
Trouble in Costa Mesa: An Airpower Case Study in Peacetime Engagement

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[The view and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and in no way represent official policies or positions of the United States Special Operations Command, the Lockheed Corporation, or the United States Department of Defense. Further, any resemblance of the notional nations of Costa Mesa and El Sol to any actual country is purely coincidental.]

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth in a series of articles by the authors addressing various approaches to applying airpower in Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), and now more broadly, in peacetime engagement. The first article, "Airpower in Foreign Internal Defense," examined the difficulties the U.S. military faces in providing appropriate airpower tools to friendly governments facing insurgency and narcotics production and trafficking.¹ The second article, "Toward an Integrated U.S. Strategy for Counternarcotics and Counterinsurgency," discussed the numerous policy development and interagency coordination dilemmas the United States must resolve to provide effective airpower capabilities against narco-trafficking and insurgency, especially in the Andean Ridge countries.² The third article, "Building a Practical USAF Capability for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)," analyzed the requirements for, and organizational structure and charter of a USAF FID aviation unit capable of providing timely, appropriate, and tailored airpower assistance to friendly regimes.³

In this paper, we go beyond recommending that a FID aviation unit be formed within the special operations community, and present a hypothetical case study of a fictional Latin American country facing an active insurgency and growing narcotics trafficking. This country formally requests, through diplomatic channels, special U.S. assistance to restore stability and counter the major internal threats to its national survival.

¹ Colonel August G. Jannarone and Mr. Ray E. Stratton, "Airpower in Foreign Internal Defense," a paper presented at the 58th Symposium of the Military Operations Research Society, Annapolis, Maryland, U.S. Naval Academy, 3 June 1990.

² *The DISAM Journal*, Winter 1990-91, pp. 51-58. Also presented at the 2nd Annual SO/LIC Symposium sponsored by the American Defense Preparedness Association, Washington, D.C., 9-11 December 1990.

³ Colonel August G. Jannarone and Mr. Ray E. Stratton, "Building A Practical United States Air Force Capability for Foreign Internal Defense," *The DISAM Journal*, Summer 1991, pp. 80-91. Also presented at the 59th Symposium of the Military Operations Research Society, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, II-13 June 1991.

TROUBLE IN COSTA MESA

The notional Costa Mesa was one of the first Latin American countries (in 1962) to reject its right wing military government and adopt a democratic, republican form. Almost 70 percent of its population of 4.9 million turned out for the 1995 general elections, and not a single left wing candidate was elected to provincial or national office, although a few did win seats in municipalities. One of the reasons for this remarkable and continuing popular support of democracy was the improving Costa Mesa economy. Although somewhat flat due to the 1991-95 recession in the western hemisphere, the economy reached a GNP of 36.5 billion in 1992. Per capita income increased slightly that year to \$1050, with the labor force almost equally divided between agriculture, industry and commerce, and government services. The country is a producer of textiles and wood products, and exports cocoa, coffee, hemp, bananas, sugar, flowers and fish. Tourism is starting to increase, thanks to miles of beautiful Pacific Ocean beaches and low prices.

There is, however, growing concern among senior government officials and businessmen. A guerrilla movement, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Costa Mesa (FPLCM), thought to have been eradicated shortly after the democratic republic was founded in 1962, has recently resurfaced and has been staging attacks on rural villages, police stations, and polling places. The budding tourism industry has been particularly hard hit. Some of the older weapons captured by the National Police after the attacks have been traced to government elements in the bordering country of El Sol, while others are modern, state-of-the-art weapons of U.S. and European origin. Concurrent with the rebirth of the FPLCM, increased transshipments of cocaine through Costa Mesa have been noted. Government officials suspect, but have little hard evidence, that the narco-traffickers are funding the guerrilla movement. Their objective seems to be to cause the government to focus its efforts on the insurgency, thereby offering the narco-traffickers less opposition to their increasing operations in Costa Mesa. Additionally, they may also be planning to enlist FPLCM support to secure their transshipment, staging, and distribution sites. The Costa Mesa military is poorly organized, trained, and equipped to combat this dual threat to internal stability and political legitimacy of the government. For years their weapons, organization, and training have been for conventional defensive operations, as reflected in their order of battle.

