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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

PRESENTATION TO THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: Institutionalizing Irregular Warfare Capabilities

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Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Langevin, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for calling this hearing, and for the opportunity to provide an update on Air Force efforts to institutionalize capabilities for Irregular Warfare (IRREGULAR WARFARE) and other matters important to our Air Force and to the Nation. In particular, I will address the following questions:

- 1) Has the Air Force fully recognized that "irregular warfare is as strategically important as traditional warfare"?
- 2) What institutional and policy challenges remain, given future operating environments and fiscal constraints?
- 3) Are Air Force forces properly postured to deal with future irregular warfare challenges?
- 4) Are current Air Force directives, doctrine, and frameworks developed, in place, and aligned?

The importance of irregular warfare and the level of institutionalization can be gauged by the changes made and frameworks put in place to ensure relevant and enduring capabilities. The simple answer to both is "yes." To quote the Air Force Chief of Staff, "We listen. We evaluate. We learn. We adapt."<sup>1</sup>

Our Chief notes that Airmen and Air Force capabilities provide additional strategic alternatives to national leaders and combatant commanders. When the U.S. engages in irregular warfare, the Air Force is a part of the larger joint, coalition, interagency effort. In this context, strategic maneuver room supports a preferred solution in irregular warfare that is organic to the nation in question through its police or security forces. Failing that, the next best solution is to

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<sup>1</sup> Gen Norton A. Schwartz, CSAF, "Airpower in Irregular Warfare," Lessons Learned Report, 8 September 2008

bring in external, but regional, support. When U.S. forces and "allied or coalition forces" are called upon, it is best if they are employed to improve host-nation or regional capabilities.

Airpower directly contributes by establishing a secure environment in which the partner nation can flourish, ultimately without direct assistance. By assessing, training, advising, assisting, and equipping a troubled partner air force, Airmen can contribute to that nation's sovereignty and legitimacy while creating opportunities for economic growth, political development and stability.

Our primary challenge going forward is to balance those requirements for essential irregular warfare capabilities with those needed for other potential conflicts. The Air Force does not view this "balancing" as a zero-sum, either-or proposition of irregular vs. traditional warfare, but as an opportunity to optimize the force for efficiency and effectiveness while minimizing risks across the full spectrum of military operations. The Air Force recognizes that an increase in capabilities relevant to irregular threats may also result in an overall increase of efficiencies in major combat capability, especially acknowledging we organize, train, and equip forces to be adaptive and agile for operations against varied threats in multiple and diverse environments. In any postulated security environment, Airmen must also be statesmen and citizens who are capable of operating independently, semi-autonomously, and as an integral part of a military, interagency or international team to accomplish diverse missions.

While the Air Force has a long history of adaptation for irregular warfare, beginning with General Pershing's employment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Aero Squadron and continuing through the present day, airpower is most often associated with its classic use—direct confrontation to disrupt and defeat the enemy. Nevertheless, while we have achieved some success throughout our history in building capability and conducting irregular warfare, significant capabilities and capacities were lost in the aftermath of each major conflict as budgets and missions contracted. Some of the

pioneering labors in aviation foreign internal defense (FID) within the USAF date back to the Greek civil war immediately following World War II. These efforts were closely followed with assistance to the South Korean Air Force in the early 1950s. In parallel with President John F. Kennedy's establishment of the U.S. Army Special Forces in 1961, General Curtis E. LeMay, then the Air Force Chief of Staff, established the 4400<sup>th</sup> Combat Crew Training Squadron (CCTS). Nicknamed "Jungle Jim," the squadron was based at Hurlburt Field, Florida, with a twofold mission: counterinsurgency training and combat operations. After the Vietnam War, the air advisory units faded away and multiple special operations wings were dispersed to Air Mobility Command and Tactical Air Command. The advisor skill sets languished on the periphery of USAF missions until the standup of the 6 SOS in 1994 under AFSOC, and funded by USSOCOM. Reinvigorated after 2001, the Air Force implemented lessons learned from Vietnam and from experience gleaned in two decades of AFSOF engagement in Foreign Internal Defense to establish and employ these capabilities in the General Purpose Forces (GPF) for Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Air Force has demonstrated further agility and adaptability of our traditional aviation capabilities for irregular warfare. The asymmetric advantages of projecting airpower into the irregular environment have proven invaluable in the areas of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, mobility, combat search and rescue, information operations, command and control, armed overwatch, and close air support. Furthermore, adaptations of B-1 and B-52 employment, availability of remotely piloted aircraft, and introduction of new capabilities, like the MC-12W, have responded well to operational requirements. They are minimizing response time to troops in contact, expanding the number of combat air patrols, shortening the find, fix, track, target, engage, and assess chain, and enhancing prosecution of targets while minimizing

