconventional warfare should also be considered as a high-potential mode of employment. Aviation has an important role in UW. Increased attention to UW is necessary both in the training and education of SOF aviation

personnel. The number of instances where this will be a viable course of action will be far less than is the case for FID; but it is a capability that must be trained for nonetheless.

Implication #4: The Size of the Pepper Matters – Inversely.

The size and composition of US elements engaging in FID and BPC activities must be considered carefully when weighing the costs and benefits of engagements. A “Big Pepper Approach” comes with massive amounts of personnel and equipment that PNs do not possess and will not be able to afford – it also does so at considerable expense. The employment of creative small-footprint approaches to building partner capacity that is directed in the new defense strategic guidance is more potent in terms of actually building PN capacity. The “small pepper” vignette is not included to suggest that large-units cannot effectively engage with PNs. Current strategic direction and impending force structure changes indicate that the military will also look towards partnering large SOF and GPF organizations with PN units. This approach has promise provided it is done in the right ways. Large exercises are important for validating and improving interoperability and enhancing the mission capabilities and cross-cultural competence of larger organizations. *But the temptation to add AvFID to the already diverse designed operational capability (DOC) statements of entire squadrons or groups in the manner that the Army is adding FID to the charters of large organizations must be avoided.* If strategic direction urges the military to employ “innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches,” then the small-team construct is the most effective means to meet executive intent. When these small teams are exclusively comprised of instructors, a greater product in terms of PN capacity building is understandably arrived at more economically when compared to a large group of more junior servicemen. Moreover, there are additional benefits to the employment of small teams. One highly experienced Embassy SAO notes the following:

“Small team means small footprint. This is positive for ‘politically sensitive’ nations. This is also better and easier for force protection. Small teams allow focused and flexible training --sometimes things change between a final planning conference and execution. Small teams are much better at adapting and meeting both the customer (partner nation) and their own unit training needs. This is hard to do for robust units.”¹³⁸

Another experienced SAO in a different Embassy notes the following:

“Small unit SOF are trained in culture, customs, and language and large units generally are not – this speaks for itself... The 6 SOS is unique: I have valued the tailored training package that this unit can bring to the table. A plug and play package is an awesome asset to bring to the table with the PN. Like an SF A-Team, a battalion-sized PN unit can be effectively engaged with a team of 12 or 13 advisors.”¹³⁹

One idea that has been proposed and revisited several times is the notion of using experienced CAAs to lead larger teams from other SOF agencies or even GP forces in military-to-military engagements. Opinions vary among CAAs regarding this practice. Brozenick aptly notes that, “It is extremely unwise for deployed detachments to rely on unfamiliar personnel for critical functions during high-risk operations.”¹⁴⁰ High-risk operations may demand force protection, medical, and survival skills that CAAs train together for months prior to deploying. Several 6 SOS advisors tell accounts of being informally instructed to “clean up the mess” in terms of the US military’s image following large exercises that had been marred by misconduct or embarrassing cross-cultural faux pas.¹⁴¹ CAAs accustomed to operating in the small-team construct will rightfully resist this framework in certain contexts in the name of preserving the squadron’s good name and for reasons associated with team security and discipline. The location and nature of the engagement should be considered prior to partnering small groups of advisors with larger groups of forces that they are expected to lead. It may be better for CAAs to act as “cultural point men”¹⁴² for larger groups in Bangladesh than in Basilan or Bangkok. Nonetheless, 6 SOS personnel report some great success with augmented teams in the recent past and the practice has promise if the risks are mitigated properly.¹⁴³ There is particular promise

for this approach in locations characterized by low force protection risks and amicable cross-cultural relations.

Implication #5: Irregular Warfare capabilities and personnel must be consolidated to a Wing commanded by an O-6 (or higher) with AvFID experience.

Major Max Weems wrote an exceptional 2008 essay dealing with organizational change in light of irregular warfare demand. Weems draws on organizational theory to suggest that a separate organization is necessary based on the significance and degree of irregular warfare's difference from conventional and traditional DA missions. Weems noted almost prophetically, "... SOCOM has committed to doubling the size of the 6th SOS in the coming years. The problem is that all of these initiatives can (and historically do) quickly disappear when exceptional operations are no longer seen as an immediate need. On the other hand, it is very hard to kill a large dedicated organization made up of individuals with a stake in its survival."¹⁴⁴ This comment is prophetic because the SOCOM commitment to double the 6 SOS did not materialize in full and its very existence is now threatened as an AvFID organization. Rothstein cites organizational theorist Stephen Peter Rosen, in suggesting that, "civilians, to include the President of the United States, have a hard time getting bureaucracies to do what they want them to do. To begin with, directions from the top are usually general in nature and therefore lack specificity. This lack of precise direction is even more evident when innovation is required."¹⁴⁵ These words were written several years ago; but their accurate description of the contemporary situation characterized by strategic direction that becomes watered down at the operator's level is a testament to their value. All of this suggests that despite strategic direction, bureaucratic organizations without sufficient perceived interest in innovation will naturally resist it. There is

great promise in AFSOC's current plan; but one which carries significant potential to derail AvFID if not handled properly – the capability is at a major turning point.