Costa Mesa Military Forces

Army: 4,400 men (No compulsory military service)

Navy: 195 men (6 fast patrol boats, 9 river craft)

Air Force: 840 men

5 C-47 transports

9 UH-1B helicopters

5 Avro Skyvan transports

2 C-130A transports

6 Tucano trainers (capable of employing weapons)

Maintenance and logistics support for the Costa Mesa military are at low levels of effectiveness. Less than half the assigned aircraft are operational on a given day, and tactical flight training is very limited. Intelligence and communications functions are rudimentary, and the military services rarely coordinate their activities. Although the officer corps is generally well-educated, the average enlisted person has only seven years of school. There appears to be little that the Costa Mesa military can do to counter the reemerging FPLCM insurgency, and the growing narco-trafficking, beyond providing increased security for public buildings, utilities, and the larger urban area transportation nodes.

THE USAF FID AVIATION GROUP IS ALERTED

Daily interface between the Costa Mesa military and U.S. Defense Attaches and Security Assistance Office (SAO) personnel has revealed the deepening concern of the leadership over the increasing instability and lawlessness in the country. Police reports and intelligence information are routed to both countries' national intelligence agencies and ultimately to U.S. military units, including the Florida-based Foreign Internal Defense Aviation Group (FIDAG), recently formed under the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). This unique joint service organization was designed to assist small foreign aviation forces in combatting internal, unconventional threats and in conducting nation-building. The alert from in-country intelligence and political sources came as no surprise to the FIDAG personnel; its operators and intelligence analysts had already identified Costa Mesa as a likely trouble spot and possible location for supportive aviation FID mission activities.

The Group staff immediately begins the required preliminary military and interagency coordination to permit an in-country survey of the threats and host country military capabilities and deficiencies. A team of operations, intelligence, logistics, and communications specialists is formed and begins intensive pre-deployment analysis of the situation. Because some of the Costa Mesa Air Force (CMFA) assets are obsolete or foreign aircraft, a few civilian contract maintenance and logistics specialists are selected from a stand-by pool to augment the military team. An Army Special Forces NCO and Army Aviation Center helicopter pilots are requested as well. All survey team members speak some Spanish, and are oriented in the history, customs, culture, and political-military issues of the region. After three weeks of fast-paced study, the survey team is ready to depart for Costa Mesa, with a stop enroute at the headquarters of U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) for guidance and a theater in-briefing from the CINC's staff. The next step will be a coordination visit with Country Team members at the U.S. Embassy in Costa Mesa's capital of Buena Vista.

PERSPECTIVE AND GUIDANCE FROM THE REGIONAL CINC

The thirteen (13) man aviation FID survey team spent two days at USCINCSOUTH's headquarters, receiving staff estimates of the military capabilities, threat level, international relations considerations, and political circumstances of Costa Mesa. The team was advised that peacetime rules of engagement applied to them while in the country, that they would be under the military operational control of the SAO Chief, and that they would provide an in- and out-brief to the Ambassador's Country Team at the U.S. Embassy.

The USCINCSOUTH J3 (Director of Operations) and J5 (Director of Plans and Policy) indicated that they also would expect a brief-back from the aviation FID personnel on the assessment survey findings, and they anticipated that the CINC would want a similar briefing. A final caution was given: the results of the survey were not to be understood by the government or military of Costa Mesa, or by the U.S. Ambassador and Country Team, as a list of requirements or needs that the U.S. would agree to meet. The nature and extent of any subsequent delivery of training, advice, or assistance, would be determined after balancing other U.S. regional interests, concerns, and commitments. There were legal, fiscal, and diplomatic tests to be passed, and on-going regional assistance and cooperation programs (of USSOUTHCOM, and non-DOD national level agencies) had to be considered before making commitments to Costa Mesa.

WITH THE U.S. COUNTRY TEAM IN BUENA VISTA

Upon arrival in Costa Mesa, the FID Survey Team was greeted by SAO personnel, and taken to the Embassy Chancery building for a series of scheduled appointments with several of the Country Team (Embassy key staff/section chiefs) sections, i.e., Defense Attaché Office (DAO),

Security Assistance Office (SAO), Political Officer, Economic Officer, Narcotics Assistance Section (NAS), and the Commercial Attaché. After a day of discussions on purposes of the survey, host military sensitivities, political issues, threat background, and individual and team procedures/restrictions to be followed, the SAO was cleared to put the team in contact with the Costa Mesa military authorities who would profile the visit and approve survey sites.