collateral damage and the associated negative public reactions and perceptions. The Air Force has also made significant gains in adapting to the requirement for precision, low-collateral damage, and low civilian casualty fires with investment in additional joint terminal attack controllers, as well as research and development in relevant third-generation munitions.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, to satisfy the appetite for relevant and actionable information, intelligence units now integrate all-source intelligence and distributed common ground system capabilities to meet combatant command requirements via rapid and global intelligence dissemination—often from distributed locations in the United States. Other notable materiel solutions providing full-spectrum effects and capabilities include: the Joint Direct Attack Munition, the Small Diameter Bomb, the Remotely Operated Video Enhanced Receiver (a situational awareness game-changer), advanced targeting pods, the Joint Precision Aerial Delivery System, and a host of specialized sensors. These kinds of capabilities allow for precise methods to defeat irregular threats while positively influencing populations to create outcomes that benefit U.S. strategic objectives.

To counter ubiquitous improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the Air Force implemented numerous counter-IED capability efforts with both hardware and personnel solutions. Efforts are ongoing to publish counter-IED guidance in revisions to current publications, write an Air Force-specific counter-IED operations publication, make counter-IED additions to the Air Force Universal Task List and unit type code mission capability statements, and include counter-IED operations in the unit inspection process.

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<sup>2</sup> Third generation refers to weapons with precision guidance and commensurate precision effects—first generation weapons were fragmentary munitions of WWII, and second-generation weapons were precision-guidance and fragmentary bomb munitions.

Air Force electronic, network, and information warfare personnel have been highly effective in defeating a variety of tools employed by our adversaries, and have achieved desired effects across the entire cyberspace domain and electromagnetic spectrum. These operations remain a vital precondition for the vast majority of military operations, often resulting in their own operational and strategic effects.

Beyond these more kinetic-type activities, the Air Force is building the capability to develop partner nation air forces. We are expanding capabilities for security force assistance and building partnership capacity with the central focus on our Airmen. The Air Force goal is to help partner nations develop a holistic and sustainable *aviation capability* that contributes to their security, government legitimacy, and stability by overcoming irregular adversaries, terrorist networks, drug cartels, and criminal organizations, and, as a consequence, prevents lethal threats from emanating from fractured or failing states. This effort focuses, first, on creating or improving the capability and capacity of the infrastructure supporting air operations. Airmen training and advising in capabilities like air traffic control, airfield management, logistics, supply, maintenance, command and control, and security, help create sustainable foundational capabilities for aviation operations to prevent or deter the types of threats listed previously. Because of the dual use of aviation, many of these efforts overlap with civil capabilities and lead to transportation options that create good governance, trade, and revenue. This is why development of aviation capabilities should be a whole-of-government effort. Air Advisor efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq have demonstrated the benefits of developing holistic aviation capabilities. For example, the U.S. Air Force just transferred the management of the Baghdad/Balad Airspace Sector to the Iraq Civil Aviation Authority (ICAA) on the first of October. Iraq's air traffic controllers are now directing the movement of all aircraft within the

area; the busiest and most complex airspace in Iraq. Organizationally, the Air Force has flexed to meet the requirement to build or rebuild the aviation enterprises in Iraq and Afghanistan with the 321<sup>st</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing Iraq Training and Advisory Mission and the 438<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing NATO Air Training Command-Afghanistan. As these units plan to draw down, the experience gained in the performance of these missions are being captured and incorporated into an enduring air advisor capability.

Aviation enterprise development is not a new idea; we have helped to develop aviation capabilities with a number of partners since World War II. In Colombia, the Air Force provided crucial support that significantly improved Colombia's military capabilities, directly resulting in unprecedented recent successes by the Colombian military in its COIN campaign against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. These key aviation capabilities included command and control, ISR, information operations, air mobility, agile combat support, and combat search and rescue. Air Force assistance was wide-ranging and comprehensive, from tactical-level training by mobile training teams, to foreign military sales assistance for C-130 parts, to strategic-level initiatives such as the 10-year Plan Colombia program, which provided funding and training which represented a long-term commitment by the U.S. Government. Aviation enterprise development has proven to be applicable to the full range of willing partners, from emerging nation-states to near-peers. This example underscores the imperative for long-term, integrated and patient engagement.