Irregular warfare aviation is different from conventional operations and direct-action oriented SOF to a degree that demands a separate organization that is able to articulate its own mission requirements. This warrants the formation of a unit that can sufficiently represent and advocate its own capabilities – in the Air Force, this unit is a Wing. Colonel John D. Jogerst (Ret) offers the following: “Why a Wing? Because we fight, train, and allocate resources that way... Call it an IW Wing with a FID Group as its training component and a COIN Group as its operations arm.”¹⁴⁶ As Weems has already recognized, “History has shown that the Air Force as an institution will tend to focus on what it sees as its primary capabilities to the detriment of others. This means program objective memoranda inputs, requirements, research and development, and resources for training and exercises must be advocated and protected by an individual of sufficiently high rank.”¹⁴⁷ This Wing should be commanded by an O-6 or higher who has AvFID experience. This arrangement mitigates the competition for resources within a Wing or Group that is comprised of traditional SOF squadrons and a single IW squadron, the prior yielding many widely-appreciated quantifiable metrics and the latter being generally misunderstood. This will result in a condition that is less confusing in terms of competing capabilities for both AvFID and traditional SOF aviation commanders at squadron, group and wing levels.

Implication #6: The AvFID Mission must be guarded from being completely consumed by competing missions – at the time of this writing the mission of concern is intratheater airlift.

At the time of this writing, the M28 is slated as AFSOC's AvFID/IW platform. This may change, but considerations regarding the suitability of this aircraft as a platform for advisory

operations illuminate the broader AvFID discussion. The M28 is an outstanding aircraft for many purposes – but it would be insincere to say that there are not many significant concerns regarding its utility as an AvFID platform. Firstly, the only militaries outside of the US and Poland who possess this aircraft are in Venezuela and Vietnam. The reason why the 6 SOS has used the UH-1 Huey and Mi-17 Hip as mainstay platforms for the past 19 years is because they are so ubiquitous. Nearly every Cold War ally to the US or Soviets has one or the other, and they are also multi-role platforms.

It is suggested that “flying skills transferable to other aircraft will be taught in the M28.”¹⁴⁸ The problem with this proposition is that it does not jibe with the manner in which almost any Air Force in the world operates, including our own. The idea of having PN pilots mission-plan for M28 sorties and fly-along in an aircraft they will never operate again may seem to be an appropriate way to instruct PN aircrews to personnel who have never advised. However, no advisor who has conducted AvFID as his primary mission would look a room full of fellow CAAs in the eye and suggest that this was a plausible approach. Despite some suggestions that this program will be “like JUNGLE JIM”, it will not – there is no historical record of US aviation crews being given the legal authorities to fly combat missions with multinational aircrews in US owned aircraft – in JUNGLE JIM the aircraft were turned over and hand-receipted to the PNs involved. Additionally, US crews participating in JUNGLE JIM were required to fly with PN pilots to mitigate political risks associated with unilateral action. JUNGLE JIM eventually evolved away from the advising construct towards a larger engagement where USAF advisors were flying the PNs’ missions for them.¹⁴⁹ It is highly presumptuous to assume that most political contexts will allow for US advisors enter a foreign country with a strange aircraft to conduct either combined combat flying operations or unilateral missions in

that country's conflict. This may be the case sometimes, but not frequently enough to base an entire AvFID strategy around a single aircraft. In some cases, the US may wish greater involvement – but that is often not the case with the PN government. The Philippine Constitution prevented that at the outset of OEF-P. In that case, this is fortunate – OEF-P has been successful, cheap, and has received little media attention in the vein of the El Salvador approach.

The M28 is a “Big Pepper” approach to AvFID as long as it is intended to “teach” PN aircrews “transferable skills” – it brings equipment that PNs do not have and may not be able to afford. This is not more constructive than the missions chided by the PN group commander in the vignette at this text's introduction. The M28 may be a great capability for intratheater airlift in some smaller countries. This is a two-edged sword for AvFID. Intratheater airlift yields easily quantifiable results that immediately meet the demands of other SOF units in theater. This will often be beneficial, but has a clear potential to overtake the AvFID mission – This must absolutely be guarded against through established procedures. AvFID missions must be prioritized in such a way that makes them immune from intratheater-airlift “re-role” except for in cases of significant national interest.

AFSOC's Congressional Testimony notes that one of the advantages of utilizing US-owned M28s are that this measure, “Reduces CAA aircrew safety risks by flying the same type of aircraft in garrison as deployed in theater.”¹⁵⁰ As previously noted, risks must be taken to accomplish any mission effectively – The 6 SOS has a safety record that would astound any outside observer considering that all of its missions have been flown in indigenous aircraft with foreign crews learning unfamiliar missions through language barriers. The risk spoken of is clearly manageable by well-trained CAAs with multiple aircraft qualifications. The 6 SOS has

proven that this is achievable and there was never a need to mitigate this risk any further with an aircraft that very few international air forces have.