Key issues for the Country Team included the following: survey personnel had to be thoroughly professional, non-committal, and non-judgmental; no new perceptions should be generated in host military units (as far as possible) concerning additional economic aid, military assistance, or diplomatic agreements, at this stage. Finally, the survey team was to avoid critical comments on Costa Mesa's foreign and internal security policies, or speculation on El Sol's possible involvement in the insurgent guerilla or drug trafficking problems in Costa Mesa. If the Country Team's instructions were not always completely clear as to intent, they were nonetheless the position and instructions of the Ambassador, and would be scrupulously adhered to. No doubts remained in this regard.

THE FIELD SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The 13 team members were as follows: 1 team leader, USAF Colonel, senior planner/aviator; 2 maintenance officers: 1 USAF fixed wing and 1 Army helicopter; 2 logisticians: 1 USAF supply and distribution specialist and 1 Army transportation and procurement specialist; 2 current pilots: 1 USAF fixed wing STOL transport and 1 Army helicopter; 2 senior aircraft mechanics: 1 USAF fixed wing STOL and 1 Army helicopter; 1 Combat Controller; 1 Special Forces operations NCO; and 2 civilian contractors with expertise in Costa Mesa non-standard and foreign systems: 1 airbase operations and sustainment specialist and 1 light aircraft repair and overhaul technician.

The survey team briefed the Costa Mesa Armed Forces Joint Staff contact personnel on their purpose, general procedures, desired field site visits (suggested by the SAO, DAO and Commercial Attaché), and nature of their data collection approach (checklists, interviews, and report/assessment outline). Then, after some clarification on security assistance versus deployments-for training (DFT) approval channels, and on the team's limits of authority, field visits were approved for the next 5 days.

The team visited the main military/civilian airfield in Buena Vista, and two forward airfields (one near the El Sol jungle border; the other in the far northwest of the country, on a rugged section of the Pacific coast). They had good (but not total) access to aircrew members of most aircraft types, as well as to mechanics, supply personnel, ground trainers, and unit commanders and staffs. There was a general sense of cooperation at each site after the in-brief to each senior commander, and a detailed explanation of methodology and theoretical possibilities of future assistance, should the CINC and both governments concur in the findings and approaches to improving capabilities.

The logistics structure was discovered to be a major weak link in the capability chain: supply discipline was poor; parts accountability was lax; and storage and stock control procedures were rudimentary. Also, requests for supply/repair support from outlying sites and field activities (especially deployed, patrolling units) were not prioritized, and a significant percentage went unfilled. In a number of cases grounded aircraft could have been repaired with parts available in Buena Vista.

Maintenance was limited primarily by the lack of certain tools and Spanish language technical publications, and secondarily by the low technical training levels of the newer mechanics and shop

specialists—budgetary pressures of the past two years had taken their toll on the central aviation maintenance school.

In operations, the pilots were found to be good aviators, but poor mission planners. They understood their aircraft, but planned poorly for tactical employment—especially with respect to detailed coordination with ground/maritime units, who were largely foot mobile. There was a sense that they could in fact work well jointly, but needed some procedural and tactical suggestions at the operational levels—planning, air-ground employment schemes, and joint post-mission analysis.

The survey results were debriefed, in order, to the Costa Mesa site commanders, Joint Staff, SAO, Country Team (assembled), and the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM, the Ambassador's number 2 man). The Ambassador was unavailable. After general understanding and concurrence had been attained, the survey team departed and traveled to Panama to debrief the SOUTHCOM staff, and then USCINCSOUTH himself—who immediately called the Ambassador in Costa Mesa, to compare reactions and understanding. The reactions of the Ambassador and USCINCSOUTH were similar and positive. The survey team had passed a crucial test, returning to their Florida base with approval and direction to prepare and forward a Country FID Aviation Plan.

THE COUNTRY FID AVIATION PLAN FOR COSTA MESA

At Group headquarters, an assessment team set to the task of analyzing the survey data and reports, and drafting a plan for assisting the Costa Mesa Air Force (CMFA). A matrix analysis of basic FID aviation tasks applicable to the Costa Mesa situation identified required CMFA capabilities (Figure 1). Additional matrix analysis matched available assets with tasks and identified shortfalls (Figure 2). From these studies, a pattern of analytical findings emerged that led to the categorization of needs at four separate levels:

Level 1: Basic deficiencies or inadequacies that limit routine unit functioning, training, and operational capacity. Costa Mesa Air Force (representative) findings: (1) aircraft spare parts/subcomponents have partial or no documentation of receipt, shelving date, and shelf life; (2) one-for-one part issue/turn-in is not enforced; and (3) electronic components are not sealed for storage or protected from excess water vapor.

