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## HOST NATION AIR POWER: THE RCAF'S BEST CHANCE AT A SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT IN SMALL WARS

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**JCSP 46**

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## **HOST-NATION AIR POWER: THE RCAF's BEST CHANCE AT A SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT IN SMALL WARS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Most contemporary conflicts, even those waged between superpowers, are fought through small or proxy wars where a conventional military force is engaged against non-state or sub-state actors. Conventional military forces must innovate to maintain the asymmetry advantage over their opponents. This asymmetric advantage can be gained through the basic principles of finding, shaping/deterring and responding in a timely fashion, principles that air power is especially efficient at delivering with minimal boots on the ground.<sup>1</sup> While the contribution of air power to small wars is critical, its tenet of flexibility clashes with the air power characteristics of fragility, impermanence and support dependency. Although mighty, Western air power is extremely resource intensive to project over the long term and has only limited scalability. Recent participation in small wars monopolize Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) capabilities for extended periods of time and in turn reduces its ability to react to the rise of new domestic and international threats.<sup>2</sup> This was exemplified by restricting the deployment of Canadian CH-147F to Mali to only 12 months to address domestic operational capability gap concerns.<sup>3</sup>

This reduced capacity to react must be addressed as the rise of new (or reemerging) super-powers, globalization, climate change and other factors such as

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<sup>1</sup> Kainikara Sanu, *Essays on Air Power* (Canberra Australia: Air Power Development Center - Australia, (2012), 55.

<sup>2</sup> Goette Richard, *Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*, Canadian Department of National Defence, (2020), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, *Canada's Task Force Mali* 6.

competition are transforming our security environment. Even with the threat of near-peer conflict, Canada must remain engaged in small wars to ensure its relevancy, ally interoperability and credibility. However, small wars are long wars, thus innovative strategies must be employed to prevent erosion of RCAF capabilities through undue wear on personnel and equipment.

One of these strategies is the empowerment of Host-Nation (HN) or indigenous air power through various diplomatic, informational, military and economic means (DIME). This paper argues that the RCAF must draw on its strength of training and advise to re-focus its contribution to small wars by empowering HN air power and leveraging their legitimacy in support of national regional stability. This essay will firstly demonstrate the failure to learn of air power's over-promise in small wars, secondly it will explore the advantages and necessary conditions for HN air power to thrive and finally explore potential RCAF contributions to HN air power.

Of note, this essay will use small wars, counter insurgency operation (COIN), and irregular warfare (IW) interchangeably as it is not the intent of this essay to dispute the doctrinal differences of these terms.

## **THE OVER-PROMISE OF AIR POWER IN SMALL WARS**

*The conventional army loses if it does not win. The guerilla wins if he does not lose.*

— Henry Kissinger, *Foreign Affairs* January 1969

The theme of over-reliance on air power in small wars is not new. It can be traced back to the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the colonial era of 1919-1939 with the introduction of the notion of air-control "... in which is asserted that airpower ought to be

the primary force in colonial military operations."<sup>4</sup> Small wars continue to evolve and have been adapted by a more patient enemy intent on disrupting the "Western concept of short, decisive wars."<sup>5</sup> The enemy seeks to protract the duration of small wars as a direct attack on the prohibitive cost of conventional air power. It also attacks moral of Western air forces in that even with overwhelming arms supremacy, no success is achieved beyond the tactical level. Air power is flexible but very resource intensive and specialization to address these costs is unlikely as "Air Force senior officials place a singular focus on low probability, worst-case conflicts with advanced state actors such as China, North Korea, or Russia."<sup>6</sup>

With these notions in mind, this section will confirm the tactical necessity of air power in small wars. It will then highlight that tactical success and short sighted measures of effectiveness (MOE) have blinded some air power strategists to ignore the resulting underwhelming strategic outcomes.

### **Tactical Gains and Innovation**

Air power through its functions of sense and sustain, has and continues to demonstrate its tactical value. Early adopters took note of the Marines' extensive use of aerial reconnaissance in Nicaragua (1912 to 1934) and its use of aerial resupply where in 1920, they transported over 900 000lbs and 1500 passengers to "...[supply] the mail, and the payroll...also air-dropped ammunition, medical supplies, and rations to the deep-

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<sup>4</sup> James Corum and Wray Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars - Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, University Press of Kansas, (2003), 51.

