

AIR FORCE FELLOWS PROGRAM

AIR UNIVERSITY

**ANOTHER WAY TO FIGHT:  
COMBAT AVIATION ADVISORY OPERATIONS**

by

Norman J. Brozenick, Jr., Lt Col, USAF

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Advisor: Lt Col (Ret) Jerome Klingaman

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## *Preface*

To win the war against global terrorism, the United States military must be capable of leading coalition operations and supporting unilateral operations undertaken by friendly governments. Our Air Force is a great coalition flight lead. But the strategic environment also requires the capability to help other countries fight and win their own wars. *Another Way to Fight* illuminates the force multiplying role of Air Force advisors and calls for the immediate enhancement and expansion of this little known yet incredibly relevant capability. I am indebted to the Hoover Institution for providing me the opportunity to pursue this study through the National Security Affairs Fellowship Program.

I learned whatever I know about advisory operations from the capable, credible, and faithful men and women of the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron. I regard the time I served as their commander as my greatest honor. The nation needs you, and you are ready.

I owe a great debt to my mentor and advisor, Jerry Klingaman, for his steadfast support of this project. His unwavering commitment to Air Force advisors and their operations has preserved a national capability. Raven 50, no one does it better than you.

I greatly appreciate the academic freedom afforded me by Air Force Special Operations Command, whose leadership steadfastly supported this effort. It was a real pleasure working with old friends and comrades during the Combat Aviation Advisory Study Team deliberations. If you need something done right in a hurry, look up Brig Gen Clay McCutchan, Col Al Greenup, Lt Col Monty Sexton, Lt Col Mike Hayes, Maj Tom Sands, or Maj Chris Jacobs the next time you visit the Fort Walton Beach area. You can contact them through team member Lt Col Eric Huppert, who commands the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron. Eric's operational genius continues to make unsurpassed capability a realizable goal for Air Force advisors.

Herb Mason, command historian for Air force Special Operations Command, ensured I received roll after roll of microfiche from Air Force archives. I greatly appreciate your support. Joe Caver, Air Force Historical Research Agency, supplied the microfiche and swiftly declassified documents. Joe also introduced me to past special operations leaders like Maj Gen Gil Pritchard and Brig Gen Ben King via the Air Force's Coronet Harvest Oral History Series. Their verbal records were packed with notes, cautions, and warnings regarding advisory efforts during the early years of the Vietnam War. I strongly recommend that anyone involved in Air Force advisory operations review their timeless commentary regarding the efficient and effective employment of advisory forces.

Thanks also to Col Tommy Williams and Col Ed Lewis, 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, California Air National Guard, for providing me a home away from home. Another guardsman and old friend Lt Col Steve Cox arranged for me to share my ideas with the leadership of the North Carolina Air National Guard. Steve, Eric Huppert, and I were in the business of envisioning the future while serving as captains on the Air Force Special Operations Command staff. After a particularly trying series of events, Steve nailed up a Douhet quote we memorized years earlier.

“Victory smiles upon those who anticipate changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur.” The sign remains on the wall to this day. I hope people still read it.

Finally, to my best friend and wife Lisa, all I can say is thanks. Again. You know the rest of this story. Now others will, too.



## *Abstract*

United States military forces traditionally excel as lead contingents of coalition campaigns. Combat operations in Afghanistan proved no different as joint forces executed a campaign that enabled anti-Taliban forces to overthrow a terrorist backed regime. Success stories included air and surface advisors who linked American airpower to surrogate ground forces. The President's pledge to help friendly governments fight subnational terrorism signaled an even more prominent role for advisors during the second phase of the war. Do Air Force advisors have the capability and credibility to help foreign military forces defeat internal threats? Much of the answer lies within the combat aviation advisory ranks of Air Force Special Operations Command. Standing combat aviation advisory forces represent the Air Force's only regionally oriented, politically aware, culturally astute, and language qualified advisory capability. Specially educated and trained combat aviation advisory teams help foreign forces improve joint capabilities to combat terrorism, subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Yet perennial challenges impede a more efficient and effective employment of aviation advisors. Fundamentally, Service and joint communities lack the mission comprehension and commitment required to fully support aviation advisory forces. An unsurpassed capability in tactical instruction builds the credibility required to achieve assigned objectives with host nation forces. Enhanced and expanded capabilities are required to meet escalating theater demands for aviation advisory services. A commitment to invest in aviation advisory forces will help friendly nations fight and win their own wars, thereby precluding the need for larger American military deployments to threatened lands.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

*I have set a clear policy in the second stage of the war on terror: America encourages and expects governments everywhere to help remove the terrorist parasites that threaten their own countries and peace of the world. If governments need training or resources to meet this commitment, America will help.*

--George W. Bush

On the six-month anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the President outlined a broad strategy for the second phase of the war on terrorism. The two-pronged approach pledged continued coalition leadership against global terror networks as well as assistance for states combating subnational terrorist organizations.<sup>1</sup> Key to the strategy's success will be United States leadership of coalition operations and advisory support to friendly governments.

United States military forces traditionally excel as lead contingents of coalition campaigns. The war in Afghanistan proved no different. Joint forces planned and executed combat operations that enabled anti-Taliban surrogates to overthrow a terrorist-backed regime. Air and surface advisors played a vital role linking American airpower and surrogate ground forces. They are destined to play an even more prominent role during the second phase of the war. By direction of the President, the United States military is now assisting numerous friendly governments seeking to deny terrorists sanctuary within their borders. United States Air Force advisors have clearly demonstrated their ability to facilitate the fall of a terrorist backed regime. But do they possess the capability and credibility to help friendly governments defeat

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<sup>1</sup> No one definition of terrorism or terrorist organization has gained universal acceptance. For purposes herein, the phrase "global terrorism" includes organizations generally operating from sanctuaries in multiple states, with the means to orchestrate premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated across national boundaries, against noncombatant targets to influence an audience. The phrase "subnational terrorism" includes organizations that primarily reside within a single state, with the means to orchestrate premeditated, politically motivated violence generally perpetrated within national boundaries against noncombatant targets—though they may possess or maintain the ability to coordinate actions with global terrorist organizations. Definitions were derived from Joint Publication (Joint Pub) 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 12 April 2001, and *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2000*, Department of State, Washington, DC, 2001.

lawlessness, subversion, and insurgency associated with terrorism?<sup>2</sup> Much of the answer lies within the combat aviation advisory ranks of Air Force Special Operations Command.

## **Purpose**

This paper argues the case for enhancing and expanding combat aviation advisory forces. It begins by briefly characterizing changes in the strategic environment and identifying the military advisory role in foreign internal defense. Few people are aware that the United States Air Force has a standing advisory capability. Therefore, a review of aviation advisory forces and their capabilities is required.

The discussion continues by suggesting ways aviation advisors can help achieve objectives within the foreign internal defense framework. But perennial challenges hindering a more efficient and effective employment must be overcome. In large part, these challenges result from a lack of comprehension and commitment to the aviation advisory mission within Service and joint circles. Nonetheless, challenges can be transformed into opportunities by properly organizing, educating and training, manning, and equipping aviation advisory forces.

Combat aviation advisors represent the Air Force's only regionally oriented, culturally astute, politically aware, and language qualified standing advisory capability. They are integral to United States efforts to improve the joint capabilities of friendly military forces. The Air Force and United States Special Operations Command should immediately enhance and expand aviation advisory capability to help friendly governments fight and win their own wars. Otherwise, combating terrorism may extract a much heavier toll in American lives and resources.

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<sup>2</sup> The term "foreign aviation forces" encompasses a wide variety of air arms including air forces, army aviation, national police, and other capabilities resident within foreign armed forces.

## Chapter 2

### THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

*Most important (and most difficult to acquire) is the ability to connect tactical and operational-level advisory efforts to the much larger objectives of theater commanders and host governments. An advisor's success in that respect may involve knowing what is at stake all the way up to the strategic level and being able to estimate how military force applied at specific times and places will affect, or interact with, host nation political, economic, and informational initiatives.*

--Jerome Klingaman

The first phase of Operation Enduring Freedom was fought in an unconventional warfare setting pitting the United States-led coalition and surrogate forces against the terrorist-backed Taliban regime.<sup>3</sup> As the dominant element of coalition combat capability, American airpower proved vital to operational success. Shrewd leadership was required to conceive a plan for supporting surrogate forces in a distant area of operations. A different yet equally compelling type of leadership will be required to direct aviation advisory operations during the second phase of the war. Achieving United States national objectives through the employment of foreign forces is not the typical American way of war. Airmen are not used to fighting without organic air assets. Fortunately, the nation invested in a small number of highly educated and trained advisors to do just that.

### Surrogate Forces and Unconventional Warfare

For the most part, operational-level coordination and tactical activity prior to the first phase of operations remains shrouded in secrecy. Yet emerging facts suggest Air Force special operations forces played a key role. Weeks prior to the first operational missions, a handful of airmen known as combat aviation advisors quietly augmented a United States country team in a

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<sup>3</sup> Unconventional warfare is defined as “a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes guerilla warfare, and other direct, offensive, low visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape.” Source: Joint Pub 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, 17 April 1998, GL-11.

key Central Asian nation.<sup>4</sup> Known to the country's military leadership, these advisors successfully articulated the military requirements that helped the United States gain access to host nation airfields and infrastructure.<sup>5</sup> Aviation advisors also conferred with foreign counterparts in other theater locations, facilitating combat search and rescue operations, air base vulnerability assessments, logistic requirements planning, and a variety of other coalition liaison duties.

Once hostilities commenced in Afghanistan, operational constraints regarding distance demanded the efficient and effective employment of airpower. Planners developed an air campaign that exploited air superiority to provide responsive support for surrogate ground operations. Yet this air campaign was planned and executed with more than just the normal complexities associated with coalition air operations. Somehow planners had to make air operations responsive to the needs of a non-traditional surrogate partner. How was it possible to conduct such a campaign supporting culturally, linguistically, and militarily dissimilar anti-Taliban forces?

While establishing air supremacy, theater commanders searched for a mechanism to integrate American airpower with surrogate forces. A handful of air force combat controllers were selected for the mission.<sup>6</sup> Skilled in the art of non-verbal communication, the controllers were teamed with a small number of highly skilled Army Special Forces advisors coordinating the ground operations of anti-Taliban forces. Combat control advisors provided a crucial air-to-ground interface that successfully controlled hundreds of close air support sorties. Time and again, combat controllers made ingenious, in-extremis adjustments to tactics, techniques, and procedures that improved the responsiveness of American airpower. As the coordination between combat controllers, anti-Taliban forces, and air operations center planners improved, airpower became increasingly efficient and effective as an integrated part of surrogate operations.

Advisors alone could not have successfully prosecuted phase one operations. Innovative employment of airborne and space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance suites, command, control and communications capabilities, ground and airborne targeting systems, long range bombers, carrier fighter-bombers, tankers, and precision munitions led an air-to-ground onslaught that killed numerous terrorists and devastated their havens. Loitering near the battlefield, side firing special operations gunships flew overhead cover, armed reconnaissance, and close air support missions with withering effect. Special operations rotary and fixed-wing

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<sup>4</sup> Combat aviation advisors will be discussed at length in chapter 3. By way of introduction, these advisory teams are comprised of Air Force Special Operations Forces personnel specially trained to support unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, and coalition support operations. Fundamentally, their mission is to facilitate the interoperability and integration of foreign aviation capabilities supporting joint, combined, and multinational operations. See Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-7, *Special Operations*, 2 August 2001, 24 and 32.

<sup>5</sup> Commander in Chief, United States Special Operations Command, remarks to the Pacific Area Special Operations Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii, February 2002.

<sup>6</sup> The mission of Air Force combat controllers includes providing tactical airfield navigational/approach systems, terminal air traffic control services, and terminal attack control for close air support operations. See AFDD 2-7, 21-23.

aircraft executed numerous missions infiltrating and resupplying joint special operations teams. Combat search and rescue forces safeguarded coalition fliers while high and low altitude tankers provided the means to overcome distance constraints.

Yet it was the combination of American airpower and surrogate forces, linked together by a small number of advisors, which was the winning combination in Afghanistan. In less than three months, the Taliban regime was unseated and the al-Qaeda global terrorist organization was on the run.

## **Friendly Governments and Foreign Internal Defense**

During the second phase of the war, terrorist organizations will seek more indirect means of fighting the United States and its coalition partners. Terrorists have learned the peril of massing forces in the vicinity of American airpower. By dispersing across time and space, terrorists will try to diffuse coalition military capability and exhaust international resolve. They will adopt highly mobile, guerilla type tactics to counter the inherent flexibility and versatility of airpower. Significantly, global terrorists will attempt to rebuild infrastructure in politically, culturally, or geographically remote regions home to sympathetic subnational terrorist organizations. If left unchecked, these activities will extend the global terror network while eroding the sovereign authority and legitimacy of democratic governments.

During his address marking the six-month anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, the President encouraged governments everywhere to combat subnational terrorist organizations.<sup>7</sup> He urged governments to make terrorists international fugitives, “with no place to settle or organize, no place to hide, no governments to hide behind, and not even a safe place to sleep.”<sup>8</sup> After cautioning that American troops could not lead every battle, the President pledged American assistance to help evict terrorists from sanctuaries and prevent them from establishing new ones.

## **The Foreign Internal Defense Environment**

Foreign internal defense is an operating environment characterized by United States government support for another government’s actions to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency whatever the source, including terrorism. The focus is support for a host nation’s internal defense and development program. At the strategic level, the National Security Council is responsible for promulgating planning guidance for foreign internal defense. The Department of State is normally designated lead agency for execution, and the

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<sup>7</sup> Insurgency is defined as an “organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict.” Subversion is defined as “action designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, or political strength or morale of a regime.” See Joint Pub 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense*, 26 June 1996, GL5-6.

<sup>8</sup> George W. Bush, “President Thanks World Coalition for Anti-Terrorism Efforts.” Remarks by the President on the Six-Month Anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> Attacks, 11 March 2002. Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/03/20020311>.

Department of Defense provides personnel and equipment to help achieve stated foreign internal defense objectives. In consultation with United States ambassadors, theater commanders-in-chief are responsible for operational-level execution. Subordinate theater commanders, through apportioned joint forces, are responsible for tactical-level foreign internal defense operations.<sup>9</sup>

A foreign government's internal defense and development plan orchestrates instruments of power to defeat internal threats and improve societal conditions. Successful planning embraces broad-based measures aimed at building viable political, economic, social, and military institutions that better respond to the needs of the population.<sup>10</sup> Host nation military forces are responsible for providing a secure environment for development plans to prosper. The military instrument is often called upon to reestablish government authority in areas threatened by subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. However, some militaries find they are improperly organized, trained, and equipped to neutralize internal threats. When faced with such strategy-to-resource disconnects, friendly governments often ask the United States to provide the necessary instructional and material assistance.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Role of Military Advisors**

The United States may employ a variety of means to assist friendly governments challenged by internal security threats. In the past United States military participation in foreign internal defense efforts focused on counterinsurgency operations. Today the primary focus of American military assistance is helping governments deal with subnational terrorism. Although the nature and type of assistance is spelled out in bilateral agreements, such efforts frequently include advisory operations. Military advisors typically interact with host nation forces during combined training exercises to accomplish capability assessments, provide training, and offer operational advice.

Writ large, the United States utilizes advisory operations to pursue a variety of objectives. Tactical advisory operations provide opportunities to study the organization, training, and equipment of subnational terrorist elements. This may uncover links and nodes leading to terrorists with global reach.<sup>12</sup> At the operational level, advisory efforts can help deter the establishment of terrorist sanctuaries by improving the flow of goods and services to remote or isolated regions. From a strategic perspective, advisory operations build enduring relationships with foreign officials who may facilitate access to resources and real estate during contingencies.

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<sup>9</sup> See Joint Pub 3-07.1, II-3 to II-15 for a detailed discussion of how United States government agencies, departments, and theater commands interact in the foreign internal defense environment.

<sup>10</sup> Joint Pub 3-05, GL-5.

<sup>11</sup> Multiple sources indicate the United States is extending assistance to Colombia, Georgia, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Yemen, and Uzbekistan. Throughout this paper, advisory operations include support for military and paramilitary forces, though the term military forces is used for purposes of brevity. Paramilitary forces are loosely defined as those "distinct from the regular armed forces of any country, but resembling them in organization, equipment, training, or mission." Joint Pub 3-05, GL-6. Examples include national police, palace guards, and national guard units.

<sup>12</sup> While military advisors are not in the intelligence collection business, they are passive observers whose reporting often includes items of interest to the intelligence community.

Time and again, anti-access dilemmas have been overcome through bonds of trust forged between advisors and foreign military leaders. Finally, the United States views advisory operations as a cost-effective means of helping friends deal with internal problems before they assume global dimensions requiring the large-scale introduction of American combat forces.

There are normally limits associated with the number of advisors permitted in country and the duration of their deployment. This forces the host nation to focus on improving self-sufficiency while deflecting critique concerning American military presence on sovereign territory. For the United States, restrictions place a premium on advisors who can overcome cultural, political, language, and operational barriers and impart instruction in a brief period of time.<sup>13</sup> For this reason the Services have established standing forces of regionally oriented advisors.

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<sup>13</sup> Personnel ceilings and short deployments normally favor training a cadre of host nation instructors, who subsequently train appropriate elements of their armed forces. Thus, advisory deployments frequently utilize a “train the trainer” methodology, which has become a primary vehicle for dispatching security and Service-funded assistance to friendly governments. This methodology also helps preclude host nation over reliance on United States training assistance.



## Chapter 3

### STANDING USAF ADVISORY FORCES

*I think we have some of the best qualified people that I've ever seen, maybe not in the airplane they were flying, but from an overall flying experience background. I've never been with a finer bunch of people to perform the missions as we've been asked or that we expected we would be asked to perform. I think the secret to this, and any other operation like this, is the motivation of the people.*

--Brigadier General Benjamin H. King

The United States Special Operations Command is the traditional home of standing advisory forces. The command's primary reservoir of operational advisory talent lies in one reserve and six active Navy sea-air-land (SEAL) teams, six national guard and fifteen active battalions of Army Special Forces, and one battalion-size squadron of Air Force combat aviation advisors. When employed together, surface, maritime, and air advisors provide the multidimensional capability necessary to improve the joint capabilities of foreign military forces. Of the three, Air Force advisors are the smallest, least well known, and most misunderstood capability. Five fundamental questions guide a discussion to improve awareness: *Who are they? What is their mission? How are they organized? Manned? Educated and trained? Equipped?*

#### Who are Combat Aviation Advisors?

An Air Force advisor could be any airman tasked to achieve United States objectives by helping to improve the capabilities of foreign forces. For example, Air Force combat controllers advised and assisted anti-Taliban forces by providing an interface with coalition airpower. Technically, combat controllers are not designated standing advisory forces. Yet like their Army Special Forces teammates, combat controllers possess transferable skills and experiences to operate within the ranks of foreign military forces. The salient point is some personnel are inherently capable of assuming two fundamentally different yet complementary roles—joint military teammate and advisor to foreign forces. A specialized skill set and extensive experience working with foreign forces separates advisors from the majority of military personnel who, without specialized education and training, are generally not suited for advisory duty.

By the early 1990s, global engagement opportunities and non-traditional security arrangements created a growing need for aviation advisors. The Air Force responded by reactivating the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron as a standing air advisory force within United States Special Operations Command. Although highly capable of conducting joint operations with United States forces, the primary role for Air Force advisors is helping foreign aviation forces improve organic airpower capabilities.

Generally speaking, Air Force personnel are educated and trained to operate *alongside* foreign units, *coordinate* planning, and execute mutually supportive operations as *part of a United States military contingent*. The tactics, techniques, and procedures of conventional air force units are generally *compatible*—but not necessarily interoperable—with those employed by coalition partners. Interoperability limitations force planners to adopt multiple *deconfliction* measures to avoid friendly fire incidents. Although generally effective at preventing fratricide, deconfliction degrades unity of effort by ensuring the separation vice integration of dissimilar forces.

Alternatively, Air Force combat aviation advisors operate as an *integral part* of foreign units.<sup>14</sup> Aviation advisors *influence* planning, sometimes to a great degree at very senior levels, and execute mutually supportive operations *with or without a significant United States military presence*. Advisors are trained in *adaptable* tactics, techniques, and procedures that permit a high degree of interoperability with foreign forces. An advisory presence within foreign units can foster an integrated, shoulder-to-shoulder pursuit of objectives. This improves unity of effort by reducing the type and quantity of deconfliction measures required during coalition operations.

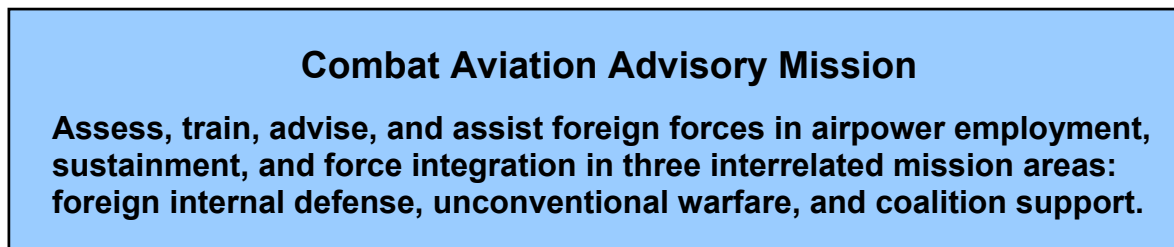
### **What is the Aviation Advisory Mission?**

Combat aviation advisors have a wartime mission to assess, train, advise, and assist foreign units in airpower employment, sustainment, and force integration in three interrelated mission

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<sup>14</sup> Individual advisors were known as combat aviation advisors since unit reactivation in 1994. Collectively, Air Force advisors were traditionally known as “aviation foreign internal defense advisors” until January 2000. At that time, then Air Force Special Operations Command commander Lieutenant General Maxwell C. Bailey directed use of the term “aviation advisors” to better represent collective advisory force capabilities in foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, and coalition support environments. For a complete discussion of aviation advisory operations, see Air Force Special Operations Command Instruction 16-101 Volume 3, *Combat Aviation Advisory Operations*, April 1, 1998. The requirement for aviation advisors to become an integral part of host nation forces was a vital lesson learned from the Vietnam War. Among others, see unclassified commentary extracted from Brigadier General Benjamin H. King, *US Air Force Corona Harvest Oral History Series* (Confidential), K239.0512-219, 4 September 1969; pg 87-88; and unclassified extract from Maj Gen Gilbert L. Pritchard, *US Air Force Oral History Series* (Confidential), K239.0512-218, 21 August 1969, pg 69. Then Colonel King was the commander of the 4400<sup>th</sup> Combat Crew Training Squadron, the first Air Force special operations unit activated for counterinsurgency duty in 1961. He also led the initial FARMGATE deployment of USAF advisors to Vietnam that same year. Major General Pritchard served as the commander of the USAF Special Air Warfare Center from 1962-1964. In this capacity, he oversaw the organization, training, and equipping of USAF advisors deployed throughout Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

areas: foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, and coalition support (figure 1).<sup>15</sup> Operational activities include advising and assisting combatant commanders, civilian agencies, and foreign aviation units on the planning and integration of foreign air operations into campaign plans, contingencies, and other joint and multinational activities. Advisors focus on improving foreign aviation combat and combat support unit capabilities associated with tactical flying, logistics, air base defense, command and control, and survival operations.<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 1**

Along with joint special operations teammates, combat aviation advisors help foreign forces employ and sustain their own assets in both peace and war, and, when necessary, integrate those assets into joint and combined operations (see figure 2). Aviation advisors aim to enhance pre-existing capabilities vice install new ones. For example, combat aviation advisors do not provide foreign forces with basic or introductory level instruction. There are a variety of mechanisms by which foreign nationals attend formal training in basic courses of instruction in the United States. International military officers regularly attend student undergraduate pilot training at stateside pilot training bases. Nor do combat aviation advisors normally provide weapon system upgrade training. Although capable of such, security assistance mechanisms routinely help foreign forces transition from less capable to more relevant weapon systems.