Level 2: Training, education or equipment/procedure familiarization deficiencies or inadequacies that limit operational capability improvements or long term readiness. Costa Mesa Air Force (representative) findings: (1) pilots are inadequately trained in flight mission detailed planning, and are especially unprepared for low level and/or night operations planning; (2) air-ground coordination for air weapons delivery and photo reconnaissance target verification is inadequate, and frequently ignored, and joint operational safety and mission effectiveness are therefore compromised.

Level 3: Operational level planning, coordination, logistics support or C³ deficiencies or inadequacies limit or prevent effective air support of ground, maritime, and non-military operations. Costa Mesa Air Force (representative) findings: (1) exercise and operational plans are developed by force type, not jointly, and they are collected only at Joint Staff level for resourcing decisions and macro-level deconfliction; and (2) post-mission analysis is rarely done at service/unit level, and is never attempted jointly, e.g., air-ground mission effectiveness assessment.

Level 4: Major system modification, upgrading, or new acquisition requirements exist that currently limit operational capabilities of the unit, the Service, or joint force. Costa Mesa Air Force (representative) findings: (1) AVRO SKYVAN transport aircraft require an extended range fuel

tank modification to permit long endurance counterdrug and counterguerilla photo reconnaissance and electronic intelligence flights; and (2) UH-1B helicopters should be replaced with higher altitude, greater payload models, such as Bell 214ST, Bell 412, or at least UH-1N (6 replacement helicopters are initially recommended).

The team focused on Levels 1 and 2 deficiencies (needs) and recommended assistance teams as follows, in a time-phased approach, with the goal of restoring or providing a self-sustaining capability:

Assistance Team 1: Aviation Supply Management (basic) SMEE

Composition: 3 NCOs, 1 contractor representative
Duration: 60 days
Funding: FID AVN Group (O&M)
Timing/sequence: Oct 95, or ASAP/1st

Note. A "Subject Matter Expert Exchange" (SMEE) allows FID personnel to practice Spanish, observe foreign supply operations/equipment, and refine instructional techniques in a cross-cultural context. In theory, the Costa Mesa Air Force will reciprocate the exchange within 24 months by sending senior logistics NCOs to the FID AVN Group in Florida.

Assistance Team 2: Avionics Component Management/Repair DFT

Composition: 1 officer, 2 NCOs, 2 contractor representatives
Duration: 90 days
Funding: FID AVN Group (O&M)
Timing/Sequence: Jan 94/2nd or 3rd

Note: As the FID Group is particularly interested in the TUCANO and AVRO SKYVAN aircraft, the unit will fund this Deployment For Training (DFT) as overseas mission training and professional development. Objective is to demonstrate asset preservation, expedient repairs, electronic test set exploitation and component overhaul, through military or manufacturer support systems, as applicable.

Assistance Team 3: Air-Ground Surveillance, Targeting and Weapons Selection MTT

Composition: 2 pilots (fixed wing), 1 pilot (helo), 2 CCT NCOs, 1 air intelligence officer, 1 intelligence NCO (targeting/ target materials specialist)
Duration: 75 days
Funding: Security assistance (TRNG Program)
Timing/Sequence: Nov 94/3rd

Note: This Mobile Training Team (MTT) would provide—if approved at all levels—for the establishment of a mini-air-ground internal defense operations training activity, staffed by Costa Mesa operators and intelligence personnel on a rotational basis from all Services and major field units. Basic threat identification, assessment, and prioritization would lead to technique training in weapons selection, application, coordination and deconfliction.

Assistance team 4: Long-Range Patrol Support and Sustainment MTT

Composition: 2 pilots (helo), 2 pilots (fixed wing), 1 SF NCO, 1 air intel NCO, 1 ground intel NCO, 1 CCT NCO
Duration: 90 days
Funding: DOD/DOS counterdrug funds
Timing/Sequence Jan 95/4th

Note: This MTT, under auspices of both Embassy NAS and SAO, would focus on teaching and reinforcing procedures for joint operations to infiltrate, resupply, support and exfiltrate long range reconnaissance, and ambush teams. Air-ground communications, detailed air mission planning, escape and evasion, personnel recovery and air fire support would be covered.