An analysis of Future Capabilities Game 2009 (FG09), directed by the Air Force Chief of Staff and led by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans & Requirements, examined USAF Irregular Warfare strategy and associated documents for shortfalls in enabling IRREGULAR WARFARE force structure development. Among the study's key findings was the

acknowledgement that to build and sustain irregular warfare proficiency requires fulfilling two competing mission sets. First, possessing the full capability to engage an asymmetric enemy directly, and second, assisting a partner nation to develop a credible air force and basic infrastructure. Furthermore, a recent Air Force Lessons Learned conference highlighted the need for further guidance on air advisor operations. In response, the Air Force has developed a draft air advisor operating concept; tactics, techniques, and procedures; and a standardized planning and assessment framework for building partner nation aviation enterprises.

The 2011 Budget Control Act poses an enormous challenge to the Air Force in the Air Force's efforts to retain these capability advances. In the immediate future our focus will be on:

- Continuing to provide the air, space, and cyber control that combatant commanders have come to expect. Simultaneously, we will continue to defend our homeland while remaining fully prepared to protect American lives at home and abroad.
- Cultivating new partnerships that enhance our friends' aviation enterprises and their ability to provide for their own security. Our air advisor program is a crucial step in that direction.
- Continuing delivery of remotely piloted combat air patrols to meet theater-level ISR demands, and solidifying our plan for steady-state, remotely piloted aircraft operations over the long term.
- Seeking broader global access to bases. We will expand our ability to operate from diverse airfields across the world to provide effective power projection in the future.
- Sustaining our Political and Regional Affairs Strategist programs, as well as foreign language programs to facilitate robust engagement with an ever-growing number of international partners.



Let me conclude my testimony with what, in my view, is the central question of the committee's inquiry: "Are Air Force forces properly postured to deal with future irregular warfare challenges?"

The Air Force is prepared to conduct the full spectrum of missions associated with irregular warfare direct and indirect action, effectively and efficiently. As part of the FY12 budget, we exceeded our efficiency target by \$5 billion and identified \$33.3 billion in efficiencies in an effort to make resources available to better support warfighter and readiness programs across the FYDP. The realization of these efficiencies will allow us to reallocate funding to modernize and recapitalize weapons systems, improve capabilities and enhance warfighter operations. Many of these enhancements will improve our capabilities for irregular operations such as:

- Repurposing 5,600 active duty billets over the FYDP to support ISR capability, U.S. Pacific Command force structure requirements, Total Force Integration, the U-2 continuation, and building partnership capacity;
- Recapitalizing the aging special operations forces MC-130H/W aircraft;
- Improving the aircraft computer infrastructure of the B-52 to enable more rapid machine-to-machine retargeting;
- Transitioning MC-12W Liberty Project from Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding into the Air Force baseline budget beginning in FY13;
- Continuing maximized production of the MQ-9 Reaper to ensure delivery of 65 combat air patrols by the end of FY13; and
- Extending U-2 operations through FY15 to ensure a smooth high-altitude transition.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The USAF Fiscal Year 2012 Air Force Posture Statement, 17 February 2011

Beyond these enhancements the Air Force has demonstrated a commitment to sustained preparation for irregular warfare. The Air Force appointed a Senior Executive Service member to lead an organization at Headquarters Air Force to institutionalize irregular warfare-related doctrine and capabilities. Nested under the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, the Irregular Warfare Directorate provides the Air Force a focal point for integrating a balanced operational approach to irregular warfighting that is congruent with doctrine, strategy, and policy to fully exploit Air Force competencies for the joint force and maximize the value of multiple use airpower capabilities.

Operationally, the Air Force is adding an additional mission to contingency response wings and groups in Air Mobility Command, Pacific Air Forces, and U.S. Air Forces Europe to build the security capacity of partner nations. Units will be habitually aligned with specific regions of the world to support building partnerships operations. Additionally, two mobility support advisory squadrons, forming the core of our general purpose force security force assistance capability, were established at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey and Travis Air Force Base, California. In addition to organizational changes, the Air Force has made training and education adaptations. The USAF significantly shifted its paradigm for employing Airmen after 2001. Our traditional operations, which were organized around the launching of aircraft and the posturing of forces to ensure aircraft sortie generation, evolved to include operations where Airmen were being required to operate “outside the wire” in higher threat environments, serving in roles traditionally filled by the land forces.