<sup>5</sup> John T. Farquhar, "Airpower and Irregular War: A Battle of Ideas," *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 1 (Mar 22, 2017), 51.

<sup>6</sup> H. Mark Clawson, "Break the Paradigm: Prepare Airpower for Enemies' "most Likely Course of Action", *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 2 (Jun 22, 2017), 40.

penetration patrols.”<sup>7</sup> The value of aerial resupply and Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) is as true today. It has been exemplified in the Manly Report requesting Chinooks in Afghanistan and by the Combined Force Air Component Commander (CFACC) of Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP) stating “ISR is a driver, not an enabler for airpower.”<sup>8</sup> These examples most often contribute directly to tactical military necessities in small wars and do not directly address strategic goals of a broader whole of government (WoG) approach.

It is accurate to counter, that at times, air power is used with little tactical value but rather for purely strategic purposes (often aimed inwards). This was the case in 1916, when General Pershing was ordered by President Woodrow Wilson to cross into Mexico in pursuit of Pancho Villa. The JN-3 "Jenny" bi-planes of the US Army First Aero Squadron, which were at the time un-armed, suddenly received a random shipment of 3-inch artillery shells so that Washington authorities could relay to the newspaper that their aircraft had bombs.<sup>9</sup>

Even if in small wars the balance between sound tactical employment of air power to directly enable strategic objective remains elusive, participation itself can be argued as beneficial. Air power may not turn the tides in small wars, but it is a birthplace, or live testing ground from where new ideas and technologies can be experimented with. An early example is in 1919-1920 during the American Haiti/Dominican-Republic war

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<sup>7</sup> Corum and Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars - Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, University Press of Kansas, 2003) 35, 39.

<sup>8</sup> 26, CBC News · Posted: Oct and 26, 2010 1:58 PM ET | Last Updated: October, "FAQ: How Canada Procured New Military Helicopters | CBC News," <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/faq-how-canada-procured-new-military-helicopters-1.940250> (accessed Apr 9, 2020); Todd Phinney, *Reflections on Operation Unified Protector*, Joint Force Quarterly, no. 73 (2014) 89.

<sup>9</sup> Corum and Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars - Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, University Press of Kansas, 2003) 17.

where Marines were forced to develop the tactics of dive-bombing to support ground forces in close proximity to the enemy (Bandits).<sup>10</sup> In Afghanistan, it was also a testbed for highly complex command and control (C2) evolutions. As an example, the roles of the Air Component Coordination Element (ACCE) as a coordination element evolved to be responsive to the demands of the Joint Force Commander (JFC), while trying not to compete with a CFACC who was responsible for all centralized execution at the strategic level (all while meeting the operational demands of the 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force).<sup>11</sup> These evolutionary steps in air power emerged in small wars but they cannot be linked to long-term strategic victories.<sup>12</sup>

### **Biased Measures of Effectiveness**

Air powers contribution in small wars is often boasted as successful and significant. The British of the colonial era, and especially Trenchard, would argue that the air-control doctrine worked well given the success against the 1919-1920 rebellion in Somaliland and the subsequent policing-by-air of Iraq.<sup>13</sup> However, the mistake in this assessment of success, is the same mistake made today with modern joint air campaigns such as OUP in Libya. Air power success is measured through a purely military lens while the conflict as a whole represents a strategic, regional, medium to long-term failure. It is true airpower can be effective in small wars as demonstrated by the US special forces

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<sup>10</sup> James Corum and Wray Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars - Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, University Press of Kansas, (2003), 28.

<sup>11</sup> Lyon Charles and Stone Andrew, "Right-Sizing Airpower Command and Control for the Afghanistan Counterinsurgency", *Air & Space Power Journal* 25, no. 2 (2011).

<sup>12</sup> Air power evolved tremendously after a decade in Afghanistan. But, small wars are too long and Western popular support as has forced last US presidents to draw up complex and sometimes hasty plans to repatriate troops from the Middle East. In Afghanistan, the US is now negotiating with its enemy, the Taliban, after a debatably fruitless decade long engagement.