Fundamentally, combat aviation advisors focus on accomplishing tactical and operational level objectives to improve the combat capability of host nation forces (see figure 3). During initial engagement operations, aviation advisors normally assess and train foreign forces during exercises with a single Service or air arm. After satisfactory performance is observed, personnel from other host nation Services are introduced into the training environment. Exercise scenarios

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<sup>15</sup> Although equally capable of operating in unconventional warfare and coalition support environments, examples herein illuminate the utility of combat aviation advisors in foreign internal defense. Coalition support is considered a collateral activity vice a legislatively assigned mission of United States Special Operations Command. Nonetheless, the combat aviation advisory squadron's designed operational capability statement, approved by United States Special Operations Command, assigns coalition support as a unit mission. Coalition support encompasses a wide variety of liaison functions that promote safety and interoperability between American forces and coalition partners, such as facilitating the tactical efficiency and effectiveness of coalition partners and maintaining vital communications links between diverse coalition units and the chain of command with tasking authority. See United States Special Operations Command Pub 1, *Special Operations in Peace and War*, 25 January 1996, 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> This paragraph is an unclassified extract from *Designed Operational Capabilities Statement, 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron*, approved by the Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command, August 2000.

become increasingly task-intensive until joint forces achieve assigned objectives while demonstrating desired levels of safety and interoperability. Through similar processes, host nation forces around the world have been readied for joint and coalition operations.

Whenever possible aviation advisors collocate with their foreign hosts. Advisors eat, sleep, and groom in host nation facilities, rigorously train alongside counterparts, and participate in customary social activities. Shared living conditions and daily experiences help advisors gain the acceptance and respect of host nation forces. For equally important reasons, aviation advisors encamp as close as possible to other American advisors. Close interaction with Army Special Forces and Navy SEAL counterparts is required to ensure training progresses in accordance with approved guidance.

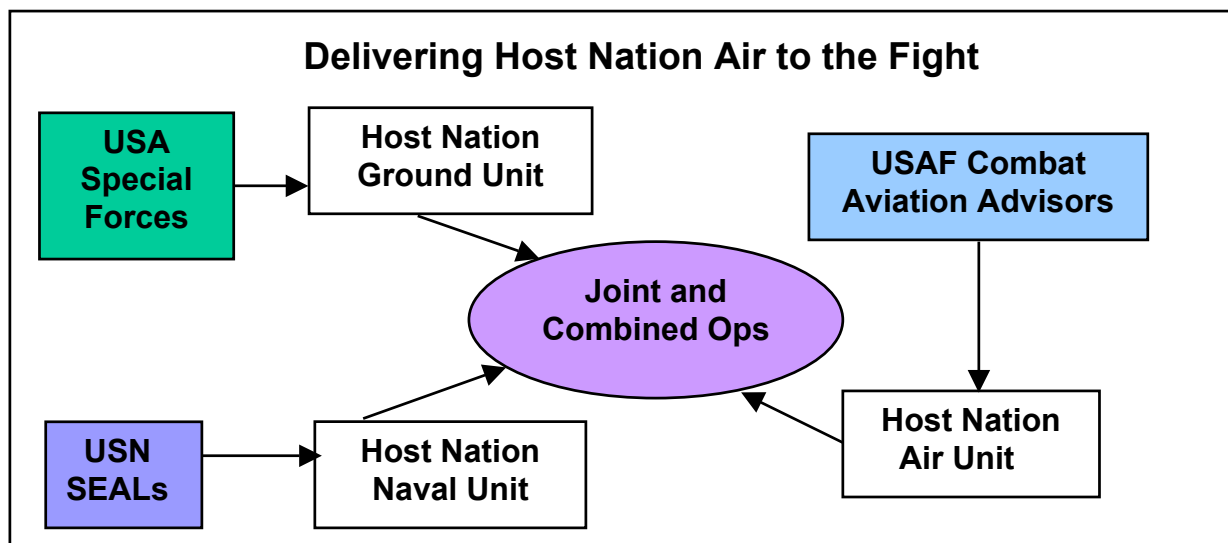


Figure 2

## Tactical Operations

At the tactical level, aviation advisory objectives include improving the availability, reliability, safety, and interoperability of host nation forces. *Availability* refers to the quality and number of resources, human or machine, which can be generated for peacetime or combat tasking. *Reliability* describes the staying power of generated forces as well as their ability to accomplish assigned objectives. *Safety* addresses adherence to appropriate tactics, techniques, and procedures that helps mitigate the risk to personnel and equipment while pursuing assigned objectives. *Interoperability* refers to the ability of host nation forces to conduct a range of operations, from small, single-Service activities to joint operations with own forces, and large, integrated coalition campaigns. Time and circumstance permitting, tactical operations follow a crawl, walk, run approach to improve capability in measured steps. This confidence building

methodology avoids setbacks that can damage credibility and erode trust shared between host nation forces and advisors.<sup>17</sup>

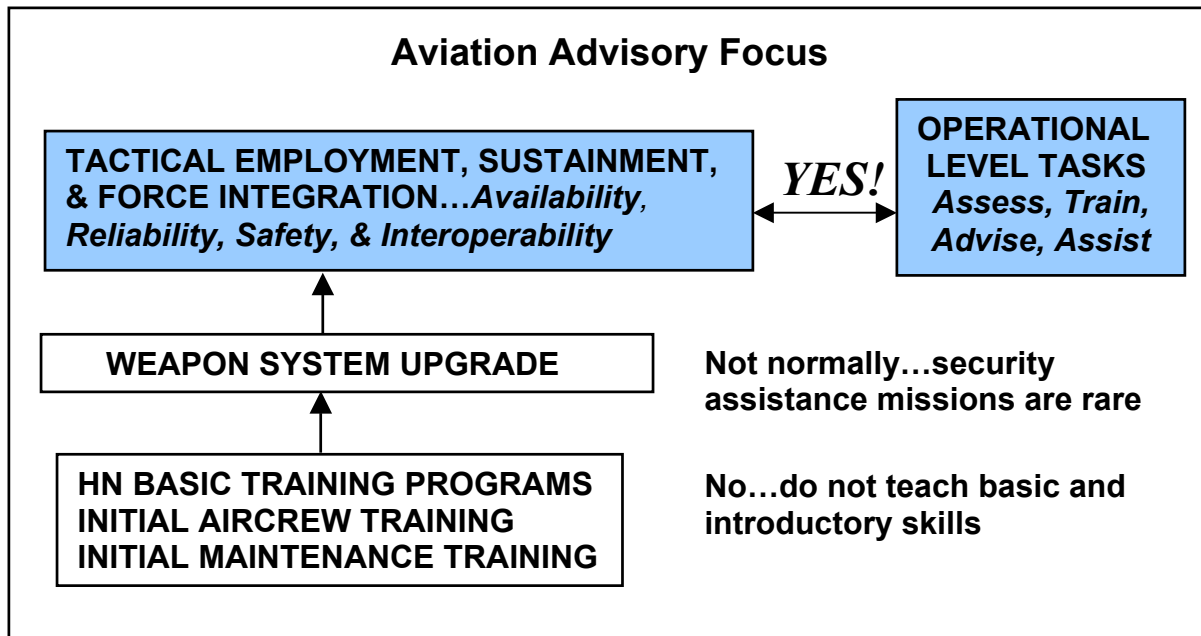


Figure 3

### Operational-level Tasks

Operational level activities are designed to help a host nation better organize and employ its airpower. Objectives include completing assessments, providing training, and when directed, advising and assisting foreign forces. Each term—assess, train, advise, and assist—has a special meaning that defines tasking within a specific operational context. Therefore, these terms should be cited to avoid ambiguity in theater guidance, commander's intent, and mission statements.<sup>18</sup>

*Assessments* determine the ground truth regarding capabilities and communicate observed intentions of host nation forces. A strategic assessment could detail the process by which a friendly government formulates its internal defense and development plan. It could also characterize rationale behind specific objectives of host nation security strategy. A defense ministry assessment generally focuses on the appropriateness of roles and missions assigned to

<sup>17</sup> Operational constraints, such as combat controllers conducting no-notice advisory operations in Afghanistan, or host nation policy (personnel ceilings and length of deployment) may force modification of the classical approach.

<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, these terms are not widely known throughout the Air Force and joint community. For the most current doctrinal context, see AFDD 2-7.1, *Foreign Internal Defense*, 3. For a compelling example concerning the impact of ambiguous mission guidance, see unclassified commentary in Brigadier General King, *Oral History* (Confidential), 3-7 and 20-30.

military forces. This type of assessment can also identify strategy-to-resources disconnects that help terrorists and insurgents exist outside the bounds of government control and authority.

Foreign aviation force assessments generally follow a strategy-to-task-to-resources model. For example, the assessment identifies assigned missions such as close air support and key supporting tasks like establishing an air-to-ground communications network. Observed task performance is reviewed in light of assigned missions to assess the sufficiency of training and resources. The relevance and performance of aircraft resources (airframes and subsystems) are evaluated against mission requirements. Maintenance procedures and training are examined to see how they impact the availability, reliability, and safety of the host nation fleet. The final product is a report detailing aviation capabilities, shortfalls, and limitations. The report also proposes material and non-material solutions to improve capability over a prescribed period of time.<sup>19</sup>

After the assessment is completed, advisors may be tasked to *train* host nation forces. Training is designed to focus host nation counterparts on mastering desired skills void of operational context. For example, training might involve improving the interoperability between a host nation air force helicopter squadron and an army commando battalion whose shared mission is to conduct infiltration operations. An appropriate number of day and night iterations are flown until aircrews and commandos demonstrate the skills required to safely fast-rope to the ground under blacked out conditions. Although aware of operational requirements for these skills, advisors make no attempt to replicate the type of buildings or light patterns associated with potential targets.

Unless otherwise tasked, advisors focus on improving host nation capabilities by optimizing the employment of available resources.<sup>20</sup> This may include influencing senior host nation authorities to scale back expenditures for missions believed to be more important (read prestigious) than other more relevant capabilities. For example, host nation officials combating a compelling subnational terrorist threat may spend millions of dollars training air-to-air fighter pilots in the absence of a credible air threat. Through the country team, advisors may try to convince host leadership to reduce fighter training and increase spending to mature fledgling quick reaction forces.

Presidential or Secretary of Defense approval is required prior to conducting *advisory* operations. These activities prepare host nation forces by rehearsing tasks within a specific operational context. For example, advisors might advise a host nation joint strike team on appropriate tactics, techniques, and procedures required to assault a known terrorist camp. Activities generally include rehearsing actions on the objective. Time permitting, rehearsals

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<sup>19</sup> In FY2000 Air Force Special Operations Command contractors began electronically compiling assessments and after action reports from foreign advisory operations. Although some of the information is for official use only purposes, much of the information is classified. For further information regarding releasability, contact HQ AFSOC/DOU, Aviation Advisory Operations, at commercial (850) 884-2245 or DSN 579-2245.

<sup>20</sup> The approach, objectives, and tasks presented are also applicable to security assistance missions that instruct foreign personnel how to operate equipment acquired from the United States. Most often, security assistance missions are assigned elsewhere throughout the joint community.

replicate the target environment in as much detail possible, to include the number of foes, type of buildings, and light patterns associated with a specific terrorist camp. The serious nature of operational advisory tasking should be clear. Although short of combat, advisory operations actively prepare host nation forces to engage hostile elements.

Presidential or Secretary of Defense approval is required prior to tasking advisors to *assist* a host nation on the actual use of airpower in support of combat operations. For example, advisors might execute crew duties aboard foreign aircraft, assist host nation maintenance personnel at a forward refueling and rearming point, or provide an air-to-ground interface for the host nation ground assault element. Intuitively, assistance operations represent elevated risk to personnel and mission. Yet windows of opportunity may open and close before host nation forces can successfully mount unilateral operations. When the expected outcome justifies the risk, teaming advisors with foreign forces may represent the only viable means of pursuing highly desirable objectives.

### **Strategic Focus**

Strategic level objectives include building trust with theater commanders, country teams, and host nation civilian and military leaders. Without the support of senior United States military and civilian authorities, advisory efforts are doomed to failure. Bonds of trust between theater commanders, ambassadors, and relatively junior advisors ensure the clear transmission, receipt, and pursuit of advisory objectives. Similar bonds must be established with foreign decision-makers. Trust can be the single most important factor in host nation deliberations regarding whether to accept United States assistance. It also greatly influences the number of advisors authorized in country and the duration of their deployment.

Strategic end game is a host nation capable of successfully integrating military force with other instruments of power to eradicate subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Ultimately, advisory efforts are successful if they preclude the need to deploy large numbers of United States military personnel and equipment to foreign lands.

Perhaps now the requirement for standing advisory forces is becoming clearer. Without demonstrable respect for foreign culture, a deep appreciation of political realities, and superior personal communication skills, it is nearly impossible to forge the trust required to assess, train, and advise foreign military forces, let alone assist them during combat operations. The inability to properly organize host nation forces into effective joint teams, conduct focused task training, and properly rehearse actions on the objective will likely result in unnecessary loss of life and mission failure. Alternatively, the effective pursuit of mutual objectives improves the odds of host nation tactical success and directly helps the United States achieve national strategic objectives.

## How are Advisory Forces Organized?

Combat aviation advisors are assigned to Air Force Special Operations Command, headquartered at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The command is responsible for organizing, training, and equipping Air Force special operations forces for global missions including combat aviation advisory operations. Assigned to the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, combat aviation advisors are tasked and report through 16<sup>th</sup> Operations Group and 16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing channels (see figure 4).

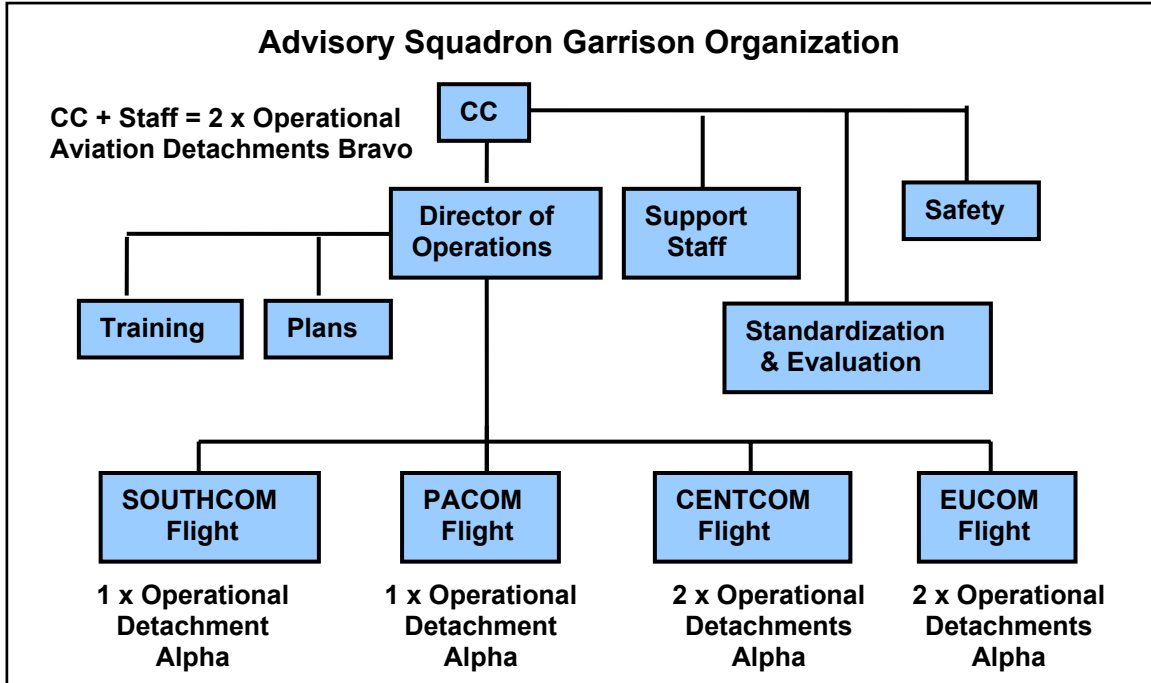


**Figure 4**

While in garrison, the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations squadron is organized in a manner similar to other operational Air Force squadrons (see figure 5). Thirty-two Air Force specialty codes are represented within officer and non-commissioned officer ranks. Squadron personnel are assigned to a regionally oriented flight that serves as the home of one or more multidisciplinary combat aviation advisory teams. Each team is comprised of approximately thirteen hand-selected personnel normally led by a captain and master sergeant.

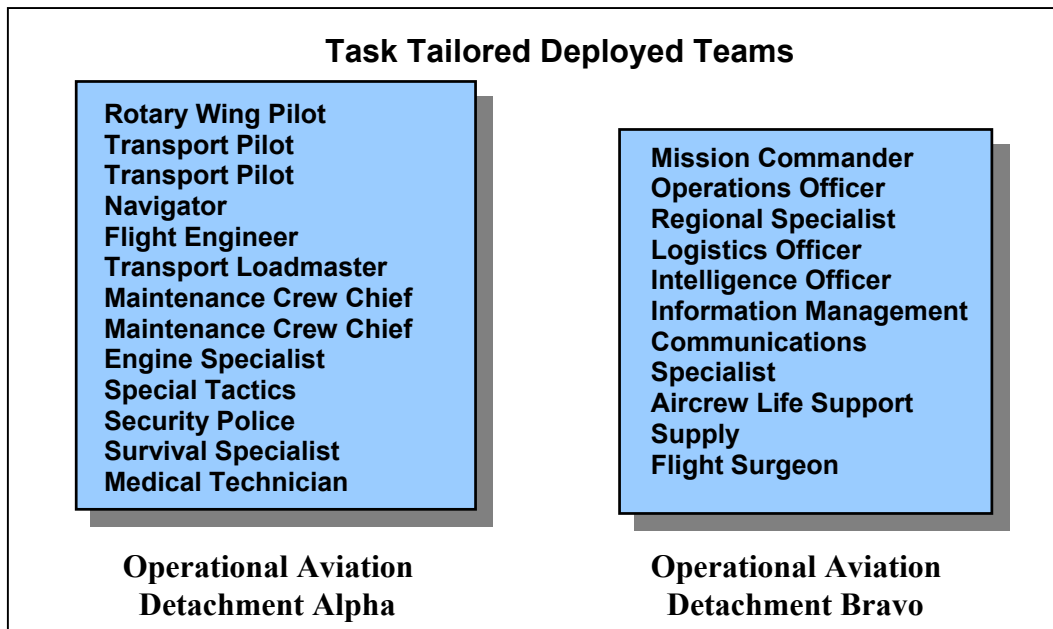
When deployed, combat aviation advisory teams are configured as operational aviation detachments. Operational Aviation Detachments Alpha, or “OAD-As,” are the multidisciplinary teams primarily responsible for advisory operations with foreign aviation forces. Operational Aviation Detachments Bravo, or “OAD-Bs,” are support teams comprised of a mission commander and staff. The OAD-B supports one or more fielded “OAD-As.” The OAD-B mission commander serves as the senior advisor to United States theater commanders, country teams, and foreign civilian and military leadership. See figure 6 for an example of operational aviation detachments tailored for overseas combat search and rescue operations.





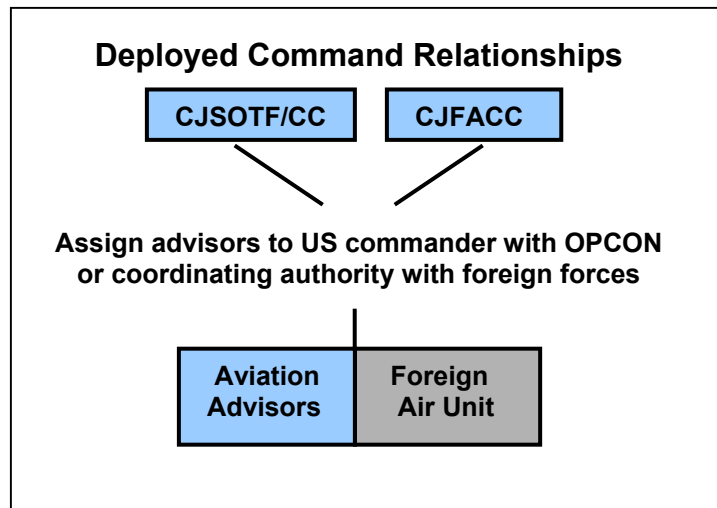
**Figure 5**

Deployed advisors are routinely chopped to the operational control of a theater special operations command commander or joint special operations task force commander. The OAD-B provides the communications and intelligence connectivity with the task force and liaises with



**Figure 6**

host nation air elements. Advisors could also accomplish missions for a joint forces air component commander. Operational aviation detachments should work for the commander exercising control or possessing coordination authority with host nation forces (see figure 7).



**Figure 7**

The unique ability to provide broad-based airpower expertise in a single team package is what distinguishes combat aviation advisory operations from other air advisory services. Not every Service or joint specialty can be organic to an aviation advisory unit. Deployed teams often require augmentation from non-organic specialists who provide medical, legal, and heavy maintenance know-how. Air Force special tactics combat control and pararescue personnel frequently augment aviation advisory operations, as do various joint special operations forces liaisons. This combination of organic capability and augmented potential enable advisory teams to provide a wide range of tailored aviation services.