With the draft FID Aviation Country Plan ready, the team began the briefing and adjustment process which would lead to approvals (and funding authorizations) by the involved headquarters and agencies. Appropriate contractor support was specified, and contractual level-of-effort estimates were developed.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN: STAYING FLEXIBLE

Only 45 days have elapsed since the Costa Mesa government requested U.S. assistance in its struggle against insurgents and narco-traffickers threatening internal stability. During this short period the in-country situation has deteriorated alarmingly. Guerrillas have attacked electrical power distribution systems, destroyed several key railroad and highway bridges, and have started a random urban bombing campaign to terrorize the public and demoralize the public security forces.

The well-planned, phased infusion of FID assistance is adjusted accordingly, and a reprioritization of tasks is swiftly accomplished. "Must have" capabilities for counterinsurgency are now given the highest precedence. The planned visits of Costa Mesa Air Force logisticians, maintenance personnel, aircrews, communications and intelligence specialists to U.S. training sites are suspended. If the Costa Mesa Air Force is to be effective against the guerrillas, it must be able to fly. The FID aircraft maintenance team is augmented with two additional U.S. technicians for each critical type of aircraft in the Costa Mesa combat inventory. Half of these technicians are contracted from civilian aircraft maintenance and logistics support firms. The supply team is increased to provide immediate training in all applicable disciplines, with a combat resupply focus.

An organic CMFA intelligence capability is virtually nonexistent. There are no airborne collection platforms or trained visual reconnaissance specialists, and the assigned intelligence analyst positions are filled by essentially untrained entry-level enlisted personnel. As was done years before in Morocco, the U.S. will have to provide sufficient "sterilized" intelligence to enable the CMFA to operate until their organic capability improves. Four experienced LIC intelligence analysts are added to the team, and channels for releasing essential intelligence are approved by the Country Team, USCINCSOUTH, and U.S. intelligence community coordinators in Washington. Assignment of an unmarked light, twin-engine aircraft with disguised SIGINT/COMINT capability is approved. It will serve both as a collection platform and flying classroom for CMFA electronic/intelligence technicians accompanying the U.S. mission crew. Two palletized ELINT packages for installation in the AVRO SKYVAN are ordered, but will not be available for several months. Security assistance funds will pay for these.

A quick reaction military-contractor team is activated to fly in with generic side-firing gunship weapon systems for installation in C-47 aircraft. Not now daring to send the pilots selected to fly the gunships back to the states for extended training, the U.S. instructors originally slated to qualify the CMFA aircrews in Florida are deployed to Costa Mesa to start immediate ground and flight training. The specific weapons/aiming systems qualification is simple compared to teaching the absolute necessity of positive target identification, and ground coordination/approval prior to firing.

Air-ground communications are unreliable, unsecure, and unavailable. Secure FM and UHF radios are loaned from the U.S. inventory until delivery can be made of security assistance funded identical communications equipment—in about six months. The guerrillas are quick to notice that

they have lost one of their most valuable intelligence channels: unprotected Costa Mesa military communications.

Counter-narcotics activities of the CMFA are temporarily put on hold until the guerrillas can be brought under control. Traffickers are not a direct threat to the short term survival of Costa Mesa. The planned assistance in Psychological Operations, Civic Action, and internal air transport for infrastructure support is realigned to directly support the counter-guerrilla campaign. Maintaining popular support for the government, and protecting the population, are the key objectives as the counterinsurgency effort intensifies.

Eight weeks pass and guerrilla attacks continue to increase. By this time, however, the AC-47 gunship crews are nearing full tactical qualification. U.S. intelligence analysts, working alongside their CMFA counterparts, have pinpointed three major guerrilla staging and training bases near the El Sol border, and have determined that they are receiving arms transshipped through El Sol. Tucano aircraft, each with a USAF pilot flying behind his CMFA counterpart, have developed an effective daylight visual reconnaissance and reporting capability. With the installation of night vision goggle (NVG) compatible lighting by another quick reaction military-contractor team, they extend their surveillance capability into the night. The operational readiness (OR) rate of CMFA combat and transport aircraft has slowly improved to almost seventy percent.