<sup>13</sup> Corum and Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars - Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, University Press of Kansas, (2003), 52.



in Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan October 2001 to March 2002) with its extensive use of close air support (CAS) or even in the 1920s when CAS was first introduced as a new domain or a novel disruptive technology against Sandino's (Sandinistas) army in Nicaragua.<sup>14</sup> Temporary successes like these encourage proponents of air-power centric COIN strategists such as Air Force MGen Charles J. Dunlap to offer that "Instead of 'clear-hold-build', airpower could provide an alternative 'hold-build-populate', where airpower could help create safe havens ..."<sup>15</sup> Conversely, as Colonel Drew proposes, these conventional war notions forget that in prolonged small wars the insurgency is "largely immune from classic airpower interdiction and strategic attack, being too small, too dispersed, and too blended into the populace for attack."<sup>16</sup> Examples of appropriate MOE of air power in small wars do exist, such as the 1958 United States Air Force (USAF) contribution to the Lebanon insurgency. They focus largely on the non-kinetic contributions that were far more effective and holistic in direct support of national strategic policy.<sup>17</sup>

Proponents of air-power centric COIN often rely on outdated and largely irrelevant kinetic metrics/MOE such as the number of CAS sorties flown, tonnage of ammunition dropped, rates of expended precision guided munition etc.<sup>18</sup> Dr. John T. Farquhar and Colonel Drew accurately pose the thesis that "In irregular war, first and

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<sup>14</sup> Center of Military History, *Operation Enduring Freedom: October 2001-March 2002. United States Army in Afghanistan CMH Pub.* (Washington, D.C: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2004), 11; Corum and Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars - Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, University Press of Kansas, 2003), 36.

<sup>15</sup> Farquhar, "Airpower and Irregular War: A Battle of Ideas," *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 1 (Mar 22, 2017), 51.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 52.

<sup>17</sup> May Michael Perry, "Non-Kinetic Air Power Against Insurgency: Lebanon, 1958," *Canadian Aerospace Power Studies* 3 (2011), 84, 93.

<sup>18</sup> Rebecca Grant, *Airpower in Afghanistan - how a Faraway War is Remaking the Air Force*, Mitchell Institute Press,[2009]).

foremost, airpower is an instrument of politics. No matter how spectacular its technological potential ...”<sup>19</sup> Thus, air forces in small wars must understand that their MOE cannot be solely military, and that “The support role of Airpower (e.g., reconnaissance, transport, and so on) is usually the most important and effective mission in a guerilla war.”<sup>20</sup>

More contemporary thinkers such as Col John Jogerst, USAF, propose Western efforts should be based on the creation and support “indigenous airpower” and “foreign internal defense (FID)” with a heavy emphasis on creating Western IW Wings dedicated to indigenous force mentoring and building .<sup>21</sup> This strategy of HN empowerment has been employed, to a certain degree in the Middle East over the last decade and can provide the RCAF with lessons observed.

Fundamentally, the RCAF must ensure its actions benefit the HN and itself with appropriate MOE to solve disconnect between the tactical and strategic, as well as to address the “lack of genuine succession planning for airpower use following the withdrawal of contributing nations”.<sup>22</sup>

## **BUILDING EFFECTIVE HOST NATION AIR POWER**

*Better the Arabs do it tolerably than you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are there to help them, not win it for them.*

— T.E Lawrence, *Arab Wars Twenty-Seven Articles Art.15*

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<sup>19</sup> Farquhar, "Airpower and Irregular War: A Battle of Ideas," *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 1 (Mar 22, 2017), 51.

<sup>20</sup> Corum and Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars - Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, University Press of Kansas, 2003), 427.

<sup>21</sup> John Jogerst, "Preparing for Irregular Warfare - The Future ain't what it used to be," *Air & Space Power Journal* 23, no. 4 (2009).

<sup>22</sup> C. Harmon, "Airpower in Irregular War: A Crucial Component that Requires Careful Employment for Asymmetric Advantage" Canadian Forces College, 5.

The Middle East has seen the re-birth of two indigenous air forces after their collapse during their respective wars. The Iraqi Air force (IqAF) and Afghan Air Force (AAF), both of which have had their successes and challenges. This section will demonstrate that for HN air forces to succeed, their added legitimacy and efficiencies must be leveraged.