### **How is the Advisory Squadron Manned?**

Even though special operations trained forces possess skills and experience readily adaptable to advisory operations, manning for combat aviation advisory duty is sourced throughout the Air Force. In many cases, line special operations units are reluctant to release trained personnel. Additionally, some capabilities required for advisory operations are not resident within Air Force special operations forces. The reality is there are many personnel highly qualified for advisory duty who work outside the special operations community.

Whatever the source, it is imperative to screen personnel who volunteer for advisory duty. Host nation credibility and trust largely depends on the character of advisory personnel. "I think you've got to have some sort of screening process. If you don't it only takes—as I say one bad

bomb or one rape...”<sup>21</sup> Advisors must hold a firm commitment to mission, teammates, and self to endure service with foreign forces in harsh living conditions and austere environments. They must also possess mature interpersonal skills deeply grounded in cross-cultural abilities. In the absence of a common language, advisors must develop alternative means to communicate with foreign counterparts. Advisory duty should be recognized as a graduate level undertaking that requires orchestration of multidisciplinary skills. Expertise in a given career field and team-making skills are fundamental requirements.

For these and other reasons, those volunteering for advisory duty are asked to submit an application package.<sup>22</sup> The advisory unit commander and senior squadron leaders review submitted items such as performance reports, flight and training records, language skills, letters of recommendation, and a personal letter expressing the applicant’s desire to become an advisor.<sup>23</sup> Candidates who appear qualified for duty are invited to an interview with unit leadership and are encouraged to formally volunteer for duty within the personnel system. A list of screened candidates is forwarded to personnel specialists at Air Force Special Operations Command. After scrubbing the list, command resource managers attempt to facilitate assignment matches through the Air Force Personnel Center. New selects fill one of 106 authorized positions that comprise unit ranks. Personnel are detailed to one of four regionally oriented flights, and then enter the initial qualification education and training pipeline.

### **How are Advisors Educated and Trained?**

The goal of the education and training program is to develop and refine the individual advisory skill sets and team capabilities. Both doctrine and theater requirements shape the advisory education and training requirements (figure 8). Basic guidance is outlined in Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Chief of Staff of the Air Force publications.<sup>24</sup> Operational requirements are communicated in annual mission guidance letters authored by theater special operations commands. The intent of these letters is to ensure stateside units understand the capabilities required to support theater engagement and wartime plans. Aviation advisory capabilities are expressed as a combination of skill sets and mission packages codified in the unit mission essential task list.

Initial qualification and continuing education and training programs ensure aviation advisors field relevant capability. Both new and seasoned advisors benefit from academic preparation, language education, and experience-based training. Various venues exist for academic preparation and language education. The United States Air Force Special Operations School provides education opportunities for cultural awareness and cross-cultural communications, force

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<sup>21</sup> Unclassified excerpt, Major General Pritchard, *Oral History*, (Confidential), 69.

<sup>22</sup> Personnel interested in applying for advisory duty should request approval from unit supervisors then contact the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron at DSN 579-4180 and request an application.

<sup>23</sup> Language skills are desirable but are not a mandatory prerequisite for selection.

<sup>24</sup> See Joint Pub 3-07.1, pp V2-3, and AFDD Document 2-7.1, 59-62. Although focused on preparation for foreign internal defense activities, education and training guidance contained in these publications also supports unconventional warfare and coalition support operations.

protection, anti-terrorism, psychological operations, and area orientation. Advisors selected for liaison duty with senior foreign military leaders in combined air operations centers study joint air operations planning and execution. Depending upon the desired level of qualification, language instruction normally demands a considerable investment of time and resources. The Defense Language Institute provides lengthy, in-depth instruction in a formal education setting. Advisors also take advantage of shorter orientation courses taught by professionals at the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School.



**Figure 8**

Advisors participate in experience-based education and training to master a specialized complement of skills. Particular emphasis is placed on advanced field craft to include survival skills, weapons proficiency, communications training, cultural appreciation, and risk management awareness. Flying and maintenance advisors also receive extensive training in selected civil and military aircraft of American and foreign manufacture. Many aircrew and maintenance personnel achieve advanced Federal Administration Agency ratings such as certified flight instructor or airframe and power plant mechanic. Other forms of advanced instruction include commercial simulator time, flight line operations, and factory technical training at relevant locations within and outside the United States.

After completing initial stateside qualification requirements, new advisors are exposed to experience-based training on their initial overseas mission. During a “supervised deployment,” senior cadre quietly coach and critique new advisors while they actively train foreign counterparts. This controlled “hands-on” environment helps new advisors quickly improve instructional skills and interpersonal techniques. New advisors also learn to take on various team

duties and responsibilities. Non-operational deployments, such as Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises and joint and combined exchange training activities, provide a superb forum for supervised deployments.<sup>25</sup>

Overseas exercise forums are also used for continuing education and training. These deployments afford advisors the opportunity to practice skills in foreign countries that may one day be the location of operational advisory activity. Exercises are a superb mechanism for drilling all phases of advisory operations, from initial team notification and deployment through redeployment and team reconstitution. Overseas forums offer many opportunities not available stateside. Among other benefits, advisors gain from exposure to language and culture, survival training in unique environs, operating and maintaining aircraft of foreign manufacture, and reporting through theater command and control architecture.<sup>26</sup>

## **How are Advisors Equipped?**

Aviation advisors are uniquely equipped for self-contained operations with foreign forces in austere environments.<sup>27</sup> Key descriptors include strategic mobility, small operational footprint, and tactical agility.

### **General Characteristics**

Combat aviation advisory teams require absolutely minimal strategic lift. Nominal cargo requirements are one aircraft transportation pallet per advisory team. Typically, teams deploy with a fifteen-day food supply, force protection weapons and ammunition, aircrew flight gear and life support equipment, maintenance toolkits, ground chemical warfare ensembles, survival rigs, computer support, and redundant long and short haul encrypted communications devices.<sup>28</sup> Personal kits are kept to an absolute minimum. Because aviation advisors bed down with host nation forces, there is normally no requirement to deploy with organic billeting and messing facilities. If required, aviation advisors would rely on the Commander of Air Force Forces for logistical support.

### **Aircraft Equipment**

Flying advisors maintain qualification and currency to support tactical flying operations in rotary-wing and fixed-wing transport aircraft categories. Annual theater special operations

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<sup>25</sup> Section 2011, Title 10, United States Code, authorizes joint and combined exchange training for special operations forces own unit training outside the boundaries of security assistance. The law recognizes that special operations forces have an assigned mission to train foreign forces—and special operations forces must be trained to accomplish that mission. The law permits special operations forces to expend operations and maintenance money for the sole purpose of own unit training, although recognizing host nation forces may derive incidental benefit.

<sup>26</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron Pamphlet, *Concepts and Capabilities*, 1 Feb 00, 14.

<sup>27</sup> Shelter is the fundamental organic limitation; aviation advisors normally plan to collocate with foreign and United States joint forces.

<sup>28</sup> Teams do not organically possess the secure communications equipment (i.e. computerized theater air planning system) required to directly interface with an air operations center or fuse high-end intelligence data.

command mission guidance letters populate categories with specific types of aircraft most likely to require advisory expertise during exercises and contingencies.<sup>29</sup> By forecasting requirements by category and type, theater special operations commands afford advisors the lead-time necessary to build proficiency in a variety of foreign aircraft. For aviation advisors, categories and types function as audit trails to ensure training and funding are directly linked to theater needs.

It is cost prohibitive to train in every aircraft listed in theater requirements. Therefore, while at home station advisors train in categories and types of aircraft generally representative of those operated by friendly foreign aviation forces. The aim is to build transferable skills that can be relied upon for expeditious yet safe qualification in a variety of foreign platforms. In the rotary-wing category, advisors fly two training-coded UH-1N helicopters to maintain skills required to support light helicopter (i.e. Mi-2, Bell-412) employment. Many medium-lift training objectives are achieved by training in a leased Mi-8 MTV “Hip” helicopter of Russian design. Fixed-wing advisors fly two training-coded CASA-212 aircraft to maintain light tactical transport skills (i.e. CASA-235 or Cessna King Air). Medium tactical transport training objectives are currently met by flying a leased Russian-built An-32 “Cline.” Advisors also fly C-130E transport aircraft assigned to the parent organization.

Should tasking require operations in other aircraft, pre-deployment flying and maintenance training is normally purchased via the commercial sector. At times, it may prove more cost effective to enter into short-term lease arrangements. This is especially true if multiple aircrew and maintenance personnel must undergo qualification and proficiency training at the same time. To this end, a single-engine An-2 “Colt” of Russian manufacture was recently leased to prepare advisors for light utility aircraft operations.

Both assigned unit aircraft and lease mechanisms are required. In most cases, unit equipment is designated as the “primary aircraft” type used to baseline currency and proficiency requirements. These requirements dictate the types of foreign aircraft advisors may operate as well as the specific maneuvers they may accomplish in them. Primary aircraft qualifications also govern active duty service commitments. Leasing arrangements provide maximum flexibility regarding evolving theater requirements. With careful planning, advisors can learn to operate and maintain a number of different aircraft types specified in theater forecasts. As requirements change, leases can be terminated on aircraft types no longer relevant to theater operations. A new lease can be arranged for an alternative aircraft type without incurring the huge costs associated with recapitalizing small aircraft fleets.

## **How are Combat Aviation Advisors Employed?**

Aviation advisory requirements are codified in theater plans that manage peacetime conflict and direct the conduct of contingency operations. Theater engagement plans aim to improve peacetime regional stability as part of on-going efforts to protect United States interests abroad.

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<sup>29</sup> Theater aircraft requirements will be thoroughly discussed in following chapters.

These plans prioritize the nature and type of advisory activities required to improve the military capabilities of friendly governments. The Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan and theater operations and contingency plans outline classified wartime tasking. Additionally, theater special operations command mission guidance letters forecast annual advisory requirements.

Advisors anticipate employment by assessing changes in security environments relative to theater engagement plans, wartime plans, and mission guidance letters. Whether resulting from forecast or unforeseen circumstances, requests for aviation advisory forces and specific mission tasking flow from theater staffs through United States Special Operations Command to Air Force Special Operations Command. Parent wing and group staffs review and relay mission tasking to the combat aviation advisory squadron.

The unit leadership compares assigned tasking against capabilities expressed in the mission essential task list. Upper command echelons are notified of any identified shortfalls or limitations. Regionally oriented garrison flights are directed to organize as task-tailored detachments. Whenever time permits, operational aviation detachments undergo rigorous pre-deployment training and rehearsal activities. These preparations expedite receipt of just-in-time training and help personnel project into advisory roles prior to departure. Detachments and associated equipment are scheduled for transportation utilizing standard joint mobility systems and procedures. When departure time arrives, detachments deploy without assigned and leased unit aircraft. Until they return, advisors rely on specialized education and training to function as integral parts of foreign units. Peacetime training of foreign counterparts frequently involves some combination of the skill sets and mission packages identified in figure 9.



**Figure 9**

## Chapter 4

### COMBAT AVIATION ADVISORS AND FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE

*I think the biggest lesson that I learned in that business was—operating in a foreign country with a foreign military establishment is not a simple operation. It is something that we shouldn't jump into, it should be planned out and well understood before we move, so we don't create confusion and personal animosities that stand in the way of getting the job done.*

--Brigadier General Benjamin H. King

The aim of Air Force advisory operations is to help protect United States interests and achieve national objectives through the employment of foreign forces. In the foreign internal defense environment advisors must pursue objectives while building host nation self-sufficiency and legitimacy. They must at all cost avoid situations that require the host nation to forfeit the strategic initiative. At the tactical level, this means helping the host nation improve its joint capability without substituting for it. In the truest sense, advisors are not employed to “do it for them.” Rather, advisory activities “get them to do it better.”

Successful advisory operations will support broad-based measures aimed at building societal institutions that better respond to the needs of the population.<sup>30</sup> The overarching advisory focus should be to support the host nation's internal defense and development plan. Such an orientation provides a unifying sense of direction and purpose for foreign counterparts. It also reminds advisors to improve vice become capabilities required for defense and development plans to prosper.

Three broad categories of activity govern the nature and type of American military commitment to improve host nation military capabilities (see figure 10). *Indirect support* activities emphasize host nation self-sufficiency and legitimacy by utilizing economic and military capabilities to build strong national infrastructures. During *direct support (not involving combat)* activities, United States military forces are tasked to help host nation civilians and

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<sup>30</sup> Joint Pub 3-05, GL-5.



military counterparts short of engaging in combat.<sup>31</sup> The third category is *combat operations*, which includes assisting foreign military forces during contingencies and enabling the introduction of United States military capability to help restore acceptable security conditions.<sup>32</sup>

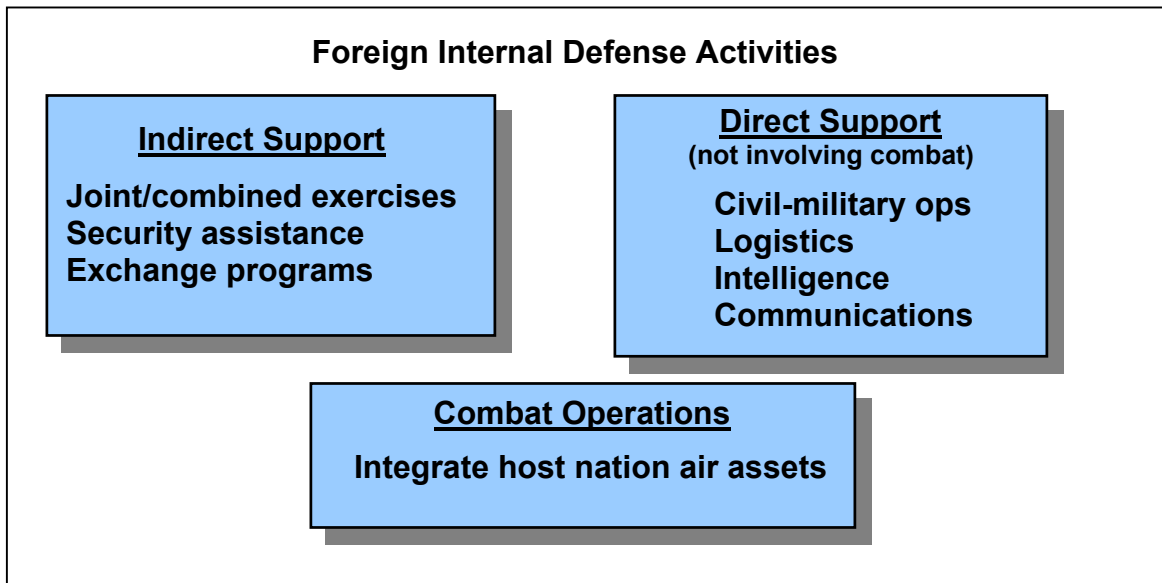


Figure 10

### Indirect Support Activities

Indirect support activities help the host nation organize and employ resources to achieve defense and development objectives. These activities often help protect and improve the flow of goods and services to politically, culturally, or geographically isolated areas. People residing in isolated regions appreciate a tangible sense of personal security. Many also desire improved connectivity with surrounding communities.

Aviation advisors participate in numerous indirect support activities. Advisors can assess transportation requirements and propose improvements. Assessments might encourage host nation officials to enhance or open lines of communication by building a network of unimproved airstrips in remote areas. These airstrips could facilitate regularly scheduled medical team visits, mail delivery, and transportation of goods to market. Extending presence and influence into remote areas signals more than government intent to win “hearts and minds.” The same airfields could be used to rapidly augment rural security forces charged with protecting the population

<sup>31</sup> Service-funded assistance includes a variety of nation building, intelligence, communications, logistics, and other activities supporting a friendly government when it is unable to acquire self-sufficiency in time to counter the threat. The goal is to improve host nation effectiveness “without duplicating or replacing security assistance efforts to create or maintain host nation capabilities.” See AFDD 2-7.1, 26.

<sup>32</sup> This paragraph adapted from Joint Pub 3-07.1, viii.

from lawless bandits or insurgents. Further, a system of remote airfields could provide multiple locations for psychological operations teams to conduct airborne information broadcasts or disseminate safe passage leaflets to insurgents.

Indirect support mechanisms include security assistance, joint and combined exercises, and personnel exchange programs. Either individually or together, they provide a means for increased interaction with host nation aviation forces.<sup>33</sup> For non-material assistance, joint and combined exercises offer the best forum to help host nation forces hone tactical skills. Civil search and rescue exercises can help aircrew, pararescue, and security forces better respond to mishaps, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises. The same skill sets could be utilized to evacuate personnel wounded during combat search and rescue operations.

### **Direct Support Activities**

When authorized by the President or Secretary of Defense, the theater commander-in-chief may task combat aviation advisors to conduct direct support activities. Aviation advisors can help manage Service-funded assistance to foreign aviation forces when circumstances prevent them from acquiring self-sufficiency in time to counter a threat.<sup>34</sup> However, careless entry into direct operations can have lasting repercussions. These activities are intended as stop gap measures until host nation forces attain required capabilities via formal security assistance mechanisms. Advisors must prevent the insidious onset of over-reliance on American airpower in whatever form it is manifest.<sup>35</sup>

Intelligence and communications sharing are two classic direct support activities. In many instances, the single most important contribution advisors can make is to improve the quality of tactical intelligence.<sup>36</sup> Whether conducting long-term trend analysis or preparing for specific operations, advisors can help host nation agencies improve timeliness associated with intelligence gathering, processing, and dissemination. Simple techniques like integrating aviation assets into human tactical warning nets can improve the efficiency of airborne reconnaissance. Aviation advisors can instruct host nation intelligence center personnel how to better fuse collection sources to identify possible sanctuary locations. Advisors can also suggest secure, redundant, and inexpensive communications methods to preserve the element of surprise when mounting attacks against mobile terrorist forces.

The theater commander-in-chief could also task advisors to support a number of civil-military operations. These operations frequently target disaffected host nation personnel who are

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<sup>33</sup> Security assistance programs provide defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services to friendly governments by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales. These programs are intended to further United States national objectives, and are authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, and a variety of other related statutes. See Joint Pub 3-07.1, GL-6.

<sup>34</sup> AFDD 2-7.1, *Foreign Internal Defense*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 36, *Foreign Internal Defense*, 6 Jan 1995, 21.

<sup>36</sup> Field Manual 100-20 and Air Force Pamphlet 3-20, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*, 5 Dec 1990, 2-21.

at elevated risk of falling under the influence of subversive elements or insurgents.<sup>37</sup> These efforts seek to strengthen the relationship between host nation military forces, civil authorities, and the population. Activities include civil affairs, psychological operations, humanitarian assistance, humanitarian and civic assistance, and military civic affairs. Although combat aviation advisors are normally not specialists in these fields, they can support these activities with airlift, communications, intelligence, medical, and maintenance expertise. Additionally, aviation advisors are uniquely qualified to function as liaisons between United States military and civilian specialists and the host nation government. The advisor's political awareness and cultural sensitivity can help senior officials rapidly gain situational awareness regarding formal and informal centers of power.

Direct support activities can also help host nations deal with more tangible threats. Aviation advisors could help friendly military forces assess their capability to maintain long haul communication with ground reconnaissance teams. Training programs could improve planning skills supporting joint operations against mobile targets. Advisory efforts could improve joint strike team operations against mobile targets by enhancing command and control procedures, refining armed reconnaissance tactics, and tweaking close air support techniques. With careful planning, host nation forces can be taught to utilize the same skills to improve convoy escort, resupply, and combat search and rescue operations.

## **Combat Operations**

When authorized by the President or Secretary of Defense, aviation advisors are exceptionally well qualified to assist host nation forces during combat operations. The primary objective of is to help "protect vital resources and buy time" until the security environment is stabilized.<sup>38</sup> Whenever feasible, such activities should be limited to supporting vice leading operations to ensure the host nation maintains the strategic initiative. Advisors can provide varying degrees of assistance to help integrate aviation assets into joint operations. Mission guidance should be carefully considered, transmitted, and understood by both theater commanders and field advisors avoid situations resulting in unwarranted injury, death, and national embarrassment.

Aviation advisors might help plan and direct foreign Air Force resupply, combat search and rescue, or close air support operations. They might also perform crew duties alongside host nation counterparts during critical missions when safety and interoperability requirements exceed organic capabilities.<sup>39</sup> Maintenance advisors might assist refueling and rearming operations at forward bases or help recover a downed aircraft near insurgent-controlled territory. Communications personnel could assist efforts to maintain the primary command and control network or help reestablish tactical connectivity between engaged elements in a remote area. Although the "what-if" list is endless, the senior aviation advisor will balance opportunity and

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<sup>37</sup> AFDD 2-7.1, 27-8.

<sup>38</sup> AFDD 36, 21.

<sup>39</sup> Just one example could be the in-extremis evacuation of American country team members and third party nationals from embassy grounds utilizing night vision devices.

impact while directing advisory efforts during combat operations. Depending upon the situation, the ability to influence operational-level events may preclude tactical level advisory activity.

In extreme situations, the United States may commit combat forces to buy time for the reconstitution of selected host nation forces. Aviation advisors can help senior commanders integrate United States combat power without turning the fight into an all-American show. Past experiences have proven weary or uncommitted foreign forces are sometimes all too happy to turn the fight over to American military units. “We made about as bad mistake as we could...We put our own troops over there with the U.S. inventory all by itself.”<sup>40</sup> Although each situation will be unique, every effort should be made to augment host nation personnel vice take over their duties and responsibilities.

Supporting--vice leading--combat operations is unnatural behavior for most American airmen. In the foreign internal defense context, less visible efforts like locating and tracking hostile foes or providing air mobility for host nation forces often pay more dividends than overt displays of American military might. It is imperative to realize that employment of American airpower, no matter how tactically successful, can erode host government legitimacy: “...one of the worst damn mistakes you can make is fly an airplane around there with the stars and bars...every time an airplane flies it has a psychological impact...”<sup>41</sup> It is incumbent upon advisors to help civil and military authorities to ensure American airpower has a positive impact.

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<sup>40</sup> Unclassified extract, Major General Pritchard, *Oral History Interview* (Confidential), 46.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, pg 63.