Military intelligence teams have determined through COMINT intercepts that a major attack will be launched shortly against the capitol of Buena Vista. The Costa Mesa Joint Staff elects to preempt the guerrillas, although all elements of the CMFA and the Costa Mesa Army are not fully prepared. U.S. advisors assist in the planning and coordination of the preemptive counter-campaign. Ground reconnaissance teams and their U.S. Special Forces advisors report the guerrillas massing for attack, and track their locations continuously. Most of the CMFA aircraft have been quietly moved to forward, remote strips to prevent telegraphing planned strikes to the guerrillas.

At dawn, just twelve weeks after the arrival of the FID Aviation Survey Team, the CMFA and Costa Mesa Army launch combined air-ground attacks on the largest guerrilla bases. The battle rages throughout the day and into the night. Losses are comparatively heavy on both sides, but by afternoon of the second day, the badly mauled guerrilla force starts to withdraw toward the El Sol border. The CMFA AC-47s dog them along the way. Many guerrillas drop their weapons and flee into the jungle. Only a handful escape. Before the Costa Mesa joint force can regroup for new attacks, the other two battalion-size guerrilla forces begin withdrawing to El Sol. The worst is over. Strangely, the FID aviation advisory personnel were nowhere to be seen in Buena Vista during the attack. Having been prohibited from fighting alongside their counterparts by Congress, the rumor circulated that they had a three-day Pacific shore beach party.

EPILOGUE

The effectiveness of the joint strike against the guerrillas enabled the FID Aviation Country Plan to get back on track. Carefully selected CMFA personnel are phased into essential training courses at the U.S.A. John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the USAF Special Operations School, the Inter-American Air Force Academy, the School of the Americas, and several conventional forces training schools. Careful monitoring of guerrilla activities insures that no significant surprise attack occurs, and a border patrol, surveillance, and reporting program is begun.

Civic action gets into high gear, with CMFA-FID advisor teams demonstrating water well drilling, providing combined medical assistance teams, and advising on building village schools with locally available labor and tools. Psychological operations specialists repeat the successful

Salvadoran ploy of dropping leaflets offering \$400 for every automatic weapon turned in—no questions asked. Over 1300 weapons are purchased by the Costa Mesa government in three weeks. A host government campaign similar to one carried out in Guatemala twenty years earlier pledges that no one in the Costa Mesa government or military will tolerate dishonesty or corruption. Posters with an easily recognizable logo are prominently displayed in all major towns and villages. Few are torn down or defaced.

With the guerrilla threat reasonably under control, many of the technical capabilities developed by the CMFA for counterinsurgency are employed against the drug traffickers. The first CMFA SKYVAN is equipped with an ELINT package and soon collects intelligence pinpointing narcotics storage sites and several transshipment airfields. SOF-trained Costa Mesa Army teams are inserted for additional reconnaissance and surveillance. CMFA helicopters transport a mixed team of Costa Mesa military special purpose forces and National Police for a predawn strike on two of the storage sites. Both are destroyed and several dozen people are taken into custody. American DEA officials accompanying the Costa Mesa forces describe the operation as effective and professional.

The FID Aviation Advisory Team now draws down to a single officer and NCO at each principal training base and field operating location. TDY professional exchange visits and MTTs are used to maintain military-to-military ties. With U.S. assistance, one of the CMFA C-130A transports spends three weeks at Duke Field, Florida, training with the 711th Special Operations Squadron, then competes in the annual USAF Airlift Rodeo at Pope AFB against USAF and NATO air and ground crews. The biggest part of the FID aviation advisory mission is over. The total cost of the efforts for Costa Mesa: less than the purchase price of a single modern jet fighter. No U.S. advisors were killed, wounded, or captured.

A government-to-government communication is received in Washington from the President of Costa Mesa expressing appreciation for the crucial assistance of the FID teams and the several U.S. government agencies that provided non-military material and personnel support. In due time it is also received at the headquarters of the FID Aviation Group but cannot be delivered to the FIDAG Commander. He and many of his key staff personnel are enroute to central Africa for a site survey to assist in combatting huge locust and beetle infestations threatening the food supplies of three small countries in USCINCEUR's area of responsibility.

With this notional case study, the authors have attempted to illustrate that the stylized FID Aviation Group mission is doable, low-cost, and can be highly effective in aiding certain friendly or allied governments in combatting insurgency, lawlessness, and narcotrafficking. Preliminary planning is currently underway to create such an organization under USSOCOM. Perhaps its first employment will be in a country similar to Costa Mesa.

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