AFSOC testimony to Congress notes that, “AvFID fixed wing (FW) aircrews will be single aircraft qualified (M28) and only fly their organic aircraft. However, the squadron will also retain CAAs who are multi-aircraft qualified to fly PN aircraft when deployed.”¹⁵¹ The testimony also notes that, “the existing AvFID manning plan includes 435 AFRC personnel to support the AvFID mission.”¹⁵² However, if these reserve personnel are only qualified in the M28, they are not likely to be conducting AvFID regardless of what their wing is called – they are intratheater airlifters. Diversity of aircraft qualifications must be sustained for AvFID and BPC to remain viable and cost-effective in the long term. With AFSOC’s divestiture of RW capabilities, AvFID demand must be met with FW assets and ground personnel. This means conducting a study reminiscent of one conducted focusing on RW assets during the mid 2000s to determine the platforms most widely proliferated to likely PNs.¹⁵³ AvFID expansion is commensurate with qualification in aircraft likely to be flown with PNs – not by the number of personnel under an organization that is nominally called an “AvFID Wing”.

The incorporation of elements of the 919th SOW (USAFR) including the 711th SOS into a new “AvFID Wing” holds unique promise in this respect. The reserve component has a significant amount of experience and seniority that is valuable for AvFID – it may conversely be less deployable than active duty units. For this reason, it is frequently suggested the reservists in the AvFID Wing will fly only the M28 while most traditional CAA work is conducted by the 6 SOS. This may be a valid construct in general, but fails to properly leverage the experience of the reserve component. Mature senior advisors can be effectively employed to meet a demand

that the 6 SOS and many USEMB Attachés and SAOs currently lack the ability to conduct effectively: dedicated aviation advising at the headquarters and ministerial-levels.

Implication #7: The Transfer of the Rotary Wing AvFID Mission from the Air Force to the Army must be closely monitored for effectiveness.

AFSOC plans to divest of RW aircraft by the end of Fiscal Year 2012 – this fact tends to shock outsiders when it is noted that 84% of 6 SOS missions over the past two years have either been RW-focused or included RW operations along with FW operations.¹⁵⁴ The intent of this text is not to dispute the divestiture or to review it in depth. The divestiture warrants a separate text unto itself; however, it constitutes a change so foundational that it is impossible to write on the topic of AvFID at this time without paying service to it. The divestment is significant because of its implications for Joint FID.

A brief historiography of AvFID literature illustrates that while the importance of helicopters in IW has clearly been recognized, it has been significantly questioned in ways that are not empirically supported. One author asserts, “Although austere countries like Afghanistan lend themselves to the use of helicopters for ingressing and egressing such rough terrain, a developing partner nation will find that their higher cost, lower reliability, and slower speed often outweigh their utility. A fixed-wing short takeoff and landing (STOL) aircraft can access most of the same landing zones as a helicopter.”¹⁵⁵ The argument downplaying the effectiveness of helicopters is even echoed in an Air Force White Paper.¹⁵⁶

The works cited above were written by esteemed officers whose IW experience far exceed the author’s and their texts were fine contributions to the study of the AvFID mission; however, the conclusions regarding RW AvFID are unsupportable. There is a reason why 84% of recent 6 SOS missions have been primarily or partially RW engagements: helicopters are

viable, maintainable, useful platforms for almost all likely AvFID partners across a diverse regional, cultural and economic spectrum. In one theater, 100% of planned AvFID missions for the next two fiscal years are primarily or exclusively RW missions (of course, most are going to be sourced by contractors).¹⁵⁷ One CRS report even suggests that, "... less-developed countries that cannot invest in infrastructure often use rotary wing aircraft (helicopters) to operate from, and get in and out of rural areas."¹⁵⁸ Recall the aforementioned assertion: "A fixed-wing STOL aircraft can access most of the same landing zones as a helicopter."¹⁵⁹ Anyone familiar with RW operations in the slightest way realizes that this is patently untrue. Landing in LZs barely large enough for a helicopter to fit into and utilizing alternate insertion-extraction (AIE) methods like fastroping and rappelling enable the movement of troops into mountainous, jungle, and urban terrain in ways inconceivable for STOL aircraft. It is reasonable to assert the RW aircraft can access a number of LZs that exceed those available to STOL aircraft by an order of hundreds (or thousands) in any given category of terrain.

Helicopters are extremely important in IW for developing PNs; this is evidenced by the 6 SOS, CAFTT, and CAPTF experience. The transition of the RW AvFID mission to the Army must be handled in a manner that is responsible, dedicated, and devoid of evasion, and must be continuously monitored by civilian leadership. The same dilemmas that plague the growth of Air Force FID will emerge in the Army – in fact, they already have. Personnel from the Army's Threat Systems Management Office (TSMO) were seen as a logical AvFID force several years ago – they already train foreign aircrews in Russian aircraft at their west Texas training ground. Colonel John Thompson (USA) notes that, "The 3-210th Aviation Regiment, under the command of the 110th Aviation Brigade, was activated and given the mission of AvFID in support of US Security Cooperation Programs... but has since lost most of its relevance because of competing

requirements and reluctance of Army senior leaders to embrace the RW SFA mission.”¹⁶⁰ More than three years ago, the Army’s Non-Standard Aviation Systems Division of Aviation and Missile Command Security Assistance Directorate was designated to perform procurement and support for the Mi-17 and possibly other non-standard RW aircraft.”¹⁶¹ However, at the time of this writing no concrete plan to transition the RW AvFID mission to the Army has been established.