Insurgencies are often about seizing popular support to oppose current government or suppress local populations. Insurgencies can easily manipulate narratives to portray the West as corrupt capitalists in their territories to simply exploit the native population and resources. The West must be able to maintain local legitimacy which is perhaps harder but just as important as international legitimacy. For this, the West must be seen as enablers and supporters, not as puppet masters.<sup>23</sup> This is especially true if it is to be welcomed in nations reticent of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) presence.<sup>24</sup> The center of gravity in small wars has often been labeled as “the people”. This supports the notion that a successful strategy of empowerment has to be more than the simple provision of air effects.<sup>25</sup>

HN air power fueled by national pride can accomplish feats and effects that are unforeseen to western biases. Aeromedical evacuation can enhance the moral of HN security forces and air mobility can extend government legitimacy to previously unreachable outlying precincts.<sup>26</sup> Such an example is the legitimizing of the AAF with

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<sup>23</sup> Boera Michael, "The Combined Air Power Transition Force: Building Airpower for Afghanistan - ProQuest," *Air & Space Power* 24, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>24</sup> Willi Bernie, "Shoulder to Shoulder the Need to Cultivate an Air Advisor Capability within NATO," *Joint Air Power Competence Centre*, no. 17 - Transformation & Capabilities (2013).

<sup>25</sup> Farquhar, "Airpower and Irregular War: A Battle of Ideas," *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 1 (Mar 22, 2017), 51; Goette Richard, *Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*, Canadian Department of National Defence, (2020), 55.

<sup>26</sup> *The Air Force Approach to Irregular Warfare* (Canberra Australia: Australian Air Publication, 2011), 5-2.

helicopters airlifting Muslim pilgrims out of remote and inaccessible regions for the Hajj.<sup>27</sup> In a world where anti-access/area denial continues to be a concern, local legitimacy is a far more effective method of self-defense than any hi-tech piece of Western equipment. Legitimacy of the AAF is further enhanced by its ability to bring its own soldiers to the fight and providing CAS with its own forward air controllers along with indigenous rotary (MI-35) and fixed wing platforms (A-29 Super-Tucano).<sup>28</sup> Empowering HN air power is perhaps the most effective manner in which we can leverage the intimate cultural understanding and the patience of a force that transcends Western political cycles. The famous phrase: “You have the watches but, we have the time.” could extend to many of the small wars the RCAF has been involved in.<sup>29</sup> Though the use of HN as an effective means of delivering air effects is seldom contested, the frictions and diverging points of view occur over equipment. Hi-tech versus low-tech approaches are exemplified with the IqAF F-16 and AAF A-19 Super-Tucano. This divergence in resourcing HN also extends to East versus West to leverage influence or retain economic benefits such as issuing H-60 Blackhawks or Russian Mi-17s to the AAF. Fundamentally, legitimate HN air forces endowed with the “people’s” support may not need to pursue the technological defeat of enemy advanced weapons systems if they are more effective at eroding the will of their opponents to use them.

Contributing to HN empowerment will likely be part of a coalition effort and require a tailor-made solution that maximizes the returns for both the HN and Canadian

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<sup>27</sup> Boera Michael, "The Combined Air Power Transition Force: Building Airpower for Afghanistan - ProQuest," *Air & Space Power* 24, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Solomon Eva, "Fighting in Afghanistan: 'You have the Watches. we have the Time'," *MacLean's*, Sep, 2017.

WoG efforts. Fortunately, by flattening the organization and with institutions such as the RCAF Aerospace Warfare Centre (RAWC), the RCAF is well postured to leverage its intellectual and institutional agility to devise optimal solutions.

## **POTENTIAL RCAF CONTRIBUTIONS**

RCAF contributions should be specifically aimed at smaller nations that are involved in prolonged regional conflict or nations that could be described as failing or failed (in a state of rebuilding). This filter is essential as early engagement with these HN, who are at the forefront of regional conflicts, can ensure that NATO and countries like Canada avoid getting bogged-down in decade long conflicts.<sup>30</sup> As outlined by air power professor and author Dr. Goette, a strategy of capacity building in such countries selected by the government would complement wider Government of Canada (GC) capacity building strategies and support foreign interest outlined in *Future Security Environment 2013-2040*.<sup>31</sup> This section will outline the RCAF's probable role of training and advise followed by how it can effectively integrate HN kinetic effects and end by highlighting the dangers of a simple Air Force to Air Force training and advise model.