## US Central Command Aviation Advisory Missions



Host nation air commander briefs a counter-smuggling exercise that integrates aviation advisors with foreign crews



US advisors helped maintain and crew host nation UH-1H Huey aircraft that infiltrated and exfiltrated specialized counter-smuggling teams



Schweizer aircraft supported counter-smuggling efforts in reconnaissance and airborne command and control roles



AS.332 Super Puma qualified advisors provided tactical flight instruction for the combat search and rescue element



AH-1 Cobra attack helos covered armed escort duties throughout the exercise



Convoy takedown complements of host nation Special Forces—  
"smugglers and contraband secure"



Maintenance assessment team supporting border security tasking in Central Asia



Teaching host nation security forces small patrol tactics during an air base defense exercise



Instructing rapid on/off-load training for foreign C-130 aircrews and ground forces



Embarked combat controller advisor directs airdrop training with Gulf coalition partner



## US Southern Command Aviation Advisory Missions



Aviation advisors provide tactical flight instruction to foreign Mi-17 crews directly achieving theater counterdrug objectives



Maintenance advisor teaching aircraft records keeping



Deployed combat aviation advisory teams often include US Special Forces augmentees like this soldier (center) shown directing air to ground communications during a bilateral exercise





Civil and combat search and rescue training remains a high demand mission for combat aviation advisors in the US Southern Command region



Combat search and rescue advisory efforts include cockpit instruction...



...and teaching maintenance personnel how to identify problematic recovery hoist equipment during pre-flight inspections



Advisor tactical flight instruction enhancing formation skills of foreign Huey crews



Advisors improving rotor blade vibration analysis techniques of host nation crew chiefs



Outbriefing assessment findings to a friendly nation air force commander

## US Pacific Command Aviation Advisory Missions



Advisor teaching tactical academics to ensure safety via procedural commonality prior to exercising with foreign aircrews



Combining call for fire training with a combat search and rescue exercise—combat aviation advisors and foreign counterparts crewing Bell 412 (upper) and Mi-17 (lower) aircraft while a host nation Mi-24 gunship (middle left) orbits nearby





Prepping for an air base defense exercise



Improving tactical communication



Small arms shoot with foreign commandos



Advisory assistance to senior US commanders often entails face-to-face discussions with foreign civil and military leaders



Facilitating academic and airborne allied familiarization with US Air Force AC-130 gunship employment procedures



Advisor and host nation navigator pre-coordinate procedures for a C-130 airdrop mission executed with a combined host nation and US aircrew team



Maintenance crew chief information exchange

## US European Command Aviation Advisory Missions



Advisors learn new search and rescue tactics, techniques, and procedures from foreign air and ground forces during own unit training



Advisor survival instructors and host nation counterparts pause for a photo opportunity following successful academic preparation and field training



En route to exercise location with foreign forces aboard a Mi-8 helo



Advisors and their foreign instructor alongside a Russian-built An-26 transport while earning international flight certification at a Eurasian flight school





Joint combined exchange training opportunities helped advisors amass the technical prowess required to help friends and allies improve the maintenance reliability of Russian-built aircraft



Advisors and foreign maintenance personnel celebrating the end of a successful training exercise



## Home Station



Advisors operate leased aircraft like the Russian built An-2 Cub, Mi-8 Hip, and An-32 Cline shown here to hone maintenance and flying skills supporting global tasking



Aviation advisors and naval special warfare counterparts sharpen joint riverine skills required for an overseas deployment

## Chapter 5

### OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

*Then I think you ought to review the inventory in those countries we're particular [sic] interested in and make damn sure we have professional confidence in their equipment because the only way you're gonna get their respect and attention—is to be able to go in and do so damn much better than they do or they've ever seen that they will really take your advice and respect you for it.*

--Major General Gilbert L. Pritchard

Since reactivation in 1994, combat aviation advisors have built a strong foundation of trust and rapport with theater commanders and host nation civilian and military leaders. Grounded in capability and credibility, aviation advisors have earned the mutual respect of host nation forces in all four overseas theaters. Unfortunately, institutional challenges within Air Force Special Operations Command and United States Special Operations Command preclude aviation advisors from making an even greater contribution to national security.

The operational challenges detailed in this chapter impede the efficient and effective employment of combat aviation advisors and limit the number of trained advisors available for duty. For combat aviation advisors, credibility comes by way of capability. Instead of investing in capability, far too much energy is expended overcoming obstacles. Figure 11 reflects enduring challenges in priority order.



Figure 11

## Command Reluctance to Embrace Tactical Missions

The Air Force and United States Special Operations Command have never fully accepted nor advocated the need for tactical aviation advisory operations. 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.

### Historical Precedent

Modern advisory heritage traces back to Tactical Air Command's 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron established at Hurlburt Field in 1961. Nicknamed "Jungle Jim," the squadron was comprised of some 250 advisors who operated thirty-two older generation cargo and attack aircraft. These advisors provided tactical training of friendly airmen in Africa, Central America, and Asia.<sup>42</sup> By 1964 Jungle Jim was absorbed by a robust Special Air Warfare Center responsible for organizing, training, and equipping three new Air Commando wings. A primary mission of the air commandos, now numbering hundreds of aircraft and thousands of personnel, was conducting combat aviation advisory operations in Southeast Asia.

During the Vietnam War, aviation advisors could be found working alongside flight crew and maintenance personnel in South Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia. Challenges included training personnel with little or no technical expertise (some reported for duty straight from rice paddies) and operating from austere locations with inferior infrastructure. Most irksome, however, was the lack of clear employment guidance from senior Air Force commanders. What was the advisor's role--trainer, operator, or both? What was the mission? Were United States Air Force advisors tasked to improve South Vietnamese air capability or conduct clandestine, unilateral air operations using advisory operations as cover? Exactly what type of tactical training was authorized, who was an authorized recipient, and what level of skill was desired? When were advisors authorized to accompany South Vietnamese airmen into combat? Under what conditions were advisors authorized to conduct unilateral operations?

Intuitively, aviation advisors understood their primary role was to help foreign counterparts develop and maintain air capability. This required an enormous commitment of time, talent, and treasure to develop tactically capable crews, build a basic infrastructure, and operate a fleet of aging propeller-driven aircraft. Initial pursuit of these objectives meant elevated risk to advisory personnel as well as friendly ground forces supported by fledgling air arms. Yet over time advisory assistance enabled host nation fliers to execute operational strike, reconnaissance and airlift missions; fly close air support for ground forces; airdrop company-size forces and

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<sup>42</sup> See Robert F. Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia, The Advisory Years to 1965*, Office of Air Force History, United States Air Force, Washington, DC, 1981, pg 79-80.

supplies; conduct medical evacuations; and perform civil military operations. Notably, friendly air elements in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia accomplished something their American counterparts could not—they remained in the fight until the end of the war.

Shortly after the United States withdrawal from Southeast Asia, the Air Force deactivated its entire advisory capability. Aviation advisory operations were deemed too operationally risky and politically complex for a jet age Air Force determined to purge propeller and rotor expertise from its ranks. By 1975 only a small wing of direct-action Air Force special operations forces remained on active duty. Five years later, the failed attempt to rescue hostages in Iran fired the expansion of special operations forces. But another decade would pass before the Air Force once again acknowledged the need to invest in advisory forces. The outbreak of communist-inspired insurgency, lawlessness, and terrorism in Central and South America generated cries for help from friendly governments locked in lengthy combat with insurgent movements. After considerable study, Air Force Special Operations Command reactivated the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron in 1994 for the express purpose of helping governments defeat internal threats.

## **Current Realities**

Although nominally back in business, a new generation of advisors soon learned their Air Force leadership was inexperienced in the art of advisory operations. To compensate for an inability to issue clear employment guidance, Air Force Special Operations Command leadership adopted a risk-averse approach to advisory operations. Much to the dismay of air-minded advisors, peacetime non-flying assessments of foreign ground training programs, maintenance capabilities, and security forces became the command's preferred method of employment. Although two or three flying training missions with foreign forces were approved each year, the vast majority of requests for tactical training were disapproved due to a purported "lack of documented theater requirements." The recent historical record reflects otherwise.

On a number of occasions, subunified theater special operations commands explicitly documented requirements for tactical flight instruction of foreign forces.<sup>43</sup> A briefing to the Vice Commander of Air Force Special Operations Command detailed one of several processes used to confirm theater requirements.<sup>44</sup> In February 2000, the Air Force Special Operations Command's Director of Operations asked United States Special Operations Command to query theater commanders on how they planned to employ aircrew advisors in support of foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, and coalition support operations. Within a matter of weeks

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<sup>43</sup> Documentation on file at the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, Hurlburt Field, FL.

<sup>44</sup> The unclassified briefing roused an in-depth discussion of the process used to update the aviation advisory mission essential task list of the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron. Appropriate unclassified elements are recreated in the following three paragraphs regarding theater requirements. Cited briefing was prepared by the author and two Air Force Special Operations Command staff members and entitled "Combat Aviation Advisory Operations" (UNCLASSIFIED), April 2001. Similar material was contained in unclassified briefings to the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, Washington, January 2001, and mobility and combat air forces commanders, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, April 2001. Both briefings were entitled "Coalition Airpower Enablers." For classified references see the messages cited below.

three theater special operations commands confirmed their intention for advisors to conduct tactical flight operations with foreign aircrews. Further, theater responses detailed categories and types of foreign aircraft, meteorological conditions, and mission essential tasks advisors could expect to encounter while flying with foreign aircrew members during peacetime and combat operations.<sup>45</sup> Without explanation, Air Force Special Operations Command declined an advisory unit request for United States Special Operations Command to formally validate theater needs. Even more amazing, both commands continued to cite a “lack of documented theater requirements” as they rejected new theater requests for advisory flight operations with foreign forces.

In June 2001 both Air Force and United States Special Operations Commands received additional theater input regarding advisory force requirements. The FY01-02 mission guidance letters from the commanders of theater special operations commands repeated the call for tactical flight instruction of foreign forces by aviation advisors.<sup>46</sup> And once again these requirements were ignored. In fact, Air Force Special Operations Command continued to advertise the conduct of peacetime non-flying assessments as the ‘bread and butter’ of aviation advisory operations.

It is important to emphasize that the theater responses linked tactical flying instruction to peacetime engagement *and* combat operations. Although not *validated* by United States Special Operations Command, theater message traffic clearly *stated* requirements for tactical flight training with foreign airmen in peace and war. Interestingly enough, United States Special Operations Command’s own directives require aviation foreign internal defense advisors to maintain tactical and technical skills.<sup>47</sup> Why would advisors need such expertise if not for

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<sup>45</sup> The author led a hand picked team that drafted the initial aircrew training review message for the Director of Operations, Air Force Special Operations Command, routed through United States Special Operations Command to theater staffs. The author also answered queries from theater staffers preparing responses for theater special operations commands operations directorates. See the following messages: HQAFSOC/DO to USSOCOM/SOOP, 082150Z Feb 00 (Secret), Subj: Request For Validation of SOC Specific Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (FID) Requirements (U); USCINCSOC/SOOP-OO to SOCPAC/J-3, SOCEUR/J-3, SOCCENT/J-3, and SOCSOUTH/J-3 141249Z Mar 00, (Secret) Subj: Request for Review of SOC Specific Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (FID) Requirements (U); COMSOPAC to HQSAFSOC/DO 072200Z Apr 00, (Secret) Subj: Review of SOC Specific Aviation Foreign Internal Defense (FID) Requirements (U); COMSOCCENT to HQAFSOC/DO 051854Z Apr 00, (Secret) Subj: AFSOC Aviation FID Review (U); COMSOCEUR to USCINCSOC/SOOP/SOOP-OE 120623Z, (Secret) Subj: none. There was no response from SOCSOUTH. No classified information was extracted from these messages.

<sup>46</sup> Three theater special operations commands promulgated mission guidance letters for FY01-02. All were routed through the commander in chief, United States Special Operations Command; Army, Navy, and Air Force special operations forces component commanders; the commanders of the 16th Special Operations Wing and Operations Group; and the commander of the 6th Special Operations Squadron. SOCCENT’s FY 2001-2002 Mission Guidance Letter (Secret/NOFORN), 29 May 2001; SOCEUR’s Mission Planning Guidance Letter (Secret), 2 Jan 2001; and SOCPAC’s FY 2001-2002 Mission Guidance Letter (Secret), 23 May 2001. No classified information was extracted from these letters.

<sup>47</sup> United States Special Operations Command Directive (USSOCOM D) 10-1, *Terms of Reference for Component Commanders*, 19 November 2001, C-5. Also, see AFSOCI 16-101, Volume 3, 13-21, for detailed guidance governing the conditions whereby combat aviation advisors conduct tactical flight instruction while flying on foreign aircraft.

tactical training and advising of foreign aviation forces? Acknowledgement of theater requirements appears to be slowly coming to the attention of a few staff officers at United States Special Operations Command. In November 2001, the command's joint mission analysis team validated the need for seven additional aviation advisory teams for future operations. Why would the command need more advisory teams if not to support theater requirements including tactical flight instruction? Further, why pay for advisory capability if there is no wartime application?

It is equally important to note the theater special operations command messages were cast in the context of *host nation aviation support for host nation surface forces*. Some within United States Special Operations Command suspect aviation advisors intend to prepare foreign aviation units to infiltrate American combat forces. There is no truth to this assertion. Aviation advisory operations are not undertaken to supplant the need for American aircrews to insert, extract, or otherwise support battlefield mobility requirements of United States forces. Rather, aviation advisors aim to improve the host nation's capability to *fight their own joint fight* or, when directed, *integrate joint host nation forces* into coalition campaigns.

Consultation with advisors returning from overseas duty confirms foreign demand for tactical flight instruction is on the rise. In particular, friendly military forces recognize they need training to more efficiently locate and effectively destroy terrorist sanctuaries. They desire improved capabilities for armed reconnaissance, close air support, convoy escort, and air-to-ground interface operations. Given enhanced fighter or attack helicopter expertise, combat aviation advisors could quickly integrate these capabilities into host nation joint operations.

In the post September 11<sup>th</sup> environment, aviation advisory operations are an expanding mission area. Numerous friendly nations require aviation advisory assistance to overcome threats associated with subnational terrorism. Requests for tactical flying operations will only increase. Now is not the time to shy away from the operational employment of advisory forces. It is time for senior command echelons to shelve the risk-averse approach and learn the art of aviation advisory operations. This is a prerequisite for crafting employment guidance that clearly defines the advisory role, mission, and objectives in support of foreign forces. The clarity of such guidance is directly proportional to mitigating operational and political risk. It should be noted that more junior advisors are capable of scribing such guidance. Since 1996 advisors have amassed a near perfect flying safety record conducting tactical training of foreign aircrews in over twenty nations operating in excess of twenty different aircraft types.<sup>48</sup> There were no political missteps. No other special operations air unit can claim similar distinction.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Two mishaps occurred during the first two years following the reactivation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron. One USAF pilot advisor and two host nation pilots were killed in an O-2 mishap in El Salvador in 1995. A 1996 helicopter mishap in Ecuador claimed the life of one host nation pilot; a USN exchange pilot augmenting the deployed advisory team survived the mishap with severe injuries requiring the partial amputation of a leg. That pilot subsequently regained flying status, cross-commissioned into the USAF, and was later assigned to the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron as a pilot advisor.

<sup>49</sup> Unit records from the 1996 to 2002 timeframe reflect a single minor mishap likely attributed to equipment failure.

It is time to embrace the role of aviation advisors as instructors and operators who provide airborne tactical instruction of foreign forces—sometimes in harm’s way. The historical precedent suggests aviation advisory operations can keep foreign air arms in the fight. Current realities indicate there is a growing requirement for the tactical employment of advisory forces. Given today’s strategic environment, it must be understood that tactical advisory operations are a relatively *low risk, high payoff* mission.

## **Organizational Oversight and Supervision**

As the United States Special Operations Command’s proponent for aviation foreign internal defense, the Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command, serves as the senior advisor on all matters pertaining to the training, doctrine, capabilities, and employment of special operations aviation to support internal defense and development programs of friendly governments. Specific responsibilities are detailed in United States Special Operations Command Directive 10-1, *Terms of Reference for Component Commanders*. See figure 12 for an abbreviated list.

Unfortunately for the joint and air force special operations community, command staffs lack the knowledge and experience to effectively monitor advisory operations and establish a clear vision for the future. Less than a handful of command staff officers at United States Special Operations Command and Air Force Special Operations Command can answer questions regarding aviation advisory doctrine, strategy, and employment. In fact, the Air Force Special Operations Command has delegated the vast majority of component responsibilities shown in figure 12 to the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron.



**Figure 12**

At the most basic level, Air Force Special Operations Command’s plans and programs directorate articulates vision and acquires capability for the air force special operations forces of

tomorrow. The directorate's *Shaping the Battlefield AFSOF 2030 Mission Area Plan* serves as a conceptual boilerplate to envision, debate, and baseline a plan for the future organization, education and training, and equipage of aviation advisors.<sup>50</sup> Noticeably absent is a complementary mechanism to open a larger debate envisioning the future of joint aviation advisory operations. The need is real. There were not enough aviation advisors available for theater tasking prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>. Nothing but increased tasking lies ahead and the aviation advisory future is all too uncertain.

Among other factors, second order effects from the CV-22 Osprey aircraft will greatly impact advisory operations. The CV-22 is scheduled to assume duties currently associated with Air Force Special Operations Command's rotary-wing assets. Within ten years, the command is projected to be out of the helicopter business, which makes debate and planning for a joint rotary wing advisory complement an absolute necessity. Though final responsibility for joint planning belongs to United States Special Operations Command, the proponentcy and expertise to kick off the joint debate clearly dwells within the ranks of Air Force Special Operations Command. Unfortunately, there is a near total void of trained and experienced advisory talent in the command's plans and programs directorate as well as the force planning staff at United States Special Operations Command.

A similar dilemma affects the Air Force Special Operations Command's operations directorate. In January 2002, a new division was created within the directorate to improve oversight and supervision of daily aviation advisory operations. Effective manning of these billets will likely prove problematic. The accelerating pace of advisory operations coupled with squadron manning limitations will likely prevent more than one or two qualified advisors from occupying command staff positions on even a semi-routine basis. Yet the nature and type of field operations demands an informed, daily presence within the operations directorate.

Group and wing level staffs are equally void of aviation advisory expertise. The squadron's parent group organization oversees eight other special operations squadrons tasked with planning and executing direct action oriented missions.<sup>51</sup> Although each of these units are inherently capable of assuming an advisory role, their organization, training, and equipment properly emphasize their primary role as integral members of the joint special operations forces team. Experts at coordinating planning and execution alongside coalition air units, the majority of these highly skilled operators rarely function as integral members of foreign units. The same logic holds for special operations maintenance, security, intelligence, communications, and survival experts assigned to the parent wing. Thus, the parent group and wing staffs are for the most part singularly focused on direct-action oriented missions. Given this incredible responsibility, the

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<sup>50</sup> See Air Force Special Operations Command, *Shaping the Battlefield AFSOF 2030 Mission Area Plan (FOUO)*, September 2001.

<sup>51</sup> Direct action, strikes and raids normally of short duration, is one of nine missions assigned to United States Special Operations Command. In this context, the phrase "direct action" is meant to convey the intense preparation and skill set airmen require to penetrate hostile airspace and execute mission tasking as a lead element of United States special operations forces. This is different from the intense preparation and skill set required to operate as an integral part of host nation forces pursuing United States objectives within the borders of a friendly foreign government.



focus is appropriate and correct. However, it leaves leadership little time to focus on the ways and means of aviation advisory operations.

Nonetheless, the risk associated with aviation advisory operations demands informed oversight and supervision at successive command echelons. It must be clearly understood that tactical-level advisors frequently act on an operational-level, if not strategic, stage. Bilateral relationships and the pursuit of regional objectives sometimes hang in the balance. Frankly speaking, the oversight and supervision of current and future aviation advisory operations is unacceptable. Disconnects must be fixed at multiple echelons, or these echelons should be replaced with a more streamlined organization.

### **Manning Limitations**

The United States Air Force and United States Special Operations Command have a single squadron of standing aviation advisory forces. Multidisciplinary manpower shortfalls have hindered the enhancement and expansion of capabilities since squadron reactivation.<sup>52</sup> During the unit's infancy years many billets were vacant while the squadron was maturing capability and supporting tasking in one theater area of responsibility. By June 1998, seventy percent of the then-authorized 87 positions were filled. A focused hiring effort by the major command staff and squadron personnel boosted unit ranks in 2000. The squadron rolls now reflect eighty-eight percent manning of 106 authorized positions.<sup>53</sup> Yet even 106 advisors could hardly put a dent in the number of requests for aviation advisory services.

From June 1998 through current times, the squadron received a myriad of official requests for forces and unofficial probes for theater support. Generally speaking, more requests are received in one quarter than can be met in an entire year.<sup>54</sup> See figure 13 for a list of recent engagements with foreign forces, including tasked Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises, counterdrug

<b>FY00-01 Aviation Advisory Deployments</b>	
<b>CENTCOM:</b>	<b>Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Jordan, Oman, Kuwait</b>
<b>EUCOM:</b>	<b>Poland, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine</b>
<b>PACOM:</b>	<b>Philippines, Thailand, Korea, Sri Lanka</b>
<b>SOUTHCOM:</b>	<b>Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay</b>

**Figure 13**

<sup>52</sup> As currently configured, aircrew members account for approximately fifty percent of the billets. Pilot members account for only twenty-five per cent of unit manning.

<sup>53</sup> Slow manning builds are somewhat typical for highly specialized units. However, Air Force Special Operations Command did not sponsor an aggressive recruiting effort to attract qualified candidates until the winter of 2000. Within six months, 25 additional personnel were added to the advisory rolls.

<sup>54</sup> According to two previous and the current unit commander, the entire squadron's assets could be directed to support one overseas theater—and mission requests from that theater would still exceed the unit's capability to respond.

deployments, cooperative threat reduction missions, joint and combined exchange training, subject matter expert exchanges, and other own-unit training activities.

Once again, staff officers at United States Special Operations Command appear to agree that additional aviation advisory forces are needed. The previously cited joint mission analysis process validated the need for seven more teams, which would add another 130 personnel and supervisory elements to the standing Air Force advisory force. Well aware of the short-term need, Air Force Special Operations Command requested thirty-seven additional advisory positions in its fiscal year 2004 program objective memorandum submission.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, given the President's public commitment to train and advise foreign forces, the requested plus up was for too few positions.

## **Education and Training Impediments**

Specialized education and training are required to support the unique demands placed upon advisors in the field. Joint and Service doctrine documents, along with the United States Special Operations Command's *Terms of Reference for Component Commanders*, provide effective guidance. However, the current education and training pipeline is quite inefficient. It takes far too long to produce a fully mission ready aviation advisor. Insufficient academic and language education opportunities coupled with an unstable instructor pilot force can stretch initial qualification training beyond a year.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, senior military and civilian authorities are often unaware of standing aviation advisory force capabilities.