It must be clear: A decreased ability to meet RW AvFID demand due to a poor mission handover between services contravenes strategic direction and specific OSD direction.¹⁶² The AvFID mission may be undesirable to the 160th SOAR – however, it is not necessary that this organization conduct RW AvFID. Despite the “experience gap” resulting in the 6 SOS recruiting pool following the standing down of the MH-53, RW missions continued with success. This is because many of the skills that developing militaries need are not the sort of advanced tactical skills that some selective SOF aviation units employ. Knowledge of these skills and experience in using them is certainly desirable – but conventional Army RW crews will be finely suited to conduct AvFID provided they receive proper supplementary training. The Army has the vast majority of RW institutional knowledge, but significantly less experience in the area of AvFID – it is almost-unimaginable that this mission can be transferred seamlessly without some involvement from the 6 SOS, either by augmenting AFSOC OAD-As with Army RW advisors or continuing the squadron’s involvement in RW missions in a case-by-case manner. Nonetheless, the 6 SOS will eventually be fully divested of RW capabilities, a fact that must be grown from. To dwell on this matter is counterproductive.

Some current members of the 6 SOS will lament at this massive change (and it is lamentable in many ways). The AvFID conversation often neglects the often-overlooked ground

advisors in the 6 SOS and their integration with RW assets during FID operations. Combat Controllers, Pararescuemen, Special Tactics Officers, Combat Rescue Officers and SERE instructors have relied heavily on RW assets for CASEVAC, CAS, CSAR, and AIE training. The divestment's inevitably means two things in terms of air-ground integration: underutilized FW air-ground integration must be developed through the initiative of advisors, and joint interdependencies with sister service RW assets will eventually become the rule rather than the exception.

Implication #8 – AvFID must be considered a Joint and Total Force Endeavor

AFSOC is a phenomenal force for irregular warfare – but it is an incomplete force. Continuing on the topic of RW operations, the Air Force's slice of the rotary wing pie is notably small. This was even the case prior to AFSOC's standing down of the MH-53 capability. Corum and Johnson note several aviation missions that recur in IW. These missions involve ISR, CAS, armed reconnaissance, and escort and overwatch for ground forces.¹⁶³ The vast majority of DoD's institutional knowledge and experience in these missions does not reside in the Air Force, it resides in the Army and Marine Corps.

The 6 SOS may be the world's best AvFID organization – but to imply that it conducts advisory missions “across the full spectrum of aviation operations” is simply untrue.¹⁶⁴ The RW, FW, Ground Tactics and Support composition of the 6 SOS looks curiously similar to AFSOC as a whole. This is understandable – CAAs should advise based on their experience; but there is much more to airpower - both PN and theater demand reflect that. AFSOC's token offering for fires has been to establish one position for a light-attack pilot (OV-10). Multiple attempts at establishing a RW Attack capability have been stifled as well.¹⁶⁵ AFSOC conducts AvFID but limits itself from RW Attack based on roles and missions agreements. The Army conducts RW

attack, but does not currently have an AvFID capability. Thus, a capability void exists in terms of RW attack. The continuation of this construct in manner that excludes general purpose and joint forces is a reiteration of the very same error that many SOF-outsiders make regarding irregular warfare – that IW is categorically synonymous with SOF forces. Foreign aviation forces will typically not be a mirror image of AFSOC, nor should they be. In reality, there is much more to IW aviation than what AFSOC provides. AFSOC's 2007 AvFID White Paper aptly concludes with original emphasis maintained, "*This is Air Force Business*".¹⁶⁶ AvFID, IW and BPC *are* Air Force Business; but that goes beyond AFSOC and the service itself. Additionally, Marine Corps RW aviation offers a potential to engage in a manner unencumbered by roles and missions agreements with a community that is characterized by an outstandingly diverse mission set – the Marine Light Attack (HML/A) community.¹⁶⁷

Air Force general purpose forces have the ability to effectively build partnership capacity when properly trained and resourced. As one example, a small team of Air Force maintenance advisors recently helped the Nigerian Air Force's C-130 fleet back into the air in a low-cost high-payoff engagement.¹⁶⁸ One career Army SF advisor states, "Though FID is doctrinally a SOF Title-10 responsibility, FID accurately describes the mission of major US joint task forces in both OEF-P and OEF-A as well as other regional engagements."¹⁶⁹ GPF advisors may be optimal to engage in situations characterized by low threat and political sensitivity. But the temptation to water down the training or simply bless GP forces with "FID Certifications" must be avoided. But it must be understood that FID dealt with more than the technical capabilities of personnel. FID *is not easy* - This is so for reasons that are often lackluster when compared to combat skills, and thus glossed over. The subjects of interagency coordination, austere communications, and small team logistics draw little attention – but in environments outside of