### **Training and Air Advisory role**

Canada has a long and proud history of delivering aircrew training. Its most notable contributions have been the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) where Canada trained upwards of 130,000 aircrew and the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) where this tradition of excellence continued during the cold war and

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<sup>30</sup> *The Air Force Approach to Irregular Warfare* (Canberra Australia: Australian Air Publication, (2011) 5-1.

<sup>31</sup> Goette Richard, *Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*, Canadian Department of National Defence, (2020), 53.

today.<sup>32</sup> The RCAF possesses two strong advantages for the training and advisory role: geography and institutional framework.

First, Canada's geography provides all round natural protection by its oceans and US border. Furthermore, Canada's vastness and low population density provides it with the required airspace to carryout military flying training. These airspace attributes were beneficial in the past and will be even more so in the future. Contrary to civilian flying training where airspace can be shared, military flying requires dedicated airspace to accommodate the dynamic maneuvering of fighters, the extremely low flying of tactical aviation, the employment of weapons and the use of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Second, due to unification in 1975, all air assets fall under one unified command. This provides the RCAF with a holistic vision of what air effect can deliver in the joint environment. This small, unified and institutionally based service provides a more realistic template for potential HN allies and finally, it furthers its legitimacy through its diversified and professionally educated officer and non-commissioned members (NCM) cadre.<sup>33</sup>

The long-term strategy of HN capacity building is scalable and could be conducted in geographical locations ranging from the HN sovereign territory, regional proximity, or even Canada, thus offering the GC options in terms of the amount of deployed personnel and risk. This scalability of risk is advantageous when trying to develop HN military and civil aviation capabilities through a WoG approach in that civil

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<sup>32</sup> "The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan - the Second World War - History - ." <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/second-world-war/british-commonwealth-air-training-plan> (accessed Apr 2, 2020).

<sup>33</sup> Goette Richard, *Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*, Canadian Department of National Defence, (2020), 56.

air advisors, government or otherwise, could contribute without unnecessary exposure to risk.

Training HN personnel, civil or military, is of primordial importance for HN air power to be credible and sustainable. The RCAF, through sound air-mindedness, understands the criticality of training/capability generation and has demonstrated this by the addition of the air force function “Generate” within its own doctrine.<sup>34</sup>

### **Pitfalls in Partnering for the Delivery of Kinetic Effects**

NATO has demonstrated continued success in delivering kinetic effects through complex air campaigns as evident by the conflicts in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. There is considerable research on the strategic effectiveness of these air campaigns and on the benefits of target destruction versus collateral damage and perceived local legitimacy.<sup>35</sup> As the merits of bombing campaigns and drone deep strikes are being debated, the RCAF must look inwards at its ability and appetite to navigate in these politically sensitive topics. For prolonged COIN, it has been noted that an air advisory capacity building role is a more palatable and sustainable option for countries like Canada as it would reduce its foot print and decrease its casualty rate.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps more importantly, it would allow NATO and the RCAF to focus solely on narrow but relatively intense periods of offensive air operations and letting newly empowered HN air forces to provide long term continuity (at a decreased intensity) of these possibly controversial kinetic effects.

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<sup>34</sup> *Royal Canadian Air Force Doctrine*, Department of National Defence, (2016), 28.

<sup>35</sup> For a recent example, one can look at the controversial effects of the UAV strikes in Pakistan under the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) “Signature Killings” policy as seen in the documentary *Unmanned: America's Drone Wars*, YouTube, *Unmanned: America's Drone Wars*. (2015)

<sup>36</sup> Goette Richard, *Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*, Canadian Department of National Defence, (2020), 54.