### **Academic Courseware**

The Air Force Special Operations School plays an important role in the initial and continuing education of aviation advisors. In fact, aviation advisors are required to take several courses during their initial qualification program that cover topics such as cultural sensitivity and theater area orientation. Supporting a broad joint customer base, the school offers courses for one to two week periods at various times throughout the year. This scheduling practice requires advisors to make repeated return trips over several months to complete required courses.

Language education is key to overcoming communications and cross-cultural barriers. Plain and simple, language education is a vital enabler of advisory operations, from the cockpit to maintenance back shops, the firing range to survival training camps, and perimeter patrols to liaison support for foreign civilian and military authorities. Due to a lack of a centralized language education source within the command, the squadron has assumed the responsibility for

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<sup>55</sup> Generally speaking, the request is in line with Air Force Special Operations Command's long-range vision for advisory force structure--two additional combat aviation advisory squadrons in overseas locations (one in Europe and one in the Pacific).

<sup>56</sup> The phrase language education, vice language training, was purposefully utilized. Unit experience suggests languages are best mastered in a specialized educational setting that includes an appropriately lengthy pursuit of formal school syllabi in an immersion setting. Training environments tend to be less specialized, much shorter in duration, and may or may not replicate immersion techniques.

scheduling such opportunities. When possible, command personnel specialists attempt to schedule language education prior to an advisor's initial qualification training. Yet the majority of new personnel selected for advisory duty are picked well within the long-term projection requirements for scheduling formal language education. Far too often, new advisors join the unit without any formal language instruction whatsoever. Instead of being available for operational duty, new advisors often spend months away from the unit learning introductory language skills.

## **Flying Training**

Flying advisors maintain currency in multiple types of American and foreign-built aircraft.<sup>57</sup> Generally speaking, few individuals are qualified in the same aircraft types, but all fliers are qualified in an air force weapon system. Extended periods of overseas duty (especially non-flying deployments) often render advisors non-current in one or more aircraft types upon return to home station. If instructors with required expertise are deployed, advisors may have to endure weeks before they can regain currency in specific aircraft types. Similar challenges exist regarding the scheduling of flight examinations. Flight examinations are often delayed while advisors await the return of standardization and evaluation personnel from extended deployments. The problem is exacerbated by the lack of trained, multiply qualified flight examiner advisors on upper echelon staffs. In many cases, squadron (vice group or major command) personnel are at the top of the standardization and evaluation pyramid.

## **Senior Officials**

For years senior officials have learned about combat aviation advisory capabilities on an ad hoc basis.<sup>58</sup> The hit and miss approach is an inefficient means of getting the word out. There currently exists no standing forum to educate senior Department of Defense and Department of State officials "going to embassies and unified commands...[to] make damn sure that these people are aware of what the Air Force mission is in this area and what their capabilities are in this arena."<sup>59</sup>

## **Aircraft Equipment Debates**

Debates concerning aircraft equipment have raged since the aviation advisory squadron was reactivated.<sup>60</sup> Two overarching issues frame pointed deliberations between the advisor unit, Air Force Special Operations Command, and United States Special Operations Command. "Why do

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<sup>57</sup> The specific aircraft types and supporting mission essential tasks are identified by sub-unified theater special operations commands.

<sup>58</sup> Recent examples include "AFSOC's Combat Aviation Advisors, Coalition Airpower Enablers" briefing delivered at the Mobility and Combat Air Forces Commander's Conference, Ramstein Air Base, Germany, April 2000. The Commander, United States Special Operations Command was provided a mission briefing at a classified location in April 2002.

<sup>59</sup> Unclassified extract from Major General Pritchard, *Air Force Oral History Interview* (CONFIDENTIAL), 92.

<sup>60</sup> For an excellent historical review of these debates, see former aviation advisor Lt Col Wray Johnson's article "Ends Versus Means, The 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron and the Icarus Syndrome," at [www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/cc/Wjohnson.html](http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/cc/Wjohnson.html).

advisors need special unit aircraft equipment?” “What is the requirement to lease foreign aircraft?”

## **Mitigating Risk**

Operating foreign aircraft while imparting instruction to host nation crews is inherently risky business. The only prudent means of lowering the risk is to possess or lease aircraft representative of the categories advisors operate in foreign countries. Advisors must have the proper equipment to train themselves before they can train others. Experience has shown workaround proposals “in lieu of” assigned or leased aircraft were fraught with peril.

There were numerous risk-related evils associated with preparing advisors for flying training missions before the unit possessed or leased aircraft. Air Force Special Operations Command’s crawl, walk, run approach preventing broad-based tactical flying training at home station until late 2001 generated related problems. Yet flying advisors were authorized to provide tactical flight instruction for foreign aircrews. How was this done? Most unit personnel were forced to maintain baseline instructor and tactical qualification and currency by attaching themselves to a sympathetic active duty or air reserve component unit with familiar aircraft.<sup>61</sup> Some received training from foreign sources while deployed on advisory missions. The unit purchased training from the commercial sector for others.

Briefly put, the number and varying types of workarounds became a risk management nightmare. Non-flying deployments frustrated advisor attempts to remain current (let alone proficient) via workarounds. Sympathetic host units grew tired of juggling unit schedules trying to accommodate the unpredictable availability of attached advisors. And finally it became impossible for squadron leadership to monitor basic or tactical flying skills. Incredibly, the first time many flying advisors operated as a crew came during overseas deployments. Imagine trying to overcome language and procedural barriers instructing a host nation aircrew in a foreign aircraft...executing alongside squadron mates you have never flown with before. Like any other military specialty, advisors must be equipped with efficient and effective tools to safely prepare for operational tasking.

## **Access to Unit Equipment**

In 2001, United States Special Operations Command reallocated its distribution of CASA-212 aircraft. According to the command, these aircraft were intended to support administrative training “as a means to achieve a more economical alternative to obtaining commercial contract aircraft due to the scarcity of active operational airlift assets.”<sup>62</sup> New aircraft sharing arrangements have prioritized Army free fall school training over aviation advisor aircrew training. The 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, through Air Force Special Operations Command, must now provide United States Army Special Operations Command with one CASA during two

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<sup>61</sup> Some of these arrangements were made with distant units. For example, an H-60 pilot tried in vain to maintain currency with a training unit based at Kirtland Air Force Base, in New Mexico.

<sup>62</sup> See United States Special Operations Command Directive 350-4, *CASA-212-200 Operations*, 2 February 2001.

three-month periods per year for military free fall training. This decision, coupled with a lack of support for leasing initiatives detailed below, bodes ill for future enhancement of aircrew advisory capabilities.

### **Leasing Foreign Aircraft**

Leasing provides advisors with a cost-effective means to build transferable skills on foreign-manufactured equipment to support theater tasking. As previously discussed, theater special operations commands confirmed the need for aviation advisors to maintain tactical qualification in a variety of foreign aircraft. To build capability and improve responsiveness to theater tasking in foreign manufactured aircraft, aviation advisors convinced Air Force Special Operations Command to explore equipment options via lease arrangements. The command consented to leasing aircraft representative of those found within the Commonwealth of Independent States and former Warsaw Pact countries of Eastern Europe.

Hoping to formalize the lease mechanism, Air Force Special Operations Command relayed the funding requirements to United States Special Operations Command. Joint special operations command staff officers rightly questioned the submission. However, many failed to comprehend why the command should expend resources to provide instruction in foreign aircraft. Some were fixated on inaccurate assertions that advisors prepare foreign crews to infiltrate United States forces. Others refused to acknowledge the requirement for improving foreign aviation capabilities supporting joint operations. Unfortunately, few staff officers (if any) can articulate the *aviation* advisory perspective for foreign internal defense. Curiously, many comprehend the need to assess, train, advise, and assist *surface forces* of friendly governments. Somehow there is an inability to transfer such logic to the air medium. It's time to embrace the need for tactically proficient advisory forces in the air as well as on the surface. Adjusting CASA-212 training priorities and approving lease funding are steps in the right direction.

## Chapter 6

### SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

*I can't impress you with the fact that the rapport you establish with [sic] indigenous air force, your counterpart, is normally based upon their admiration in the way you can perform; and you got to demonstrate this between talking to these people. Once you have shown them what their equipment is capable of doing (and normally it is far better than they think it is) I think you have opened the door to rapport with the indigenous air force types themselves...*

-- Major General Gilbert L. Pritchard

In January 2002, Air Force Special Operations Command convened an internal review of combat aviation advisory capabilities and force structure.<sup>63</sup> Aware of mounting operational challenges, the command's senior leadership convened a small group, quietly known as the Combat Aviation Advisory Study Team, to propose concepts enhancing aviation advisory capabilities.<sup>64</sup> Noting changes in the strategic environment, leadership also desired options to increase the number of trained aviation advisors.

The Commander of Air Force Special Operations Command provided the study team with amplified guidance. There were four specific guidelines. "Keep it simple." Historical problems associated with organization, education and training, manning, and equipment needed resolution. "Think out of the box." Citing talent available throughout the armed forces, the commander suggested that air reserve component and joint forces offered the potential for creative solutions. "Make it cost effective." Proposals solely relying on additive force structure to increase advisor

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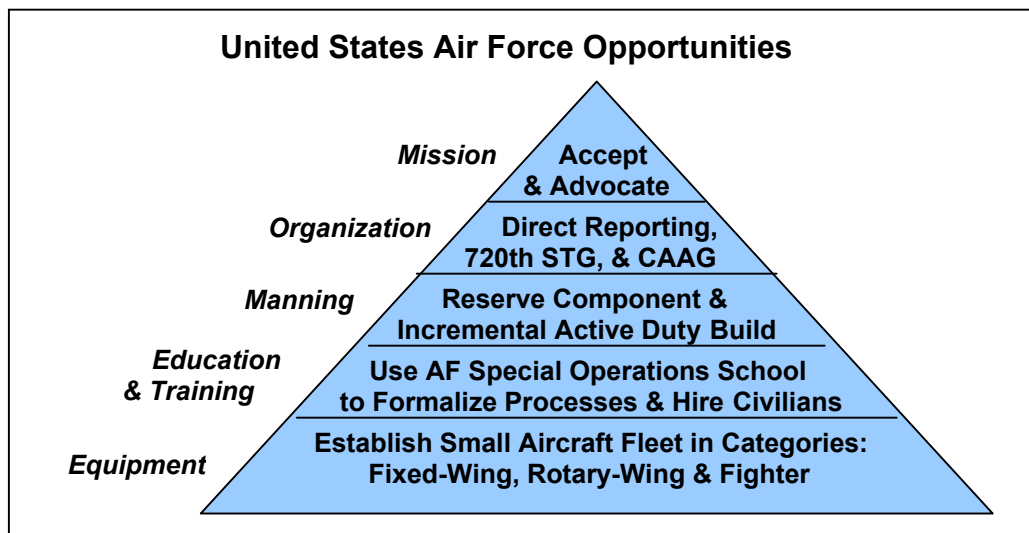
<sup>63</sup> This chapter is the author's attempt to record group and individual deliberations among study team members. As a group, members participated in several sessions during a weeklong meeting in January 2002. A second series of meetings occurred between individual group members in March 2002.

<sup>64</sup> Combat Aviation Advisory Study Team members were selected for their expertise and experience in aviation advisory operations. The team included the command's most senior aviation advisor (a civilian with three decades of advisory experience), the current and two former commanders of the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, an operations group commander and a former aviation advisor from the air reserve component, a command historian, and two aviation advisors currently assigned to the command staff. Contact AFSOC/DOU, DSN 579-4425 for team member contact information. Interestingly, the team name (abbreviated as *CAAST*) was derived from the assigned mission, as well as a play on the phrase "the usual *cast* of subjects."

numbers would be rejected. “Provide immediate and near term options.” Knowing it takes years to create competent special operators, the commander cautioned not to expect the impossible overnight. As the meeting adjourned, the team was reminded to honor traditional principles regarding special operations force structure. Adherence to these “special operations forces truths” will be discussed in the concluding chapter.<sup>65</sup>

The study team started from scratch. An all-encompassing review of combat aviation advisory capability and availability had never been attempted. Most members were very familiar with the core operational challenges affecting combat aviation advisors. After reviewing the commander’s guidance, they quickly began brainstorming ways to transform these challenges into opportunities. The team soon realized that time constraints would preclude significant exploration and development of proposals. Accordingly, members concentrated on creating a vision to guide future analysis by the command staff.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps the phrase “Combat Aviation Advisors, Unsurpassed Capability, Unmatched Credibility” best embodied the team’s vision. Though acknowledging the desirability of joint aviation advisory operations, time constraints prevented the team from identifying viable joint concepts. The vision’s Service-oriented opportunities were prioritized from top to bottom, beginning with mission acceptance and proponentcy (see figure 14).<sup>67</sup>



**Figure 14**

<sup>65</sup> Combined remarks of Lieutenant General Maxwell C. Bailey, Commander, Air Force Special Operations Command, to the Combat Aviation Advisor Study Team, January 4, 2002. Guidance was reconfirmed by his successor, Lt. General Paul V. Hester, on March 15, 2002. Both meetings were at Hurlburt Field, Florida.

<sup>66</sup> Ultimately, the team hoped to build leadership advocacy for the framework and then help the wider Air Force Special Operations Command staff further develop Service and joint concepts.

<sup>67</sup> A “Combat Aviation Advisory Concept Exploration” briefing summarizing working group progress was given to the commander and senior staff of Air Force Special Operations Command in January 2002. A second concept update briefing, entitled “Combat Aviation Advisors: Coalition Airpower Enablers” was presented to the commander and vice commander in March 2002.

## **Mission Acceptance and Advocacy**

Air Force Special Operations Command must fully accept and advocate the advisory mission before there can be any serious talk of enhancing and expanding capability. Acceptance means comprehending the changes in the security environment that make advisors a force of choice in a global fight. Advocacy signifies championing the employment of advisory forces while planning for expanded use in the future.

The motto “Anytime, Anywhere” signifies Air Force Special Operations Command’s pledge to stay a step ahead in a changing world. Unfortunately, the command is a step behind when it comes to acknowledging the utility of advisory forces. The vast majority of resources are spent on training airmen to conduct unilateral operations against nation states, not helping foreign countries combat subnational terrorism.

The strategic picture includes global terrorist networks, numerous safe havens, and too few United States forces to pursue them. The operating environment places a premium on culturally aware, politically astute, and language educated technical experts who can help friendly countries eradicate terrorists and their sanctuaries. Combat aviation advisors are imbued with these qualities. Their role in the global war on terrorism is to help friendly military forces fight and win their own wars against subnational terror. Air Force Special Operations Command must accept this fact and ready its advisory forces to conduct the nation’s business.

But readying forces is not enough. Air Force Special Operations Command must educate the joint community on what aviation advisors bring to the fight, and then fight to institutionalize programmatic solutions that address shortfalls. The command should begin its campaign of advocacy by reengaging theater special operations commands to formally baseline global aviation advisory requirements. Next, the command should ensure United States Special Operations Command validates theater requirements. A formal review of capability should then be undertaken to identify shortfalls and propose both material and non-material solutions. Advisory needs should then be prioritized alongside programs of equal relevance to the war on terrorism. Advocacy is more than acknowledging utility. Advocacy embraces dedicated planning for enhanced and expanded capability and devoting the resources to achieve this end.

## **Streamlining Organization**

An enhanced and expanded advisory capability should be accompanied by modifications to the existing aviation advisory squadron structure and a new model for next echelon of command. The organizational proposals discussed below can facilitate improved oversight and supervision at all levels of command.

### **Squadron-level**

The current composite rotary and fixed-wing advisory squadron structure provides effective oversight and supervision for a small number of teams. Any significant change in advisory



capabilities or increase in the number of deployable teams should trigger consideration of alternative unit structures. Multi-squadron organizational models improve oversight of global aviation advisory activities and supervision of dissimilar flying operations.

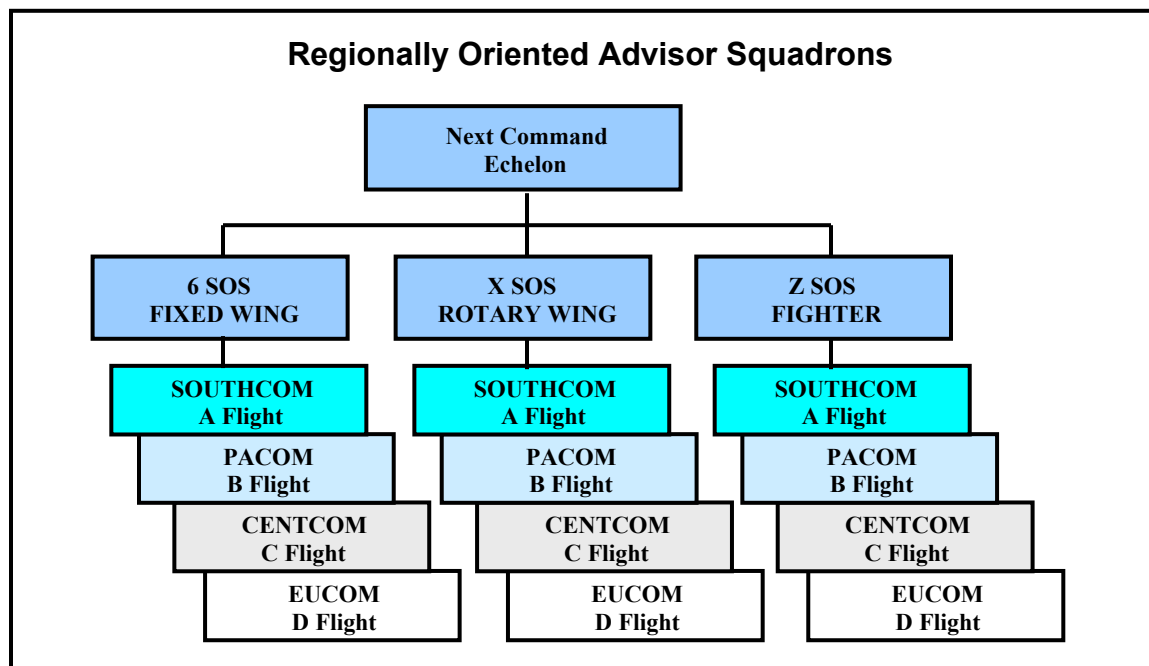
If expansion involves more than one or two teams, force planners should consider dividing the current 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron into two units—a fixed and rotary wing squadron. Two complementary homes of advisory excellence would lower risk by focusing advisory units on a single category of aircraft operations. Likewise, the addition of new advisory capability would create training and employment challenges not easily remedied within a single composite squadron. For example, if fighter expertise were added without organizational change, a single squadron would bear responsibility for global advisory activities in three different aircraft categories. Once again, prudent analysis suggests adopting a multiple squadron construct that focused advisory units on single aircraft category operations.

This ‘organize by category’ construct should follow two simple rules. First, advisory units should be configured as multidisciplinary teams to mitigate risks associated with augmentation. Cross-functional capabilities are required for team safety as well as theater tasking. Every advisory operation relies on organic support from maintenance crew chiefs, force protection specialists, intelligence and communications personnel, and survival, escape and evasion experts. It is extremely unwise for deployed detachments to rely on unfamiliar personnel for critical functions during high-risk operations. Required familiarity should be sourced from standing teams with shared education, training, and operational experiences. Gained units may have to convert some authorized positions to ensure an appropriate balance between flying and non-flying billets.

Second, advisory units should be regionally oriented. Advisors rely on personal relationships to achieve assigned objectives. Cultural sensitivity, political awareness, and language skills are required to build enduring relationships. Years of education, training, and experience help bridge social and operational divides. Unit structure should encourage small teams to study and assimilate required skills. Further, regional orientation helps theater commanders comprehend finite limits associated with small team operations. For example, commanders are aware there only one aviation advisory team is apportioned for peacetime operations in the Pacific region. Although long-term advisory help in Korea may be desirable, Pacific commanders know this would preclude team availability for operations in other theater countries. Finally, regional orientation will provide an efficient means for the next echelon of command to quantify and qualify theater capability dispersed between multiple squadrons (see figure 15). Unit structure must afford the next echelon of command the transparency required to plan for composite operations that could involve rotary-wing, fixed-wing transport, and fighter advisory operation.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Other means of expanding squadron level capability were reviewed but discarded. For example, team members were not in favor of proposals to integrate small advisory elements within operational support squadrons in overseas groups. The direct-action orientation of the groups will likely overwhelm aviation advisors with non-advisory tasking. Further, it would be difficult to provide adequate training for small numbers of advisors permanently



**Figure 15**

### **Next Command Echelon**

There are three basic options for modifying relationships for the next echelon of command. Note that each option removes the advisory unit(s) from operational control of the 16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Group and 16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing.<sup>69</sup> Proposed changes were driven by the serious need for improved oversight and supervision of command-delegated responsibilities. The intent is to align aviation advisory unit(s) under a command echelon perceived to have a broader stake in daily aviation advisory operations. See figure 16.<sup>70</sup>

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stationed overseas. Additionally, all agreed that the command's long term vision to stand up permanent overseas advisory squadrons was viable but not likely to happen within the future years defense plan.

<sup>69</sup> The study team also discussed the idea of placing the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron and a gained Air Force Reserve Command unit under the operational control of the 919<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing (Air Force Reserve Command). Initially it was felt the 919<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing's smaller scope of flying operations might offer a chance for increased oversight and supervision. However, the idea was discounted after consulting with the wing's leadership. Like the 16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing, the 919<sup>th</sup> wing would be forced to divide attention between demanding direct-action oriented activities and fast-growing advisory operations. Second, there were concerns that enough civilian jobs might not be available to support another reserve unit. Finally, while the wing's primary mission would likely remain direct-action oriented, crewmembers might prefer advisory duty instead of their current mission. This could create a transfer of talent situation that could render existing squadrons undermanned.

<sup>70</sup> The Combat Aviation Advisory Group emblem depicted here is that of the Special Air Warfare Center. The center was the home of Air Force counterinsurgency expertise from 1961 until deactivation in 1968.



**Figure 16**

**Direct reporting unit(s).** This option places the combat aviation advisory squadron(s) under the direct operational control of the Air Force Special Operations Command Commander through the director of operations. A direct reporting relationship would make advisory operations more visible to command leadership. There would also be more timely awareness regarding advisor discussions with senior United States civilian and military authorities as well as foreign defense ministers, ambassadors, and air force commanders.