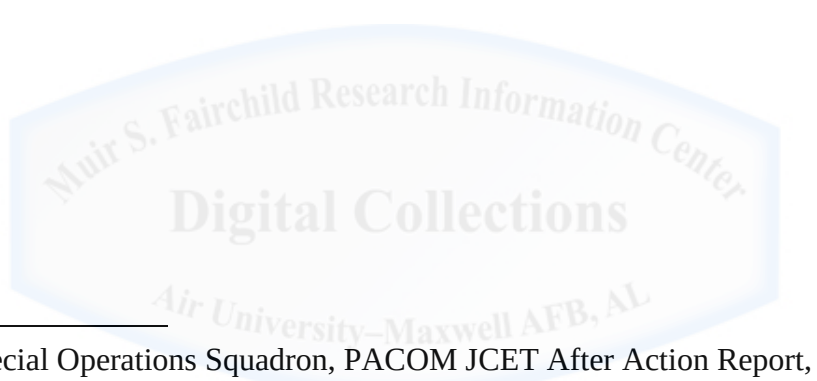
OIF and OEF operations where there is no large logistical and administrative structure to plug into, their neglect can result in mission failure. Topics of money, law, contracting, force protection and medical procedures may be uninteresting; but failure to honor them can put advisors in jail or in a grave.

Final Thoughts

A curious irony can be detected at the root of AvFID's failure to grow in accordance with strategic direction – it is stunted for the very same reasons that developing air forces fail in developing their own new capabilities: *higher headquarters understanding, integration, and sustainment*. The case for **HHQ understanding** has been belabored to this point; it is necessary only to assert that a standing organization integrating AvFID with enough institutional security and sufficiently high-ranking leadership must be established. Future AvFID will require **integration** of joint air capabilities based on the missions common to irregular warfare. Moreover, AvFID must integrate not only with ground personnel organic to AvFID units, but across services. A review of 6 SOS mission reports shows that many of the squadron's missions during the 1990s were conducted with Army ODAs. However, mission reports from the last 4 years reveal that this number is shockingly low. **Sustainability** means more than the technical maintenance of materiel – it means proper personnel management. Unlike the Army, the Air Force has no personnel identifier for CAAs or Air Advisors. Even CRS and RAND reports note that the 6 SOS is not a particularly wise career move because of its isolation from the DA-dominated command and the absence of an organizational structure affording upward mobility.¹⁷⁰

The creation of a viable AvFID entity does not necessarily mean the Balkanization of SOF and GP forces – it means further integration. But this integration must occur in a fashion

that retains the AvFID mission's sanctity – if it does not, insulating FID and BPC organizations and their resources may be necessary. New capabilities including the M28 must be leveraged creatively and more aggressively if AvFID and BPC are truly to be leveraged as the economy of force measures that they were intended to be. Historically, marginalization has emerged from misunderstandings regarding FID strategic employment and operational assessment. These misunderstandings must be considered in conceiving a growth in FID capability. This growth is not a matter of choice for DoD components; it is mandated in official guidance and must be approached with an eye for effects that goes beyond the countable.



Endnotes

¹ Report. 6th Special Operations Squadron, PACOM JCET After Action Report, December 2011

² US Department of Defense, *Sustaining US Global Partnership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012.

³ Hy Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006)

⁴ Quoted in Peter Singer, *Hegel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 84.

⁵ Christopher Bolckom and Kenneth Katzman, Congressional Research Service, *Military Aviation: Issues and Options for Combating Terrorism and Counterinsurgency*, January 2005, 40.

⁶ Nearly every article advocating FID during the time period from 2002 to present makes similar assertions.

⁷ Thomas K. Livingston, *Building the Capacity of Partner States Through Security Force Assistance*, Congressional Research Service Report For Congress, May 2011, 1.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Extrapolated from Air Force website, www.af.mil

¹⁰ Budget data received via email from Mr. Joe Klipstein, 6 SOS Resource Advisor, May 2012.

¹¹ One example is the Defense Institute for Security Assistance Management (DISAM) which publishes a journal that occasionally features articles dealing with the need to assess success better for these sorts of engagements.

¹² This report does not seek to advocate effects-based operations (EBO) approaches to AvFID or BPC, nor does it aim at denying them. Joseph Celeski (Col, Ret) has written an outstanding Joint Special Operations University pamphlet which includes a section discussing Effects-Based COIN. It may be obtained from JSOU. It is worth noting that “effects” is a doctrinal term detailed extensively in JP 5-0; at time the advocates of EBO take a degree of latitude with the term “effects” that makes its use alien to the doctrinal definition. The use of effects in this text is used doctrinally – more commonly the term “outcomes” will be used, which is also non-doctrinal. The reason for this will be highlighted in Section IV.

¹³ *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, 11 August 2011

¹⁴ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger International, 1964), 1.

¹⁵ Conrad Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea: 1950-1953*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2002)

¹⁶ George M. Monroe, “The Rebirth of the Outback Air Force,” *Armed Forces Journal*, <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2008/02/3246746> , p. 4

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 3

¹⁸ John Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders and Bandits: How the Masters of Irregular Warfare have Shaped our World* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Press, 2011), 15-40.

¹⁹ Sam Sarkesian, *America’s Forgotten Wars: The Counterrevolutionary Past and Lessons for the Future* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986)

²⁰ Alan Vick, Adam Grissom, William Rosenau, Beth Grill and Karl P. Mueller, *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era: The Strategic Importance of USAF Advisory and Assistance Missions* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006), 116.

²¹ George M. Monroe, “The Rebirth of the Outback Air Force”, *Armed Forces Journal*, February 2008, 13.

²² *National Security Strategy*, 1995.