To meet these new requirements, Airmen needed to be trained with combat skill-sets which fully prepared them for these types of operations. Over the past decade, the Air Force has successfully institutionalized expeditionary skills training to meet this transformational

requirement. These skills are obtained through a tiered training approach, and have been continually evaluated and adjusted to ensure they remain relevant, synchronized, standardized, and integrated across the Air Force. Expeditionary skills training is incorporated across an Airman's career and aligned with mission-tasking and deployments. To help implement this tiered training, and to provide advanced mobility skills, the Air Force established the Expeditionary Center at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, a center of excellence for advanced combat support training. The Expeditionary Center teaches over 90 courses to meet emerging theater entry requirements, and has established a disciplined training process that ensures the right skills are taught at the right time.

Seeing education as the gateway to change, Air University has actively adjusted its curriculum to reflect the dynamics of irregular warfare. The Air War College includes a significant exploration of irregular warfare across the core curriculum, as well as in specific elective courses. Courses on joint and interagency capabilities and planning considerations include a specific lesson on irregular warfare, with the objective of analyzing and assessing the nature of irregular warfare, the new joint counterinsurgency doctrine, current and future capabilities and limitations, and employment considerations of military and other instruments of national power in joint military operations. The Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) presents a robust series of lectures, seminars, and readings related to irregular warfare topics. All three ACSC departments address topics related to irregular warfare in their resident and distance learning programs. In a similar manner, the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, the Air Force's graduate-level professional military education program, includes irregular warfare lessons in six of its eleven courses, comprising approximately 15% of the overall curriculum.

Additionally, AETC established an Air Advisor Academy and has trained over 2,000 personnel to fill the role of expeditionary advisors. The mission of the Air Advisor Academy is to provide a rigorous, relevant, and flexible continuum of education and training to Airmen, so they are capable of applying their aviation expertise to assess, train, educate, advise, and assist partners in the development and application of their aviation resources to meet their national security needs, in support of U.S. National Security Strategy objectives. The academy is permanently based at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, and is capable of producing 1500 students per year. While the initial graduates had been focused on air advising in Iraq and Afghanistan, The Air Advisor Academy is now developing a more robust curriculum to cover operations globally. In the past few months, the Academy has trained an initial cadre for the mobility support advisory squadrons aligned with the USAFRICOM and USSOUTHCOM areas of responsibilities. Examples of future air advisor academy curriculum include improved training for mobile training teams, Air National Guard State Partnership Program participants, and air component theater command planners. The Air Force's goal is to create a more robust planning process in support of DOD—wide efforts to improve theater security cooperation plans.

In parallel with the effort in education, the Air Force has published and is updating relevant publications to address how the Air Force organizes, trains, equips, and conducts operations across the spectrum of conflict. This includes the Air Force Doctrine on Irregular Warfare and Foreign Internal Defense, the Air Force Irregular Warfare Operating Concept, the Global Partnership Strategy, the Air Force Irregular Warfare Strategy, the Air Force Air Advising Operating Concept, and the Building Partnerships Core Function Master Plan.

Recognizing that our personnel are our most valuable asset, and the vital role Airmen play in conducting successful irregular warfare activities working with, through, and by partner

nations, let me highlight the following: Rapid Engineers Deployable Heavy Operations Repair Squadron, Engineers, or RED HORSE, are engaged in humanitarian construction projects in every theater—building schools, clinics, well-drilling, and sanitation projects. Our Airmen lead and are members of provincial reconstruction teams, empowering Afghan local governments. A variety of Air Force specialists, including judge advocates, are deploying with the Army civil affairs teams, legal mentor teams, counternarcotics and law enforcement teams, and investigatory and forensics teams. The Air Force Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps offers support and advice on irregular warfare missions. International health specialists assigned to expeditionary medical groups provide state-of-the-art care to U.S., coalition, and partner nation militaries and civilians.

While all these capabilities have been developed, tried, and institutionalized in our policy, doctrine, budget, and organization, there is still room for improvement in retaining, building, and sustaining the capabilities required to work with, through, and by partner nations, regardless of developmental state, to ensure the security of U.S. national interests. We recognize this challenge and continue to assess all lessons learned and balance them against opportunity and resource constraints to ensure Air Force relevance in the future.

In closing, the Air Force flies and fights in air, space, and cyberspace—globally and reliably—as a valued member of our joint and coalition teams, with over 29,000 airmen in and around Afghanistan and Iraq, as we unwaveringly do whatever it takes to prevail in today’s wars. The Air Force stands ready to win today’s joint fight and plan for tomorrow’s challenges. We are committed to working together to institutionalize capabilities and capacities to meet the irregular challenges facing the military, coalition partners and our nation.