But visibility and awareness are different than active oversight and supervision. Command relationships necessitating director of operations involvement in daily matters would not be healthy for the command or unit(s). The details associated with planning and execution of peacetime advisory operations would likely eclipse the operations directorate's capacity for meaningful daily supervision. Any swell in wartime tasking would further compound the matter. Any increase in the number of advisory squadrons would further magnify the problem. It is quite likely some of the current organizational problems would be replicated. Daily responsibilities commensurate with wing or group-level oversight and supervision would continue to be relegated to the squadron. See figure 17 for a summary of daily group-level responsibilities now being worked at unit level. In essence, one or more squadrons working directly for a major command commander and staff would likely solve nothing. A more intermediate layer of focused supervision is required.

### **Daily Group-Level Responsibilities**

- **Prepare group annexes to CINC wartime/theater engagement plans**
- **Educate and train force to achieve theater objectives**
- **Execute flying hour program**
- **Ensure efficient resource allocation via multiple colors of money**
- **Manage overseas exercise and training program**
- **Publish and disseminate commander's intent and mission statement**
- **Provide initial intelligence and force protection estimates**
- **Secure theater and country clearances**
- **Approve unit operational orders via pre-deployment brief-backs**
- **Monitor mission execution and provide reach-back situation forecasts**
- **Record and disseminate after action information**
- **Plan and coordinate with four theater special operations commands and overseas special operations forces**

**Figure 17**

**720<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Group.** A more feasible concept calls for assigning operational control of one or more combat aviation advisory squadron(s) to the 720<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Group.<sup>71</sup> For reasons discussed below, this option is most appealing if only one or two aviation advisory units are envisioned.

As previously discussed, combat aviation advisors and special tactics professionals have highly compatible skills and numerous shared experiences operating with foreign aviation counterparts. Writ large, the special tactics community is responsible for integrating air and ground operations to improve joint and combined capabilities. The 720<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Group provides multidisciplinary teams of combat controllers, pararescue specialists, and combat weather personnel for four theater special operations commands. As combat controllers proved with anti-Taliban forces, special tactics personnel have the specialized education and training and operational experience to perform as advisors. Further, special tactics personnel and combat aviation advisors frequently team together during foreign internal defense and coalition support operations. Frankly speaking, the mission bond between special tactics personnel and combat aviation advisors is much stronger than that shared by advisors and other Air Force special operations forces.

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<sup>71</sup> Although quietly discussed between advisor and special tactics commanders since 2000, this proposal was not briefed to the senior leadership of Air Force Special Operations Command in January or March 2002 meetings. The idea was reviewed and sketched out after discussions between individual team members in April 2002. Additionally, the author and the current commander of the 6th Special Operations Squadron have previously discussed such a proposal with the former and current commander of the 720<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Group.

There are no significant equipage or administrative drawbacks. Essentially a ground combat force, the 720<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Group is not currently equipped with aircraft. Assets and funding could be cross-walked within the command. Although few ranking special tactics personnel have aircrew experience, their multidisciplinary expertise makes them uniquely qualified to command advisory forces. Internal oversight and supervision for flying and maintenance operations could be arranged with by adding functionally oriented positions on the group staff.

Operational hurdles must be studied carefully. The group would be responsible for fulfilling United States Special Operations Command directives concerning planning, coordination, and employment of aviation advisory forces. Additionally, the group would be responsible for daily responsibilities shown in figure 17. Oversight and supervision could prove time consuming and labor intensive, especially if a decision is made to significantly increase the number of aviation advisors. Conceivably, the 720th Special Tactics Group could be asked to address advisory pipeline shortfalls, add new advisory capabilities, and integrate re-designated units while managing combat deployments of controller, pararescue, and weather team personnel.<sup>72</sup> The burden could prove difficult to manage. Prudence dictates investigating an alternative command arrangement better suited for oversight and supervision of enhanced and expanded capability.

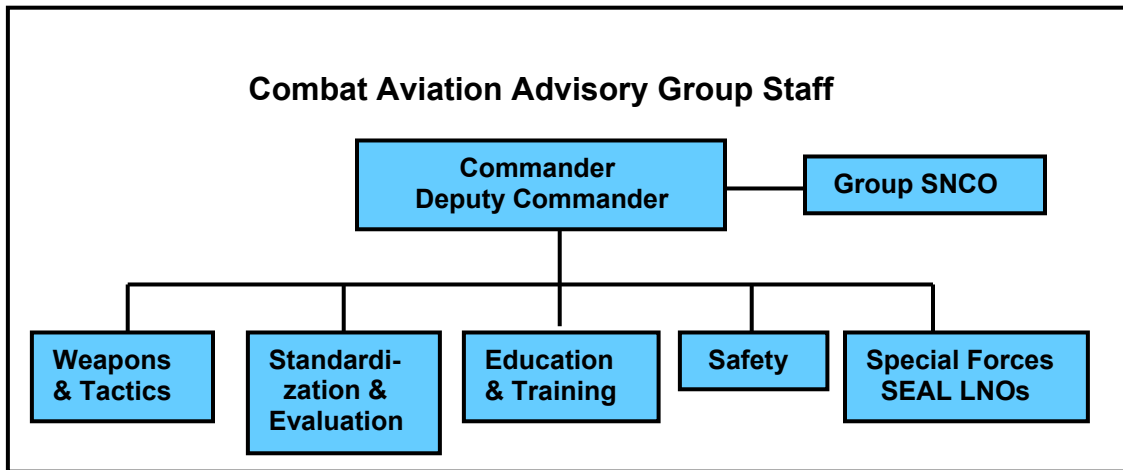
**New Combat Aviation Advisory Group.** The Combat Aviation Advisory Group option provides a command echelon solely responsible for providing regionally oriented, culturally aware, politically astute, and language educated advisors. This group model could easily accommodate enhanced and expanded advisory force structure.<sup>73</sup> In addition to daily responsibilities, the group would be charged with fulfilling component duties and responsibilities per United States Special Operations Command directives. See figure 18 for a notionally structured Combat Aviation Advisory Group staff.

There are numerous tasks associated with enhancing and expanding advisory capability. Challenges include detailing command relationships, identifying equipment needs, and projecting funding requirements. Perhaps the most time consuming activity would be to overhaul the qualification pipeline and continuing education and training programs. Depending on the number of subordinate squadrons, a group flight or operational support squadron would implement and oversee the institutionalization of these programs.

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<sup>72</sup> Staff paper, AFSOC/XRT, "Combat Needs Statement (C-MNS) for Combat Aviation Advisory (CAA) Support," December 2001. Related papers include AFSOC/XPPF, "Increasing AFSOC C-130 and Tanker Force Structure," 26 Oct 01; AFSOC/XPPX, "6 SOS Aviation Advisory Teams," no date; and AFSOC/XPPX, "6 SOS Combat Aviation Advisor Support to Crisis Response Element," 15 Oct 01.

<sup>73</sup> Although not discussed here, expediency could dictate standing-up provisional aviation advisory squadrons in overseas theaters under the administrative control of a stateside command echelon. Mandated into existence for the length of the war, provisional unit members would still require education and training support. The combat aviation advisory group could provide such administrative oversight and supervision.



**Figure 18**

Detractors to this option include facilities, personnel, and funding. Facilities are a premium on any military installation. However, the relatively small number of individuals assigned to the group staff should mitigate the need for military construction.<sup>74</sup> The group staff could quite feasibly operate from an existing facility at Hurlburt Field, Duke Field, or Eglin Air Force Base. Additional personnel positions will certainly be required. A mixture of contract, civil service, and reserve component personnel could prove the most efficient way to man the group staff. The northwest panhandle of Florida is home to an estimated two-dozen former advisors who would be well suited for group staff duty.

Fiscal realities must also be squarely addressed. Combat aviation advisory teams are the most relevant tools in Air Force's foreign internal defense kit. They are also the most cost effective. An advisory squadron comprised of six operational aviation detachments trains for war on an operations and maintenance budget of \$1.4 million. While doing so, the unit builds enduring relationships with foreign counterparts in four theater areas of operation. On an annual basis, advisors engage some fifteen countries and operate over twenty different aircraft types. This small investment delivered access to runways and resources in Central Asia when our nation needed it the most. Imagine the returns additional squadrons could provide.

### **Air Force Special Operations Command**

Regardless of the organizational model selected for implementation, Air Force Special Operations Command must integrate combat aviation advisory expertise within the staff. Establishing the aviation advisory operations division was an important start. However, the division must be manned with personnel charged with monitoring operations and enhancing capability on a daily basis. Strong consideration should be given to creating positions for reserve component officers and civil service personnel with advisory experience.

<sup>74</sup> A March 2002 study team estimate suggested the group could fulfill assigned responsibilities with as few as 32 group staff personnel

## **Manning Options**

Study members examined augmentation, ad hoc tasking, and building dedicated force structure to improve the number of aviation advisory teams available for deployment. Both active duty and reserve component forces were considered as potential sources of manpower.

### **Augmentation**

This option seeks to immediately increase advisory ranks by forming new teams comprised of seasoned advisors paired with Service augmentees. Options were compared by assessing impact on the availability, reliability, safety, and interoperability of advisory forces.

**Air Force special operations active duty and reserve forces.** The team unanimously agreed that Air Force special operations forces could effectively augment aviation advisory teams. Air Force special operations personnel from non-advisory units were deemed highly qualified and exceptionally well experienced regarding reliability and safety. As with all operations, pre-deployment task training would be required. The two challenges were interoperability and availability. Interoperability issues primarily concerned aircrew operations. Other than special tactics personnel, special operations airmen rarely have the opportunity to practice becoming an integral member of a foreign unit. A great deal of personal confidence is required to overcome language, cultural, and procedural barriers and impart tactical flight instruction. Availability issues affect flying and non-flying specialties. Although highly desirable for advisory duty, operations tempo would likely prevent line Air Force special operators from deploying with aviation advisors for extended periods.

**Other active duty forces.** Active duty personnel could certainly be made available for augmentation. But there are valid concerns about reliability and safety, particularly regarding the lack of advanced force protection training, personal and team survival skills, and weapons qualification. Without a lengthy investment in pre-deployment training, these and other issues could make a potential augmentee ineligible for deployment. Interoperability limitations will impact far more than cockpit operations, suggesting the need for near continuous over-the-shoulder supervision. Further, personnel would likely return to their home unit after deployment, making pre-deployment training a sunk cost. Nonetheless, given intensive pre-deployment and continuous on-the-job training, the study team agreed individual specialists could acceptably augment trained aviation advisors.

**Reserve component forces.** Given appropriate education and training, the skill and experience resident in Air Force reserve component forces makes them attractive augmentation candidates. Certainly, the same reliability, safety, and interoperability concerns apply to reserve component forces as discussed in the above active duty section. However, reserve component forces may soon require specialized education and training to accomplish advisory-like tasks supporting the evolving homeland defense mission. Potential tasks include training and exercising first responders, directly assisting authorities and the civilian population by distributing supplies and operating specialized equipment, and participating in contingency

operations to secure physical and virtual borders. From a broad perspective, such tasking roughly parallels the indirect support, direct support, and contingency (combat) activities of foreign internal defense (see figure 19). There may be a unique opportunity to develop a single mission essential task list governing state homeland defense and federal foreign internal defense missions. Additionally, some Air National Guard units have demonstrated advisory skills during Partnership for Peace exercises with countries from the Commonwealth of Independent States.<sup>75</sup>

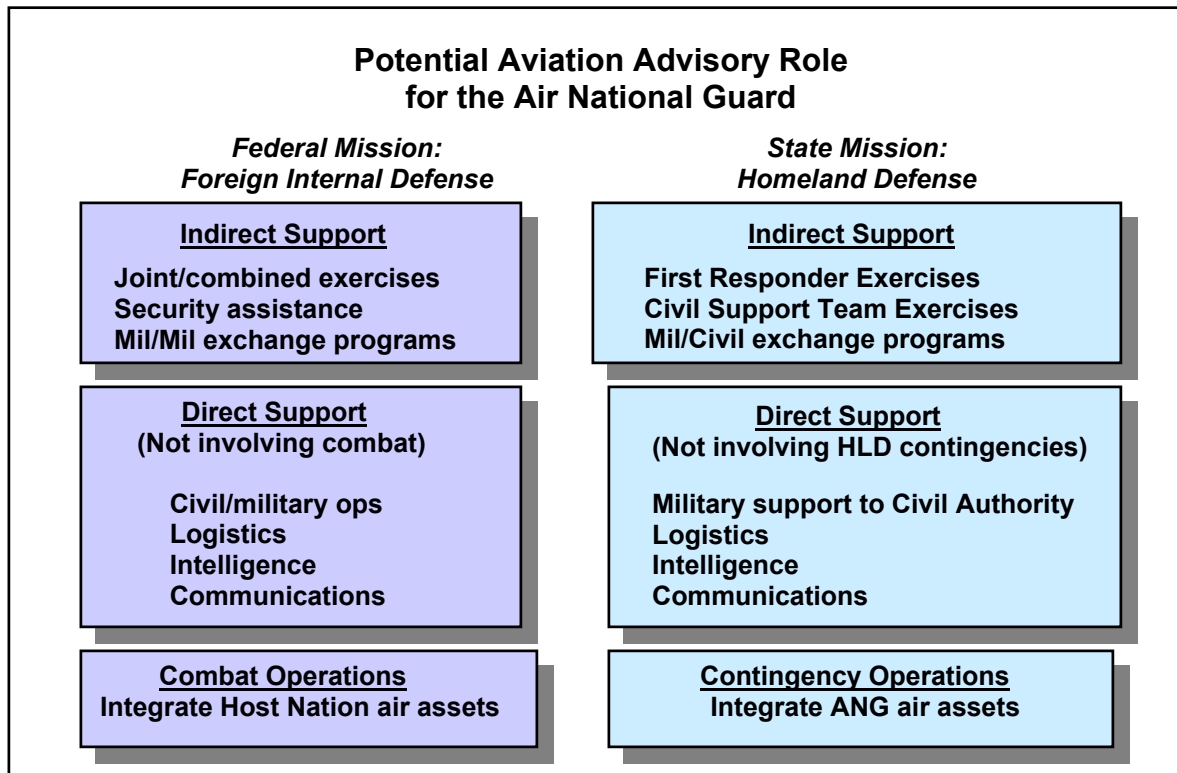


Figure 19

### Ad hoc tasking

Team members were convinced that aviation advisory tasking would soon exceed fielded team capacity. Conversations regarding ad-hoc tasking of line units to perform advisory duties were pointed and serious. Line operational units may be capable of providing basic instruction such as learning to fly newly acquired American aircraft. However, their ability to provide tactical instruction in foreign aircraft is another matter. It is sometimes difficult to detect when foreign aircrews lack the proficiency and professionalism required to master advanced tactical operations. Problems are masked from view if advisors are struggling to maintain situational

<sup>75</sup> Training exchanges between the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing, Moffett Field, California Air National Guard, and the Ukrainian Air Force are just one example. In 2000, search and rescue exercises and civil military operations were the focus of training events hosted by Ukraine. Similar events are scheduled this year in the United States.



awareness due to a lack of familiarity with foreign aircraft and host nation procedures. Sooner or later, normally at the most undesirable moment, a lack of proficiency or deviation from accepted behavior occurs.<sup>76</sup> Aviation advisors are conditioned to test proficiency and deal with deviations through routine flights in foreign aircraft and specialized host nation procedural training. Unless line units are afforded such training, sound risk management strongly suggests ad hoc unit tasking for tactical instruction of foreign aircrews should be avoided if at all possible. Figure 20 expresses risk as a function of untrained advisors and complex missions.

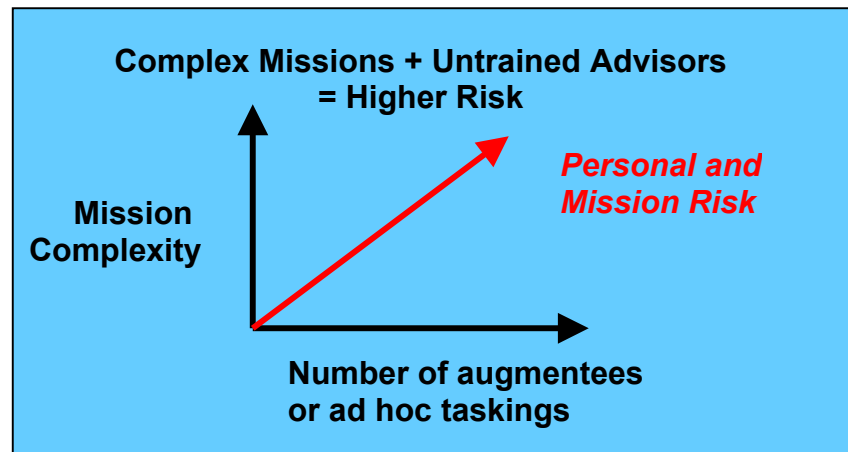


Figure 20

### Building a Dedicated Advisory Force

The study group determined building dedicated advisory forces was the most militarily feasible concept for enhancing and expanding capability. The group was aware that active duty Air Force units were unlikely to be re-designated as advisory forces. Commander's guidance also cautioned against resolving shortfalls with costly force structure proposals. Therefore, much time and energy was spent discussing how existing reserve component units might be re-designated as aviation advisory units in the near term. But after discovering the complexities of this task, the team brainstormed how the Air Force might incrementally invest in cost-effective active duty force structure.

**Re-designating reserve component units.** In December 2001, Air Force Special Operations Command forwarded a combat mission needs statement to the requirements division at Headquarters Air Force. A shortfall in the number of combat aviation advisors was reported, along with a proposal calling for two reserve component airlift squadrons to be re-designated as combat aviation advisory squadrons under Air Force Special Operations Command. The stated

<sup>76</sup> For example, aircraft commanders in some foreign countries hold 'god-like' authority over other crewmembers. Their 'divinity' is sometimes exercised by dismissing other crewmembers from assigned stations, verbal or physical abuse, or attempting prohibited maneuvers. Advisors must always be on guard to immediately mitigate such occurrences through techniques learned during an extensive period of qualification training.

manpower requirement was for 192 personnel.<sup>77</sup> Although not indicated in the needs statement, staff memos indicate the clear intent was to gain C-130 units rumored “excess” to Air Force airlift requirements.

Although a good idea on the surface, merely adding two squadron equivalents of aircrew talent could prove problematic. Organic airlift units do not possess the multidisciplinary capability required for advisory operations. Instead of re-designating two flying squadrons, a better solution might be to select one flying and two or more non-flying units, or perhaps even a small group. A much larger pool of multidisciplinary talent would be available for unit conversion. For example, consider a C-130 transport, maintenance, and air support operations squadron selected for re-designation. If converted at the same time, at least two fully capable combat aviation advisory squadrons could be assembled. The resulting units would each fly, fix, and otherwise support airlift advisory tasking. Certainly, this scheme would take units off-line until conversion training was completed.<sup>78</sup> However, the new units would be much more viable than a reserve component C-130 unit that sometimes augmented advisory operations.

Building advisory units requires significant forethought. Requirements-based planning and the need for multidisciplinary capability should drive the units selected for re-designation, not unit availability for conversion. Force planners must strive to ensure gained units can be transformed into highly capable advisory squadrons that answer the most pressing theater needs. For example, theater requirements suggest a growing need for ground attack and air-to-ground interface expertise. Therefore, the command should look toward integrating fighter and tactical air control party capability vice becoming fixated on airlift and mobile aerial port expertise.

Re-designation mechanics aside, there was considerable discussion about the feasibility of air reserve component participation in the aviation advisory mission. All study members recognized the enormous talent and stability resident in the reserve components. Yet each voiced concern about command and control relationships, completing education and training in a timely manner, retaining the investment for the duration of the war, and ensuring availability of reserve component advisors for peacetime tasking. Reserve component leaders who discussed these issues with the author echoed similar concerns.<sup>79</sup>

Active duty study team members suggested integrating reserve component units by formal call-up or federalization under the operational control of a Combat Aviation Advisory Group.

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<sup>77</sup> The 192-person requirement evolved from the following logic. A generic reserve airlift squadron is normally assigned eight aircraft. Each aircraft is crewed by six personnel (48 personnel). There are two crews assigned per aircraft (96 personnel). Two squadrons were requested (192 personnel). See aforementioned staff paper AFSOC/RT, “Combat Needs Statement (C-MNS) for Combat Aviation Advisory (CAA) Support,” December 2001.

<sup>78</sup> Some combination of active duty liaison officers and noncommissioned officers, exchange tours between active and reserve component units, and seasoned advisors in informal or formal unit leadership billets could greatly assist the unit conversion process.

<sup>79</sup> The author had the privilege of discussing these issues in depth with professionals from the air reserve component. Commanders from the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing (California Air National Guard), Moffett Field, CA; 145<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing (North Carolina Air National Guard and Headquarters North Carolina Air National Guard, Charlotte International Airport, NC; and the 919<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing (Air Force Reserve Command), Duke Field, FL, provided honest insights regarding mission feasibility.

This would ensure unity of command, facilitate unit conversion, and ensure availability.<sup>80</sup> Air reserve component team members suggested an alternative plan calling for an enduring partnership between an active duty and reserve component group. During peacetime, the reserve partner would plan and execute a given number of advisory team deployments and offer augmentees for active duty missions. During wartime, the group could voluntarily generate additional teams or be mobilized into service. On a broader scale, mature partnerships might include exchange tours between active and reserve component units. Younger active duty advisors could greatly benefit by developing relevant expertise alongside seasoned reserve component personnel. Likewise, an active duty tour could provide reserve component advisors with increased opportunities to hone advisory skills in deployed settings.

There appear to be at least three keys to an active and reserve component partnership. First, allow enough time for the partnership to mature. Reserve component unit conversion alone could take several years to complete. Second, organizational structure must facilitate coordination between active duty and reserve component units. An active and reserve component group pairing should be considered. Third, air reserve component units should be designated as special operations forces. This will permit the expenditure of operations and maintenance funds on own-unit training with foreign counterparts.

**Incrementally investing in active duty force structure.** This option combines cost effective investments in additive active duty force structure with “creative group staff” manning (see figure 21). Recall that Air Force Special Operations Command requested additional advisory positions in its FY04 program objective memorandum submission. If approved and funded, nearly 150 advisor positions could be authorized by FY04. If the Air Force re-designated one fighter squadron of 80 personnel and cross-walked the funding, over 200 authorized advisory positions could become available. That is enough for three moderately sized advisory squadrons. If the proposed combat aviation advisory group was creatively manned as previously discussed, a new group comprised of three advisory squadrons (rotary-wing, fixed-wing transport, and fighter per figure 15) could be brought on line as soon as 2004. By primarily relying on active duty force structure, this option maximizes aviation advisor availability in peace as well as war.