²³ House, *Congressional Update on the United States Special Operations Command Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Program*, 15 February 2012. Report prepared for House Appropriations Committee and House Armed Services Committee, 3.

²⁴ Studies include Vick's RAND report, AFSOC's cited testimony to the HAS/HASC, 6 SOS Plans Department estimates, and the cited SOCOM Unrestrained Demand Study.

²⁵ Report. *Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Unrestrained Demand*, available from SOCOM J3A, November 2011

²⁶ Chief of Partnership Capacity Building - Aviation, Theater SOC J3A, to Maj Nicholas. M. Dipoma, e-mail, 17 February 2012.

²⁷ Contractors have had some noteworthy successes in the area of aviation FID and BPC, and some noted failures. One well-known case within the small AvFID community deals with two retired Army AH-1 Cobra pilots who executed a contract to train RW Attack pilots in an Islamic PN. After angering the PN through constant drunkenness one of the two was expelled. The second became serious ill after eating bad street-food. He had not coordinated for medical care and was evacuated from the country without return. On the other hand, some contractors have been employed to great effect. In some cases, contractors can achieve things that military advisors cannot; particularly when they maintain sustained contact with PN forces (juxtaposed with period AvFID engagements lasting several months or less) – Of course, this is a matter of deployment schedules, not AvFID's viability as a military endeavor. One good informal source on the topic of contractors can be referenced at the following web posting site: SOCNET, <http://socnet.com/showthread.php?p=1058077660>

²⁸ Contractors are constrained legally in ways that active duty military personnel are not, unless they are of a very rare and specific type.

²⁹ Maj Stephen L. Renner, "A Modest Proposal for Attack Combat Aviation Advisors," (thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 2007), 57.

³¹ Lt. Col. Clint Hinote, *Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution: A Catchphrase in Crisis?* (Maxwell AFB, AL: USAF Research Institute, 2009), 26.

³² Much of the critique of AvFID emanating from within the SOF community is undocumented. It would be contradictory to do so in an environment where guidance directs an emphasis on the capability. This statement is not made in any formal written document, but has been repeated to personnel within the SOF community. Regardless of the lack of official sanction for this statement, actions that will be detailed in this paper indicate that this opinion is not only worth

examining based on its logic alone, but its power in terms of influencing future decisions regarding resourcing and force structure.

³³ Conceptually, Voznesensky's quote is worth considering in light of FID as it highlights a fertile paradox: is the indirect approach truly indirect when foreign militaries use the equipment and training received to kill? In many situations it is either not possible or politically and legally unworkable for the US military to pursue certain objectives – FID is an economy of force measure to work around these situations, in an indirect fashion.

³⁴ Like Voznesensky, Emerson is an unusual choice for advice related to military matters. Emerson's Transcendentalism and his influence on the late 19th Century's Pragmatist school of American philosophy have been noted for its striking similarities to some Eastern approaches to philosophy. Interestingly, emerging trends in military theory borne from the theoretical implications of complex adaptive systems theory, networks, neurobiology and quantum physics indicate a shift towards more non-linear approaches to warfare. Such approaches contrast with the approach taken by the positivist theorists like Jomini and von Bulow who drew Clausewitz's critique (a theme to be revisited in the introduction of Section 4 of this text). These theorists, writing in the wake and celebration of Newton's *Principia* yearned for a "clockwork" approach to warfare, empirically understood as an affair of cause and effect. This is somewhat reminiscent of the more extreme versions of network-centric warfare put forth today with the suggestion of omniscience for centralized commanders with nearly-whole knowledge of the battlespace based on sensors and their linkages to shooters enabled by predictive intelligence.

³⁵ Hastings earned fame following the publication of a Rolling Stone article entitled "The Runaway General", which eventually contributed to the relief of General Stanley McChrystal as the Commander of US Forces in Afghanistan.

³⁶ Michael Hastings, *The Operators: The Wild and Terrifying Inside Story of America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: Blue Rider Press, 2012), 201.

³⁷ Ibid, 202.

³⁸ Ibid, 203.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Interview with Doctor William Dean, Air Command and Staff College, April 2011.

⁴¹ Mark Moyer, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey: Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism in Vietnam* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2006) and Lewis Sorely, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (Austin, TX: Harcourt Press, 1999)

⁴² See Dana Priest, "Free of Oversight, US Military Trains Foreign Troops," *Washington Post*, July 12, 1998, p.A01, and Dana Priest, "Special Forces Training Review Sought," *Washington Post*, July 15, 1998, p. A25.

⁴³ Rachel Maddow, *Drift: The Unmooring of America's Military Power* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 209.

⁴⁴ Hastings, 203-204.

⁴⁵ US Department of Defense, *Sustaining US Global Partnership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012.

⁴⁶ David H. Ucko, "Counterinsurgency After Afghanistan: A Concept in Crisis," *Prism*, Vol 3, No. 1 (December 2011), 2.

⁴⁷ Justin Logan and Dr. Christopher Preble, "Washington's Newest Bogeyman: Debunking the Fear of Failed States," *Air and Space Power Journal Africa and Francophone*, Fall 2011, 78-93.

⁴⁸ Dr. James W. Forsyth, "The Past as Prologue: Realist Thought and the Future of American Security Policy," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Fall 2011, 113.