Certain pitfalls do exist with this off-load of strikes to HN. Coalition of like-minded nations already have different legal interpretations and appetites for delivering kinetic effects as evident in OUP and Operation IMPACT.<sup>37</sup> These frictions could be amplified with a HN who's value for life, tolerance for civilian casualty and views on the Laws of Armed Conflict may differ even more than traditional western nations. As air power is typically centrally controlled and de-centrally executed, HN may be getting their intelligence from Canadian sources. If the CAF is part of the targeting chain, it cannot dissociate itself from these ethical challenges. Hence, the training and advise mission must not limit itself to the trigger-pullers but focus on HN air power holistically to include its C2 and support functions.

Although there are many success stories surrounding HN air power, there are also many told and untold stories about frictions.<sup>38</sup> For the RCAF, cultural friction could arise as HN traditional values and local practices may not be in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and Canadian specific initiatives such as Operation HONOR and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) sensitivities.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, this is not a RCAF-only challenge and as a Canadian WoG initiative it should not be seen as a barrier, but rather an opportunity that will take time and nourishment by all parties involved.

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<sup>37</sup> Jason R. Greenleaf, "The Air War in Libya," *Air & Space Power Journal* 27, no. 3 (Mar 1, 2013), 41.

<sup>38</sup> Untold stories based on author's personal visit while deployed on Op ATHENA to the U.S. mentored Afghani Mi-17 helicopter unit located on Kandahar airfield in 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Goette Richard, *Preparing the RCAF for the Future: Defining Potential Niches for Expeditionary Operations*, Canadian Department of National Defence, (2020), 57.



## It Takes a Whole Air Force

Opponents of air advisory training will point out that with trade shortages such as pilots, maintainers and air traffic controllers, assisting a HN is a luxury the RCAF cannot afford until it has resolved its own personnel recruiting and retention challenges.

Nonetheless, it is a mistake to view HN empowerment as a “pilot training” mission. For HN air forces to be successful, the “Sustain” function must also be empowered. In fact, as of 2007, the USAF Air Advisory Academy (AAA), stated that 75% of airmen/airwomen who were employed as air advisors were not from the aircrew or maintainer trades and that the requirement for air advisor would exceed their schools capacity.<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless, LTC Andy Hamann, USAF commanding the 52d Expeditionary Flying Training Squadron who trained IqAF pilots in Iraq remarked that:

“Regardless of Squadron 203’s operational autonomy, it has virtually no maintenance capability, primarily due to underdeveloped English-language and technical-training programs for its maintainers. Thus, for the foreseeable future, the IqAF will continue to rely on US contractors to complete basic and scheduled maintenance as well as daily flight-line maintenance”<sup>41</sup>

This ongoing dependency of HN on western nations is a potential training and advise niche for the RCAF to employ trades (officer and NCM) that are not experiencing shortages. LTC Hamann further describes fears of deterioration of the IqAF as there is great doubt on their ability to provide the basics such as airfield security, airfield management and even aircraft refueling. This problem also expands when considering the need to recruit, pay and retain these HN servicemen. This example highlights the

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<sup>40</sup> Michael A. Keltz, "Getting our Partners Airborne: Training Air Advisors and their Impact in-theater," *Air & Space Power Journal* 28, no. 3 (May 1, 2014), 7, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Andy Hamann, "Partnership between the US and Iraqi Air Forces: One Airman's Perspective," *Air & Space Power Journal* 26, no. 1 (Jan 1, 2012), 61.

vulnerability of a simple Air Force to Air Force train and advise model when a WoG approach is critical for any lasting HN empowerment solutions.<sup>42</sup>

Fundamentally, the RCAF possesses the right training and air advisory experience, the proper intellectual agility to navigate cross-culture frictions and sound air-mindedness to ensure a balanced contribution to any indigenous air forces.

## CONCLUSION

As shown, the RCAF must leverage HN empowerment by innovating with its training and advise expertise and leverage a WoG approach to harmonize tactical, operational and strategic effects. More research can be conducted to examine the success and failures of middle eastern HN air forces over the last ten years to guide the RCAF in its next small wars engagements. The RCAF, even with personnel shortage in select trades remains well postured to assist in this manner to support broader GC international initiatives while retaining its ability to respond to new challenges.

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<sup>42</sup> Derek Read, "Airpower in COIN: Can Airpower make a Significant Contribution to Counter-Insurgency?" *Defence Studies* 10, no. 1-2 (Mar 1, 2010), 126-151.

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