<b>Active Duty Force Structure Adds</b>	
<b>Currently authorized</b>	<b>106 positions</b>
<b>FY 04 POM submission</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>USAF fighter squadron</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>“Creative” Group Staff</b>	<b>32</b>
<b><i>Potential near term force</i></b>	<b><i>255 advisors</i></b>

**Figure 21**

<sup>80</sup> Yet even this logic was not airtight. Some personnel assigned to these units would not desire or screen fit for advisory duty. The only workaround the team could come up with was to advertise a reserve or guard unit would be re-designated for advisory duty weeks before implementation. The interim period could then be used for screening personnel and letting those unfit for duty and non-volunteers seek alternative employment in other units.

## **Improving Education and Training**

The inefficiencies associated with initial qualification and continuing education and training programs must be dealt with immediately. The objective should be nothing short of institutionalizing both programs as a prerequisite to any meaningful expansion of advisory capability.

### **Qualification pipeline**

Aviation advisors need the Air Force Special Operations School to develop a single package of combat aviation advisory qualification courseware. This courseware should be based on education requirements spelled out in joint and Service doctrine, United States Special Operations Command directives, and theater requirements. Education should focus on advisory operations in foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, and coalition support environments. Multiple course elements, currently taught at various times throughout the year, should be consolidated into a single package of academic instruction taught progressively for a period of time not to exceed three weeks. If offered twice annually, this courseware could significantly decrease the number of classroom events and hours required for initial qualification. If open to joint surface force advisors and country team personnel, this courseware could help fashion a common perspective regarding the conduct of aviation advisory operations.

To centralize responsibility and increase opportunities, Air Force Special Operations Command should assign command language education responsibilities to the Air Force Special Operations School. This does not necessarily mean the school should bear the responsibility for classroom instruction. It does mean the school should be directed to become the single repository of language excellence in the command. The school should be responsible for making language education opportunities available to aviation advisors as well as special tactics personnel, line aircrew members, and medical specialists (to name a few) throughout the command. This requires extensive coordination with Joint Special Operations Forces University schools and the Defense Language Institute. If the school assumed responsibility for arranging language instruction as well as building new qualification courseware, new advisors could be scheduled for successive months of language and qualification academics. This would drastically reduce the amount of time devoted to completing the initial qualification program.

### **Continuing Education and Training**

It is a challenge to maintain skill proficiency in an advisory squadron comprised of thirty-two different Air Force specialty codes. Currently, five or six line advisors work education and training issues on a rotating basis in between deployments. A centralized education and training office, continuously manned by contractors, could greatly reduce the turbulence associated with initial qualification and continuing education and training programs. Aircrew advisors need a stable cadre of flight instructors to improve continuity during qualification training and help maintain proficiency in between deployments. Contract flight instructors should be hired for advisor flight training. Contractor instructors could help advisors attain advanced ratings and

source academic, simulator, and flying training for aircraft types not available at home station. Contract trainers could also improve non-flying education and training opportunities. Maintenance crew chiefs, survival instructors, security force personnel, intelligence specialists, logisticians, and communications experts alike must comply with numerous requirements to maintain skill levels and global mobility status. Contractors would offer a much more stable means of administering education and training programs.

## **Senior Officials**

Air Force Special Operations Command should sponsor the development of a traveling executive course on aviation advisory operations. This will help senior officials within the Air Force to learn about aviation advisory capabilities. Although briefed at various courses at Fort Bragg, senior special operations forces and embassy leaders may also benefit from an opportunity to familiar themselves with aviation advisory operations.

## **Equipping by Category**

Staff officers at Air Force Special Operations Command repeatedly question changing aircraft equipment needs. The answer lies in theater requirements. Equipment needs can change as theater special operations commands develop training partnerships with regional friends. Equipping by category is a mechanism that can help advisory units and upper echelon command levels better understand the linkage theater requirements, categories and types of aircraft, and funding options.

Equipping by category implies three tasks. The first task is reviewing requirements found in theater special operations command mission guidance letters. Currently, these letters identify the need for advisors to maintain proficiency in two categories, rotary-wing and fixed wing transport. By category, the letters detail various aircraft types and the level of desired proficiency required for operations in various meteorological conditions.

The second task requires the advisory squadron(s) to submit a prioritized list of what aircraft they are able and desire to fly in support of theater needs. Annual flying hour submissions should include category, type, flying hours, cost, and proposed funding source (see figure 22). Air Force Special Operations Command should then review and validate the submission by category, funding source, and total cost. However, the command should stay flexible regarding the exact types of aircraft flown during the year. In consultation with higher command echelons, squadron commanders should be empowered to terminate or commence leasing arrangements in accordance with evolving theater requirements. This ensures funds are expended against relevant training requirements.

Notional Unit Flying Hour Program Fixed-Wing Category			
Type	Hours	Cost	Funding
An-2	250	\$\$	Lease
An-26	150	\$\$\$	JCS exercise
An-32	300	\$\$\$	Lease
C-212	400	\$\$\$\$	Contract
C-130	200	\$\$\$\$	Wing

Notional Unit Flying Hour Program Rotary-Wing Category			
Type	Hours	Cost	Funding
Mi-8	250	\$\$	Lease
Mi-17	150	\$\$	JCS exercise
As-332	100	\$\$\$	JCS exercise
UH-1N	400	\$\$\$\$	Contract

**Figure 22**

The third task is for Air Force Special Operations Command to strongly advocate advisor equipment needs with United States Special Operations Command. This implies providing unrestricted access to assigned unit equipment and funding lease arrangements. If advisor training in the CASA-212 cannot be prioritized over military free fall training, Air Force Special Operations Command should return the equipment after brokering alternative arrangements with Headquarters Air Force. One suggestion is to seek Air Force permission to purchase and employ foreign aircraft as training coded (non-deployable) unit equipment. Advocacy also implies pursuing a firm source of funding to lease foreign aircraft types specified in theater mission guidance letters. If United States Special Operations Command cannot provide appropriate lease funding, non-traditional sources should be pursued through the Air Force, Department of Defense, and other government agencies.<sup>81</sup>

### **Some Insights and Considerations**

Before attempting to enhance and expand capability, Air Force Special Operations Command must first commit to fully supporting the aviation advisory mission. That means embracing tactical flying operations. Tactical flight instruction is the means by which advisors improve the capability of foreign units to prosecute the global war on terrorism. Unless the command advocates the mission within the joint community, theater commanders may be deprived of an effective tool to prosecute the war on terrorism. The Air Force Special Operations Command commander's guidance for the advisory study is a useful framework for summarizing insights and considerations regarding Service opportunities for enhancing and expanding advisory capabilities.

<sup>81</sup> For example, sub-leasing arrangements might be available through the Forestry Service.

*Keep it simple.* Dramatic changes would be required for any line unit selected for re-designation as an aviation advisory squadron. Centralized oversight and supervision can help mitigate complexities associated with mission change. Units gained from active and reserve components should fall under the operational control of an active duty group. This will ensure unity of command, facilitate efficient unit conversion, and ensure availability. Gained units should also commit to an appropriate multidisciplinary structure with regional orientation.

*Make it cost effective.* With little out of pocket expense, the Air Force Special Operations School could help improve efficiencies associated with education and training. These professionals can significantly streamline qualification education to get new advisors into the field faster. As a fervent proponent of the aviation advisory mission, Air Force Special Operations Command must convince United States Special Operations Command to provide readily available aircraft for flight training. Lease mechanisms provide the most cost effective means to enhance flying and maintenance capability, improve responsiveness to theater tasking, and improve advisor familiarity with foreign aircraft operations.

*Think out of the box.* The local Hurlburt Field area is significantly populated with former aviation and surface force advisors who now wear civilian clothes. Provisions could be made for them to rejoin the aviation advisory team as flight instructors, trainers, and staff members of a new Combat Aviation Advisory Group. Additionally, Air National Guard units may prove desirable for re-designation due to their experience in military support for civil authorities and overseas partnerships. Additionally, it is time to seriously consider adding fighter ground attack capability to the advisory tool kit.

*Provide immediate and near term solutions.* Several unique alternatives are available to expeditiously overcome organizational challenges. However, a few cautions are in order. At the unit level, the integration of non-special operations forces will take time. Active duty and reserve component personnel both estimate successful reserve component conversion would take years. There are also limitations regarding next echelon of command proposals. Making advisory squadrons direct reporting units of Air Force Special Operations Command may appear easy on the surface. However, chances are good that neither the command nor the advisory unit(s) would benefit due to the lack of time and personnel available for direct oversight and supervision. Aligning the advisory unit(s) under the 720<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Group is a sufficient option if little growth is expected for the advisory force. Any significant expansion may swamp the group with burdens like determining multi-command relationships for gained reserve component units and overhauling pipeline education and training processes. Though requiring a small investment in overhead, the Combat Aviation Advisory Group offers direct oversight and supervision of daily operations while serving as an expandable plug for gained force structure. The group would also help insulate the command and subordinate units from turbulence associated with enhancing and expanding capabilities. Overall, Service opportunities promise more near term than immediate relief from manning shortfalls when new personnel are sourced from non-special operations units.

## Chapter 7

### JOINT OPPORTUNITIES

*As long as the warfighting CINCs maintain a demand for combat aviation advisors, we must be prepared to train and nurture some of these "special operators" and keep them around long enough to learn and comprehend the game. The candidate advisor, for his or her part, must understand that only a very small part of their essential tradecraft can be acquired through scheduled training. Most of it has to be acquired and drawn in by the advisor through active engagement with the issues, through first-hand experience down range, through intense observation and self study, and by staying open to the experiences and lessons that shape our world views.*

--Jerome Klingaman

In February 2002, the Commander-in-Chief, United States Special Operations Command, directed his staff to review the aviation foreign internal defense mission.<sup>82</sup> Guidance included exploring joint applications of foreign aviation training and identifying ways to integrate United States Army special operations rotary wing capability into advisory operations. As the command's proponent for joint aviation foreign internal defense, Air Force Special Operations Command should take advantage of the tasking and assist efforts to transform operational challenges into joint opportunities.

Building on the Service-oriented work of the Combat Aviation Advisory Study Team, this chapter proposes joint concepts to enhance advisory capabilities and increase the number of aviation advisors available for duty. Intuitively, United States Special Operations Command must address the same aviation advisory challenges facing Air Force Special Operations Command. But unlike its Air Force component, United States Special Operations Command has the opportunity to improve joint comprehension of the aviation advisory mission and apply joint resources against enduring limitations (see figure 23). Deliberations concerning the future of aviation advisory operations should be guided by a joint vision. "Unsurpassed Capability, Unmatched Credibility" might serve as a good point of departure. To survive contact with

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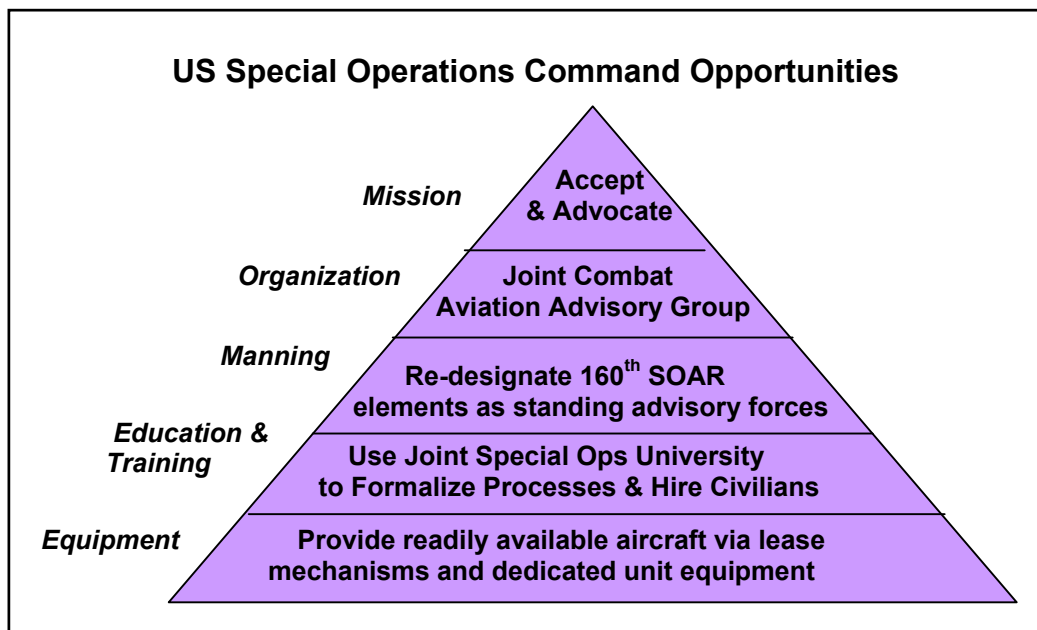
<sup>82</sup> Unclassified excerpt, USSOCOM/SORR Memorandum (For Official Use Only), 8 Mar 02.



reality, the vision must invest in joint opportunities regarding mission, organization, manning, education and training, and equipment.

### **Mission Acceptance and Advocacy**

To encourage broader mission acceptance, United State Special Operations Command should critically examine the utility of combat aviation advisory forces in operational environs. Time honored principles and a distinguished record of accomplishments can assist. During



**Figure 23**

DESERT STORM, special operations planners considered four questions to ensure appropriate tasking and employment of special operations forces (figure 24). The same questions can help illustrate why aviation advisory operations are an efficient and effective means of accomplishing operational objectives.

*Is this an appropriate special operations mission?* Aviation advisory operations directly support United States Special Operation's Command's legislatively assigned foreign internal defense and unconventional warfare missions. Additionally, aviation advisors frequently conduct many special operations collateral activities, including coalition support, combat search and rescue, and counterdrug operations. Appropriately, many aviation advisory operations are now part of the wider effort to combat terrorism.

*Does this mission support the Commander-in-chief's campaign plan?* The President publicly pledged American resources and training to help friendly governments combat

subnational terrorism. Theater special operations commands have developed supporting plans directly linking tactical and operational aviation advisory activities to the pursuit of engagement and wartime objectives.

*Are the required resources available?* The manning and equipment for small-scale aviation advisory operations are available in the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, Air Force Special Operations Command. The most efficient and effective means of immediately enhancing and expanding capability is to re-designate elements of the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment, United States Army Special Operations Command, as standing aviation advisory forces. Assigned to a Joint Combat Aviation Advisory Group, Air Force and Army aviation advisory squadrons can be organized, manned, educated and trained, and equipped to attain unsurpassed capability and earn unmatched credibility. Group ranks could be further expanded if meaningful partnerships with the Air and Army National Guard were pursued.

#### **Special Operations Forces Mission Employment Criteria**

- **Is this a special operations mission?**
- **Does this mission support the Commander-in-chief's campaign plan?**
- **Are the required resources available?**
- **Does the expected outcome justify the risk?**

**Figure 24**

*Does the expected outcome justify the risk?* The employment of aviation and surface force advisors operationalizes United States government intent to help foreign forces fight and defeat subnational terrorism. These deployments can preclude relatively large loss of American life and resources in foreign lands. Given the global war on terrorism and the looming shadow of major theater war in Southwest Asia, aviation advisory operations are a relatively low risk, high payoff mission.

When considering the operational utility of aviation advisory forces, United States Special Operations Command might also reflect on the subtitle of its *Posture Statement 2000*: "Providing Unique Solutions for a Changing World." Advisory operations are unique because they protect United States interests and help achieve national objectives through the efforts of foreign forces. Air and surface advisors are uniquely kin to each other because they are fundamentally the same activity played out in different mediums. Both aviation and surface advisors assess, train, advise, and assist foreign forces. And they both provide operational level coaching and tactical level instruction to improve a foreign military's joint capability and when required, integrate joint capability into coalition operations. Side by side, air and surface advisors have achieved objectives in all four overseas theaters of operation.

Advocacy will not begin until the command internalizes aviation advisory accomplishments. Oddly enough, there appear to be more aviation advisory advocates outside the command than within. The list includes current and former United States ambassadors, deputy assistant secretaries of defense, commanders of theater special operations commands, as well as foreign defense ministers, special operations commanders, and air force chiefs. Joint counterparts like the professionals of 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group can also help validate aviation advisory contributions.

To win internal wars against subnational terrorist threats, friendly governments must learn to orchestrate their own joint combat power. United States Special Operations Command can best help by embracing a standing, joint advisory capability of multidimensional means. The command should accept and advocate tactical instruction of foreign airmen in the same manner it accepts and advocates tactical instruction of foreign soldiers. Special Forces operational detachments demonstrate weapons proficiency and small unit tactics while instructing foreign soldiers in the field. There is no good reason why combat aviation advisors should be restricted from demonstrating flying proficiency and employment tactics while instructing in the air.

### **Building a Joint Organization**

Standing aviation advisory forces should be shaped by the same vision of jointness that contours the direct action-oriented force. Each Service component brings unique and complementary skills to United States Special Operations Command. In the foreseeable future, Air Force Special Operations Command will be uniquely responsible for fixed-wing and tilt-rotor operations, while Army Special Operations Command will be uniquely responsible for rotary wing operations. The time is right to begin integrating Army special operations rotary wing assets into a new standing force of joint combat aviation advisors.

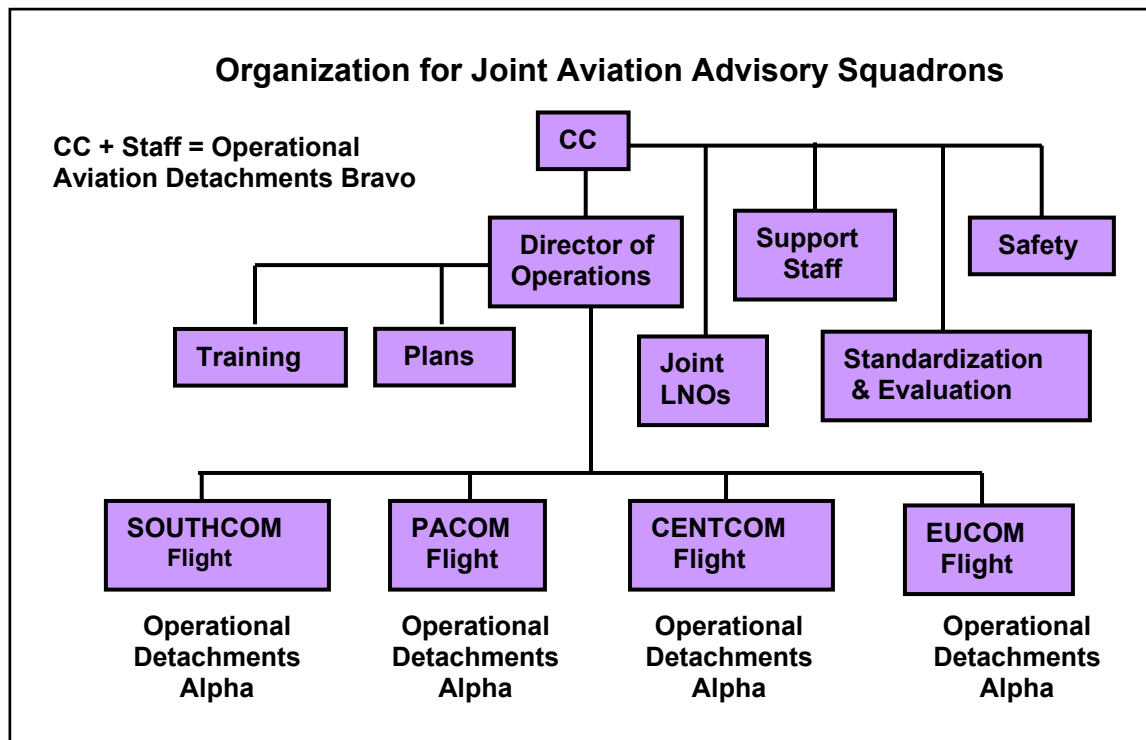
### **Squadron structure**

Any vision embracing joint aviation advisory operations must ultimately succeed at unit level. The need to preserve Service culture and proven configurations should shape unit structure. The current composite fixed- and rotary-wing configuration of the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron should be divided into separate fixed and rotary wing aviation advisory units. Both units would maintain regionally oriented forces. Air Force aviation advisors would fill the preponderance of fixed-wing advisory positions and command the squadron. An appropriate number of flying and non-flying billets for Army liaison personnel should exist within the unit. Army advisors would fill the preponderance of rotary-wing advisory positions and command the unit. Flying and non-flying billets for Air Force liaison personnel should be created. Mature units should have provisions for Navy liaisons as well. Other than equipment focus, both fixed and rotary-wing units could appear much the same as the current aviation advisory squadron configuration. See figure 25.

Regional orientation and multidisciplinary capability should remain the *sine qua non* of advisory units. By demanding such, the command can significantly increase the quantity of aviation advisory forces prepared for foreign internal defense tasking.

...one could be misled to think that all forces have regional, cultural, and language skills. In reality, the only units that the US Special Operations Command can call on for this unique capability is the Army's Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations, the Air Force Special Operations Command's 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, and a small number of Navy SEAL personnel trained to conduct foreign internal defense.<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps future commentary will cite the prudent addition of an Army special operations aviation advisory unit.



**Figure 25**

<sup>83</sup> Major Greg E. Metzger, *Unconventional Warfare: A Mission Metamorphosis for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?* Unpublished paper, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, June 2000, 77.

## Next echelon of command

Unity of command is a vital part of the joint vision. It is time to seriously consider a unique group-level organization responsible for planning and coordinating the preparation and employment of joint aviation advisors. Simply put, joint aviation advisors need a streamlined and functional command arrangement. As the proponent for aviation foreign internal defense, and the sole source of standing aviation advisory expertise, Air Force Special Operations Command should be assigned operational control of a new Joint Combat Aviation Advisory Group. The joint group will exercise operational control over aviation advisory units and ensure they are properly organized, educated and trained, manned, and equipped. This supervisory organization would be jointly staffed and commanded on a rotational basis. See figure 26 for a notional joint group staff.

### Air Force Special Operations Command

Army liaison officers should be assigned to the aviation advisory operations division of Air Force Special Operations Command. These liaisons will not only monitor daily operations, but also work to enhance joint aviation advisory capability. Further, these liaisons could provide feedback to United States Army Special Operations Command on Service-unique responsibilities regarding personnel and administrative matters. Army advisory positions on the command staff should be considered a mandatory requirement.