⁴⁹ Sun Tzu: *The Art of War*, trans. By Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963) 73.

⁵⁰ Sam Sarkesian, *America's Forgotten Wars: The Counterrevolutionary Past and Lessons for the Future* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986)

⁵¹ Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace* (New York: Perseus Books, 2002)

⁵² Forsyth, 117

⁵³ The late Carl Builder documents this phenomenon in both *The Masks of War* and *The Icarus Syndrome*

⁵⁴ Meredith Reid Sarkees, Frank Whelon Wayman, and J. David Singer, "Inter-State, Intra-State, and Extra-State Wars: A Comprehensive Look at Their Distribution over Time, 1816-1997," *International Studies Quarterly*, 2003, vol 47, 49-70. Also see various reports compiled by the *Correlates of War* Project, available at www.correlatesofwar.org.

⁵⁵ This is documented in many sources, one recent one is *Foreign Policy Magazine* www.foreignpolicy.com/category/section/small_wars

⁵⁶ *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012

⁵⁷ Robert Greentree, *The Crossroads of Intervention: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency Lessons from Latin America* (New York: Praeger International Studies Press, 2008), 27.

⁵⁸ David C. Maxwell, *Understanding Future Irregular Warfare Challenges*, Statement before the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, March 2012

⁵⁹ The author has written a classified report on the history of this engagement. This report is archived at the 6th Special Operations Squadron, Plans Department.

⁶⁰ This critique is not documented in writing, but has been reiterated to the author on several occasions by fellow ACSC students in recalling their conversations with various personnel from within the AFSOC community.

⁶¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 178.

⁶² Brian M. Burton, "The Promise and Peril of the Indirect Approach," *Prism*. Vol. 3, No. 1, December 2011. 48. The terms input, output and outcomes are non-doctrinal, but were well employed by Burton in this article and are valuable in describing some of the assessment-related misunderstandings common to FID.

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Rothstein, xiv

⁶⁵ Betts Fetherson, interviewed by Daniel Druckman and Paul C. Stern of the National Research Council. Published in *Mershon International Studies Review* (Malden, Massachusetts, 1997), 156.

⁶⁶ Paul Diehl, interviewed by Daniel Druckman and Paul C. Stern of the National Research Council. Published in *Mershon International Studies Review* (Malden, Massachusetts, 1997), 160.

⁶⁷ J David Singer and Paul F. Diehl, *Measuring the Correlates of War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), xii.

⁶⁸ Paul K. Davis and James P. Kahn, *Theory and Methods for Supporting High Level Military Decision-making*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007) 59-62. In this text and others, the movements by many EBO-advocates including seek predictive models whereby computers predict human behavior through the use of algorithms based on complex adaptive systems theory.

⁶⁹ Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006), 28.

⁷⁰ Richard D. Lewis, *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures*, (Boston: Nicholas Brealey International, 1996), 48-52.

⁷¹ James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 341.

⁷² Paul L. Moorcraft and Peter McLaughlin, *The Rhodesian War: A Military History*, (Barnsley, South Yorkshire, England: Pen and Sword Press, 1983)

⁷³ Rothstein documents the intangible rapport-related progress made by SF teams over periods of months was ruined in a single clearing mission during Operation Mountain Sweep in the Shah-e-Khot Valley of Afghanistan in 2003. The SF teams' accomplishments will not fit onto a PowerPoint slide in the same manner as numbers of arms caches seized or suspected insurgents captured.

⁷⁴ Tami Davis Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 48.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Ibid 248-253

⁷⁷ Report. Officer Performance Report, May 2011. Name withheld for privacy reasons.

⁷⁸ James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003)

⁷⁹ Greentree, 160

⁸⁰ Senate, *Following the Money in Yemen and Lebanon: Maximizing the Effectiveness of U.S. Security Assistance and International Financial Institution Lending*, Report to Committee on Foreign Relations, 111th Congress, January 2010, 20-24.

⁸¹ Ibid, 23

⁸² These successes are referenced in AFSOC's recent testimony to the HAS and HASC; unfortunately, more detailed reports are classified.

⁸³ Diehl, 153

⁸⁴ Fetherson, 158

⁸⁵ 6 SOS storyboards are being compiled on the 6 SOS AFSOC Sharepoint site, SIPRNET.

⁸⁶ Livingston, 53

⁸⁷ Clausewitz, 697.

⁸⁸ Hy Rothstein (Naval Postgraduate School), Interviewed by the author, 2 April 2012.

⁸⁹ William Durch, interviewed by Daniel Druckman and Paul C. Stern of the National Research Council. Published in *Mershon International Studies Review* (Malden, Massachusetts, 1997), 161.

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Diehl, 156

⁹² M. Simaan and J.B. Cruz Jr, "On the Stackelberg Strategy in Nonzero-Sum Games". *Journal of Optimization Theory and Applications* Vol . **11**, No. 5, 533–555.

⁹³ Vick, 91

⁹⁴ Ibid, 91-92

⁹⁵ Report. *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other Global War on Terror operations since 9/11*, Congressional Research Service, March 2012.

⁹⁶ Quoted from US Air Force Special Operations School lecture, *Pacific Area Special Operations Forces*, July 2011.

⁹⁷ Greentree, 2-22

⁹⁸ Rothstein, Interview

⁹⁹ Major Stuart L. Farris, "Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines," (monograph written for graduation requirements, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2009)

¹⁰⁰ Col Brian Petit, "OEF-Philippines: Thinking COIN, Practicing FID," *Special Warfare*, January-February 2010.

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¹⁰² Maj Joseph E Whittington Jr, "Mobility Support Advisory Squadron's BPC Mission Delphi Study Questionnaire" (Delphi Study Questionnaire, USAF Expeditionary Center, JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ. 2012)

¹⁰³ Scott A. Bethel, Aaron Prupas, Tomislav Z. Ruby, and Michael V. Smith, "Developing Air Force Strategists: Change Culture, Reverse Careerism," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, issue 58, 3rd quarter 2010. 88.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ House, *Congressional Update on the United States Special Operations Command Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Program*, Report prepared for House Appropriations Committee and House Armed Services Committee by AFSOC, 15 Feb 2012, 2.

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¹⁰⁷ Ibid

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¹¹⁰ Chris Jacobs, Chief of Regional and Cultural Education, Joint Special Operations University, to Maj Nicholas. M. Dipoma, e-mail, 13 October 2012.

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¹¹⁸ Lewis, 143-144

¹¹⁹ Lewis, 143

¹²⁰ US Department of Defense, *Sustaining US Global Partnership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012.

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- ¹³² House, *Congressional Update on the United States Special Operations Command Aviation Foreign Internal Defense Program*, 15 February 2012. Report prepared for House Appropriations Committee and House Armed Services Committee by AFSOC
- ¹³³ The author was one of the advisors involved in this situation and writes this vignette from anecdotal experience.
- ¹³⁴ Interview with Combat Aviation Advisors, 27 March 2012.
- ¹³⁵ Gen William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1976), 166.
- ¹³⁶ Brozenick, 42
- ¹³⁷ Major Eric Bruton, 6 SOS, Plans Department. Interviewed by author. 27 March 2012.

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- ¹³⁸ Email from Lt Col John Crawford to Author, 4 March 2012.
- ¹³⁹ Email from Mr. Larry Boudreaux, Joint US Military Advisory Group, Thailand (JUSMAG-Thai), 6 March 2012.
- ¹⁴⁰ Brozenick, 43
- ¹⁴¹ Interview with Combat Aviation Advisors, 26 March 2012.
- ¹⁴² Term “cultural point men” borrowed from: Maj John Baseel (USMC) “Socio-Cultural Aspects of Thai and United States Military Relations,” *The DISAM Journal of International Security Assistance Management*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (March 2010)
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- ¹⁵¹ Ibid
- ¹⁵² Ibid, 14
- ¹⁵³ Mr. Gary “Hale” Laughlin, former 6 SOS Director of Strategy, conducted a study examining the proliferation of platforms in likely FID PNs in 2006.
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¹⁵⁶ Col. Billy Montgomery, *USAF Irregular Warfare Concept*, Air Force Special Operations Command White Paper , OPR AFSOC A5/8/9, May 2007

¹⁵⁷ Email from TSOC J3A to author. February 2012 On file with 6 SOS Plans Department.

¹⁵⁸ Livingston, 50

¹⁵⁹ Hock, 64

¹⁶⁰ Col John W. Thompson, “Building Capacity from Within: The Need for a Rotary Wing SFA Capability” (Thesis, US Army War College, 2010), 16

¹⁶¹ Weston and Carrington, “Army’s Non-Standard Aviation Systems Division of Aviation and Missile Command Security Assistance Directorate,” *DISAM Journal*, Fall 2009, 3

¹⁶² Report. Non-Standard Rotary Wing Aviation, Assistant Secretary of Defense – Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD-SOLIC), November 2010.

¹⁶³ Corum and Johnson, 423-439.

¹⁶⁴ Air Force Instruction 16-101, Vol 3, *Combat Aviation Advisor Operations*, July 2011

¹⁶⁵ Maj Stephen L. Renner, “A Modest Proposal for Attack Combat Aviation Advisors,” (thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 2007)

¹⁶⁶ Montgomery, 21

¹⁶⁷ Marine HML/As fly utility and attack helicopters in a wide variety roles including CAS, forward air control – airborne (FAC(A)), CASEVAC, shipboard operations, infil/exfil, surface escort, and rotary wing escort, among others. These squadrons are currently transitioning completely from the AH-1W to the AH-1Z, and from the UH-1N to the UH-1Y. Following a construct similar to that used by the 6 SOS, these aircraft could remain as “primary aircraft”, with additional qualifications to be established in relevant platforms. Likely candidates would be the UH-1H, Bell-412, AH-1F and MG-500 series helicopters.

¹⁶⁸ Jennifer H. Svan, “US Helping Nigeria’s C-130s Back of the Ground,” *Stars and Stripes*, 5 January 2010, 1-2.

¹⁶⁹ Petit, 15

¹⁷⁰ Christopher Bolckom and Kenneth Katzman, Congressional Research Service, *Military Aviation: Issues and Options for Combating Terrorism and Counterinsurgency*, January 2005, 51