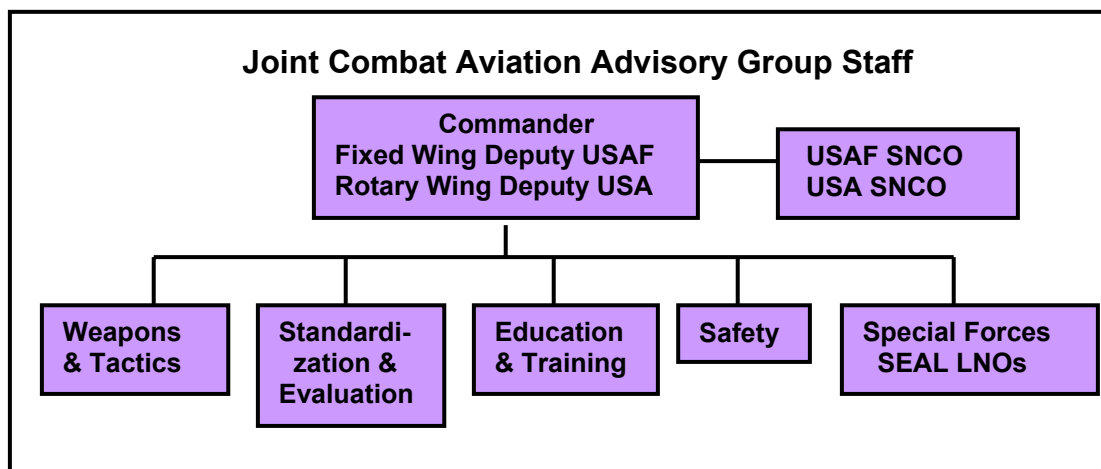


Figure 26

### United States Special Operations Command

Likewise, joint aviation advisory experience should be integrated into the staff of United States Special Operations Command. Staff personnel with advisory experience and expertise are needed to make better-informed decisions regarding aviation advisory operations.

## **Manning Options**

Joint opportunities to expand force structure include augmentation, ad hoc tasking, and building dedicated force structure. As with Service discussions, building dedicated force structure appears the most efficient option.

### **Augmentation**

Joint special operations forces could effectively augment aviation advisory teams after participating in pre-deployment task training. Previous qualification courses ensure these forces will be safe and reliable teammates in unfamiliar environments. There are some interoperability and availability challenges. Like their Air Force counterparts, joint special operations airmen rarely operate as an integral part of foreign aircrews. They must learn how to overcome language, cultural, and procedural barriers while imparting tactical flight instruction. Availability issues affect both aircrew and support personnel. Operations tempo and combat tasking will likely prevent some joint special operations forces from participating in extended advisory deployments. Finally, it may prove difficult to recycle trained augmentees for subsequent deployments.

### **Ad hoc tasking**

Theater staff officers will undoubtedly be tempted to employ line special operations units in an aviation advisory capacity. Temptations will result from unfamiliarity with complexities of the advisory environment and a lack of knowledge regarding combat aviation advisory team capabilities. Further, most staff officers at United States Special Operations Command will be unable to provide informed counsel because they lack knowledge or simply refuse to back concepts supporting the tactical employment of aviation advisory forces.

Certainly, theater assigned joint special operations flying units possess unique skills and extensive experience working alongside foreign forces. With specialized academic and experienced-based education and training, these units could function in an advisory role. Without special preparation, direct-action forces should not be put at risk instructing in foreign aircraft unless aviation advisory forces are unavailable and the expected result is clearly worth the risk.

### **Building a Dedicated Advisory Force**

United States Special Operations Command has the authority to re-designate subordinate elements as aviation advisory forces. Fortunately, United States Army Special Operations Command appears eager for its flyers to embrace the role.<sup>84</sup> Army rotary-wing professionals possess the compatible skills and experiences to become outstanding aviation advisors. Given a tailored conversion plan, Army rotary-wing personnel could become safe, reliable, and

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<sup>84</sup> Unclassified excerpt, USSOCOM/SORR Memorandum (For Official Use Only), 8 Mar 02.

interoperable aviation advisors well before other less capable forces. By combining Air Force and Army capabilities, United States Special Operations Command could narrow the gap between theater requirements and available aviation advisory forces.

Integration of Air Force and Army personnel provides an opportunity to enhance capability ahead of expected tasking. Theater requests for ground attack advisory expertise will be forthcoming. United States Army rotary wing special operations personnel have the forward-firing helicopter gunship experience required for these missions. Proactive force planners should consider manning an Army advisory unit with attack qualified flying and maintenance personnel.

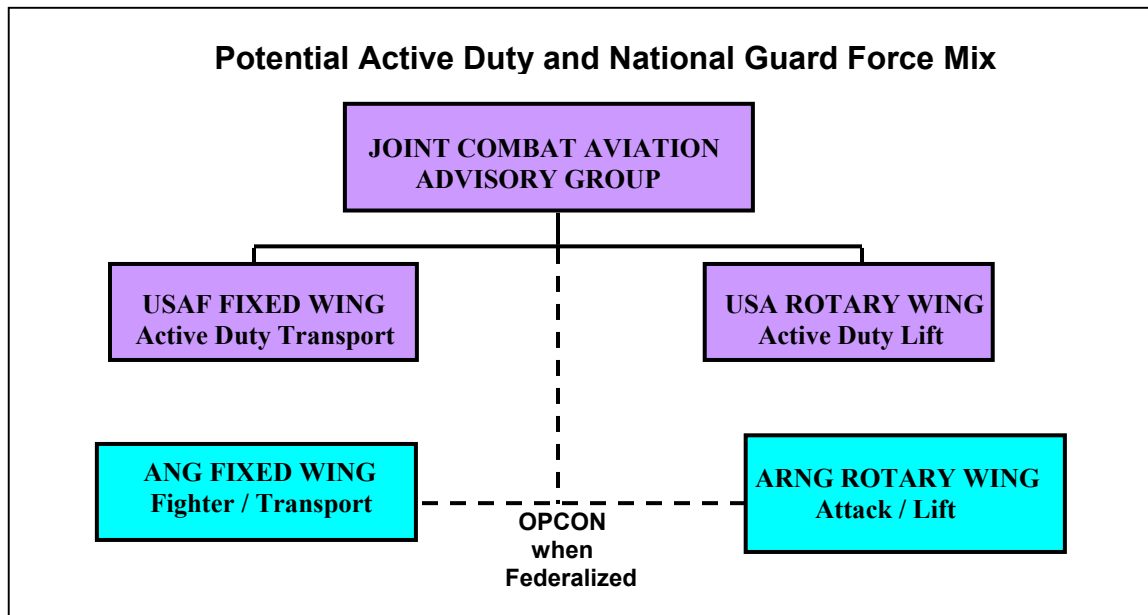
Advisory squadrons will differ in the number and type personnel required to fly and support the assigned category of aircraft. However, units should be similar when it comes to other disciplines, such as force protection, survival, communications, and intelligence personnel. It would be inappropriate to expect Army special operations forces to field an entire rotary-wing advisory unit from scratch. Experienced Air Force advisory personnel can fill open positions during a transition period. This provides a chance for Army personnel to complete the initial qualification process and then learn mission skills working side by side with Air Force counterparts. As expertise and resources permit, a steadily increasing number of Army personnel would take over key positions including command.

Screening and selecting qualified personnel remains a pivotal part of the manning process. Like the Air Force, there is no doubt that highly qualified personnel exist throughout the United States Army. Nonetheless, a strong initial cadre consisting of personnel from the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment appears to be the most efficient and expeditious means of generating combat power in a new advisory unit.

Air and Army National Guard operators could provide additional depth and breadth of experience. This would be especially true if Guard units are assigned advisory-type duties supporting the homeland defense mission. Although a near term vice immediate option, force planners should nonetheless consider re-designating air units currently assigned counterdrug, border security, counter-smuggling, and search and rescue missions. See figure 27 for a joint advisory group notionally comprised of active duty and National Guard forces.

## **Improving Education and Training**

The joint aviation advisory vision must embrace common tasks, conditions, and standards. Joint doctrine and theater requirements should continue forming the foundation of education and training programs. Every combat aviation advisor, regardless of Service, should be the product of a common pipeline course. Similarly, all aviation advisors should benefit from the same continuing education and training program.



**Figure 27**

### **Qualification pipeline**

There is every reason to enlist the assistance from the wider Joint Special Operations Forces University campus when fashioning joint aviation advisory courseware. Instructors from the John F. Kennedy School of Special Warfare could augment Air Force Special Operations School talent during classroom instruction. Likewise, United States Army Special Operations Command, the proponent for United States Special Operations Command language programs, could greatly assist efforts to institutionalize language education for all aviation advisors.

Provision must be made to accept Service regulation differences found in flight manuals and other technical data. These differences should be pointed out during qualification pipeline training, especially as they apply to flight operations. For purposes of simplicity, it can be expected that rotary wing aircraft will be operated in accordance with United States Army instructions applicable to specific aircraft types. The same will hold true for Air Force fixed wing operations. A concerted effort must be made to enhance the compatibility of Service capability, not water it down.

### **Continuing Education and Training**

Education and training programs must reinforce pursuit of common standards while fully answering Service-specific requirements. Common classrooms will be required to hone individual skills while team rooms will be help reinforce joint capability.



A Joint Combat Aviation Advisory Group should include a joint aviation advisory support squadron charged with daily oversight and supervision of education and training. Out-sourcing internal education and training services could help. Contract flight instructors and civilian education and training personnel could lower personal and unit turbulence associated with sourcing and scheduling education and training opportunities. They could also free line unit members from such responsibilities, making make additional advisors available for overseas deployment.

## **Equipping by Category**

Equipping is where the “rubber meets the ramp” because it involves money. No matter how firm the commitment to aviation advisory forces appears, it can be measured by the type and quality of assigned equipment. Fortunately, there are mechanisms available to mitigate cost. Equipment discussions begin and end with the “requirement” word. Pure and simple, advisors must be able to operate equipment other countries employ to defeat internal threats. “It must be remembered that our national policy regarding counterinsurgency is to help others help themselves. From the standpoint of hardware, this means an ultimate capability to ‘do it yourself’ on the part of the indigenous military force.”<sup>85</sup> Advisors help foreign counterparts do it better with their own equipment.

Theater special operations command mission guidance letters list aircraft requirements by category and type. Armed with this information, United States Special Operations Command’s primary task should be validating the need for advisory units to operate specific categories of aircraft (presently fixed and rotary-wing). Next, the command should promulgate funding guidance per category, and delegate validation of specific types to Air Force Special Operations Command. The new Joint Combat Aviation Advisory Group would generate validation processes by submitting a flying hour budget by category and type along with proposed training plans. This information will be gleaned from detailed advisory squadron proposals regarding category, type, flying hours, estimated cost, and funding sources.

The second task is for United States Special Operations Command to become a proponent of its own aviation advisory force. This requires serious re-consideration of unit aircraft allocation. Joint aviation advisory force aircraft needs should be prioritized alongside operations of equivalent risk. Military free fall school requirements do not compare. Other fixed-wing arrangements should be immediately investigated. Fortunately, economies of scale can mitigate the cost associated with equipping Army rotary wing advisors. Army personnel could continue to operate the two UH-1N Huey aircraft contractually funded by United States Special Operations Command. Additionally, Air Force instructors could easily qualify Army advisors in assigned and leased aircraft for minimal or no cost.

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<sup>85</sup> “Air Force Special Warfare Responsibilities.” Interview with Brig. General Gilbert C. Pritchard, USAF, Commander, USAF Special Air Warfare Center, *Data*, December 1964, pg 34.

## **Some Insights and Considerations**

Like its Air Force component, United States Special Operations Command must first commit to the aviation advisory mission before attempting to enhance and expand capability. Supporting tactical flight instruction is part of that commitment. Tactical surface force advisory operations often revolve around on maneuver and fires in the field. Similarly, tactical aviation advisory operations focus on maneuver and fires through the air. The mission is that simple. Aviation advisors complement surface force advisory efforts. Both are required to improve the joint capability of foreign forces. For United States Special Operations Command, it is time to embrace the need for a multidimensional advisory force. In today's strategic environment, multidimensional advisory needs cannot be met with one small Air Force squadron. Air Force Special Operations Command commander's guidance can help provide summary insights and considerations regarding joint opportunities.

*Keep it simple.* The conduct of joint aviation advisory operations could become a tremendously complex business. A Joint Combat Aviation Advisory Group should oversee and supervise the organization, education and training, manning, and equipping of joint aviation advisory units. The group will be jointly manned and fall under the operational control of United States Special Operations Command's proponent for aviation foreign internal defense operations (currently Air Force Special Operations Command). Air Force special operations forces will plan and execute fixed wing flight operations. Army special operations forces will have the same responsibility for rotary wing operations. Joint doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and theater requirements should govern readiness requirements. The use of basic instruction manuals and associated technical data should be permitted to preserve Service-unique capability. The Army should also commit to manning units with multidisciplinary capability.

*Make it cost effective.* The most cost effective way to enhance and expand advisory ranks is to re-designate Army special operations rotary wing elements as standing aviation advisory forces. Army special operations personnel possess advanced education and training and years of operational experience. These qualities will enable an expedient conversion to advisory operations. If theater requirements remain constant, rotary-wing aircraft currently assigned and leased to the 6<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron should prove sufficient for Army aviation advisor training.

*Think out of the box.* United States Special Operations Command has a reputation for employing non-traditional means to achieve assigned objectives. The President's commitment to train and advise foreign forces is clear. There simply are not enough trained Air Force aviation advisors to meet theater requirements. The command can enhance and expand capability by creating a Joint Combat Aviation Advisory Group with subordinate Air Force and Army units. Among other enhancements, forward-firing gunship skills would be a timely addition, regardless of whether fighter ground attack expertise becomes part of the advisory tool kit. In many ways, the only box to "think our way out of" is the one stamped "roles and missions."

*Provide immediate and near term solutions.* The best way to immediately enhance and expand capability is to re-designate elements of Army special operations rotary-wing forces as standing aviation advisory forces. Air and Army National Guard units represent near term options. A pipeline qualification course, supervised deployment, and Air Force liaison personnel can help Army elements assimilate aviation advisory capabilities. As a vocal advocate of the aviation advisory mission, United States Special Operations Command must provide resources for assigned or leased aircraft. These aircraft should be representative of the types and categories advisors will operate in foreign countries.

## Chapter 8

### TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

*They damned sure didn't teach us to fight other people's wars or to fight all wars the same way...with a sledgehammer.*

-- Brigadier General Heinie Aderholt

For advisory operations the art of the possible is largely defined by two watchwords: capability and credibility. Aviation advisors are committed to a continuous pursuit of both maxims. Building capability requires rigorous tactical training with joint forces and foreign counterparts. In an operational sense, only foreign counterparts can bestow the credibility required for a shared pursuit of common objectives.

Do aviation advisors have the capability and credibility to help friendly governments defeat internal threats? If you are inclined toward quantitative measures of merit, note that over twenty countries have relied on aviation advisors to help them combat subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, and terrorism. If you believe in qualitative measures, observe how foreign militaries organize, train, and equip to fight internal threats. If coordinated joint force operations are involved, chances are the air elements were assessed, trained, advised, and perhaps assisted by combat aviation advisors.

### Enhancing and Expanding Capability

New capability and more advisors are required to fulfill evolving needs. With the art of the possible in mind, an Air Force Special Operations Command study envisioned an aviation advisory force with “unsurpassed capability, unmatched credibility.” This vision transformed a list of enduring operational challenges into a framework of opportunities to enhance capability and increase availability. Service and joint perspectives alternatively framed a discussion of enabling concepts.

Enhanced and expanded capability would magnify existing organizational challenges. Unit level oversight and supervision could be improved by creating multiple advisory squadrons focusing on a single category of aircraft operations. A multidisciplinary configuration and regional orientation should be maintained. The Combat Aviation Advisory Group was proposed as the best means of improving oversight and supervision at the next echelon of command. The

construct provides the inherent capacity to absorb reserve component squadrons and Army special operations elements re-designated as aviation advisory forces. If expansion is limited to team-sized gains, force planners should consider assigning operational control of the advisory squadron to the 720<sup>th</sup> Special Tactics Group.

There are two viable sources of manning. Air National Guard personnel provide a near term potential to swell advisory ranks. Guardsmen may soon develop compatible aviation advisory skills supporting homeland defense tasking. Their skills and experiences may prove easily transferable to a federal foreign internal defense mission. Army special operations rotary-wing elements offer more immediate relief from manning limitations. They possess skills and experiences that would enable expeditious assimilation of advisory capability.

Education and training processes supporting qualification and continuing education and training need to be institutionalized. Both the Air Force Special Operations School and wider Joint Special Operations Forces University campuses could assist by preparing tailored course packages and tackling language education problems slowing pipeline qualification. Contract flight instructors and civilian personnel could greatly reduce the turbulence associated with sourcing and scheduling education and training for multidisciplinary advisory forces. Further, they could help reinforce common standards underwriting interoperability between composite advisory forces.

There is no substitute for proper equipment. Advisors fly training-coded aircraft to build transferable skills that mitigate risk associated with foreign aircraft operations. Unit aircraft should be representative of the categories and types flown while imparting instruction to foreign forces. Theater special operations command mission guidance letters clearly identify the category and types of aircraft expertise required for engagement and combat operations. The United States Special Operations Command should ensure adequate funding is available permitting daily access to assigned aircraft. Lease arrangements offer cost-effective, short term means to build skills in foreign aircraft. Finally, equipping by category is a mechanism that affords transparency regarding aircraft categories, types, training time, and funding sources.

Mission acceptance and advocacy is the greatest obstacle to enhanced and expanded aviation advisory capability. Staff officers at United States Special Operations Command shape current and future aviation advisory operations without requisite skill or experience. Operational deployments prevent counterparts at Air Force Special Operations Command from making much of an impact. Those lacking knowledge or refusing to acknowledge the fundamental requirement of tactical flight instruction continue preventing efficient and effective advisory employment. Air Force component responsibilities to develop a joint aviation advisory capability were largely ignored. Years of progress are being forfeited defending the air advisory capability to a joint command well known for its support of surface advisory forces. Historical precedent and national need suggest there will always be a need for aviation advisory forces.

There are perhaps two credible ways out of the mission dilemma. United States Special Operations Command can fully embrace the tactical flying mission and invest in

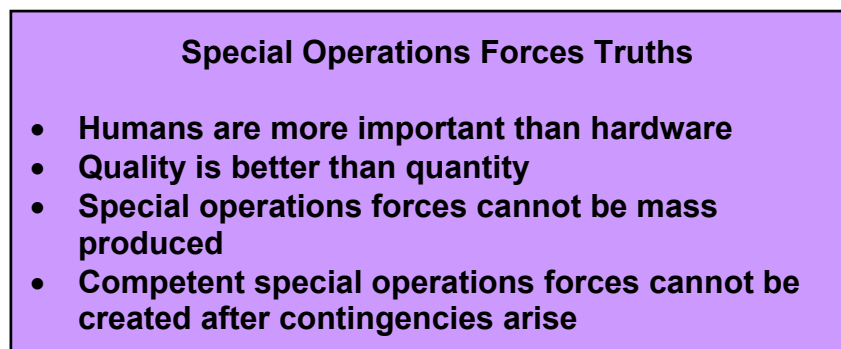
multidimensional advisory capabilities. If undoable, the Air Force should buy back the advisory capability it conceived some forty years ago. For airmen, the pursuit of advisory objectives always has—and always will—include tactical flight instruction of foreign aviation forces.

The nation waits. It is past time to turn discussion into serious analysis. These and other proposals should be scrutinized and acted upon to close the growing gap between national commitment and advisory capability. Combat aviation advisors are an inseparable part of the multidimensional capability required to achieve United States objectives through the employment of foreign forces. It would be unconscionable if a lack of mission acceptance and advocacy prevented the Air Force and United States Special Operations Command from enhancing and expanding the aviation advisory capability.

### **Honoring Special Operations Forces Truths**

An enhanced and expanded combat aviation advisory force is needed to help friendly military forces combat terrorism. With skillful planning, a dedicated special operations aviation advisory force can be raised in accordance with traditional truths (see figure 28).

*Humans are more important than hardware.* United States special operations forces have a long history helping foreign military forces employ joint resources against internal threats of subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Enhanced and expanded joint combat aviation advisory forces will continue that tradition. Highly capable aviation advisors will build the credibility and trust required to achieve national objectives through the employment of foreign forces.



**Figure 28**

*Quality is better than quantity.* A hallmark of special operations forces is small, well-trained units manned and led by carefully selected people. As part of the joint special operations community, aviation advisors hold the enduring belief that small numbers can pay huge dividends. The employment of Army Special Forces and Air Force combat control advisors validated this belief during the first phase of the war. A similar faith in joint, multidimensional advisory capability is required for foreign internal defense operations. Capability investments will be returned ten-fold by a credible and trusted force.

*Special operations forces cannot be mass produced.* Intense preparation is required to produce the individual skills and team complements that comprise advisory forces. Joint and Service doctrine, United States Special Operations Command directives, and theater requirements will remain at the heart of qualification and continuing education and training programs. Joint Special Operations Forces University and civilian professionals can help refine courseware and secure new opportunities to ensure advisory talents remain relevant to theater needs.

*Competent special operations forces cannot be created after contingencies arise.* Highly trained and constantly available units are required to achieve advisory objectives during theater engagement and wartime missions. Theater requirements have already eclipsed the availability of standing Air Force advisory forces. However, Service and joint solutions are available to enhance and expand aviation advisory capabilities. A Joint Combat Aviation Advisory Group of special operations trained forces can be activated to address immediate needs. In the current environment, prudence dictates deepening capability by thoroughly preparing National Guard elements for aviation advisory duty.

### **Unsurpassed Capability, Unmatched Credibility**

The Presidential commitment of March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002, pledged assistance to foreign forces combating subnational terrorism. Combat aviation advisors will continue providing theater special operations commands with the means to assess, train, advise, and assist foreign forces in flying, maintenance, air base defense, survival, communications, intelligence, survival, and air base defense operations. Friends and allies are counting on us to help them fight and win wars against subnational terrorism.

For the Air Force and United States Special Operations Command, enhancing and expanding aviation advisory capability is a small investment. For United States citizens who proudly serve in uniform, the dividends could prove enormous. Together with Special Forces, SEALs, and foreign counterparts, combat aviation advisors can achieve objectives precluding large, lengthy, and costly deployments of American military personnel.

On domestic and foreign ledgers, that's a good thing.

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