



# NEWSLETTER



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# Irregular Warfare

A SOF  
Perspective

*Observations, Insights, and Lessons*

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CENTER FOR ARMY LESSONS LEARNED

SUPPORTING THE WARFIGHTER



# Irregular Warfare: A SOF Perspective

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## Introduction

In this edition of the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Special Operations newsletter, we will examine the special operations forces (SOF) perspective of irregular warfare (IW) at the operational and tactical levels through a selection of articles and an academic study by military and civilian authors.

IW is “a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will.”<sup>1</sup>

*Countering Irregular Threats Joint Operating Concept (JOC)* version 2.0 identifies the problem of IW as “adaptive adversaries such as terrorists, insurgents, and criminal networks as well as states increasingly resort(ing) to irregular forms of warfare as effective ways to challenge conventional military powers. Advances in technology and other trends in the environment will render such irregular threats ever more lethal, capable of producing widespread chaos, and otherwise difficult to counter. These threats are enmeshed in the population and increasingly empowered by astute use of communications, cyberspace, and technology, such that their impact extends regionally and globally. Many of these conflicts are essentially contests for influence and legitimacy over relevant populations.”<sup>2</sup>

SOF attempt to solve the problem of IW by preventing, deterring, disrupting, or defeating irregular threats, with the primary emphasis on prevention. There are five activities SOF employ to counter the threat: counterterrorism (CT), unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID),<sup>3</sup> counterinsurgency (COIN), and stability operations. Four out of these activities (CT, UW, FID, COIN) are considered SOF core activities, with SOF also leading the effort in stability operations.<sup>4</sup>

This newsletter should not be considered all-inclusive. This is an effort to capture relevant articles published in recent professional journals and from the CALL and other joint archives to inform Soldiers on relevant observations, insights, and lessons and provide a historical document for future reference.

In many instances, the ideas presented in these articles are personal opinions and in some cases not approved joint or Army doctrine. The recommendations in these articles should always be validated with the latest approved Army and joint doctrine.

CALL acknowledges and thanks the professional journals and authors who permitted the reprinting of these articles and in some instances were personally involved in assisting CALL in the formatting process.

Note: Minor modifications were made to support the CALL newsletter format. In some instances, pictures not referenced in the narrative were deleted to save space. Additionally, biographies were eliminated to avoid release of personal information.

### Notes

1. Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 12 April 2001 (as amended through 30 September 2010).
2. *Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats Joint Operating Concept (JOC)* version 2.0, 17 May 2010.
3. Security force assistance, a term that overlaps with foreign internal defense, is defined as activities that directly support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their sustaining institutions. (Department of Defense Draft Instruction).
4. Civil affairs operations, information operations, and military information support operations (formerly known as PSYOP, or psychological operations), three of 12 SOF core activities, are essential components of stability operations. See Michele Malvesti, "To Serve the Nation: U.S. Special Operations Forces in an Era of Persistent Conflict," Center for a New American Security, June 2010.

## **A Balanced Approach to Irregular Warfare**

**ADM Eric T. Olson**

Reprinted with permission from the Spring 2009 issue of  
*The Journal of International Security Affairs.*

To successfully deter and confront the global insurgency threatening the world and our nation today, the U.S. military must be able to employ a balanced approach to warfare, carefully blending the full spectrum of military, para-military and civil action to achieve success. It is an approach I refer to as “balanced warfare.” It is the manner in which our nation’s Special Operations Forces are combating terrorism today, and it is the guiding principle behind the Department of Defense’s campaign plan to combat global terrorism.

### **The environment**

Today, we find ourselves living in a “new normal.” The world is not going to go back to the way it was before 9/11. Our national security is threatened not only by terrorists and terrorist organizations, but also by fragile states either unwilling or unable to provide for the most basic needs of their people. Further, sovereignty is not what it used to be; advances in communications, transportation and global networking continue to make borders more transparent, economies more interconnected, and information available on an unprecedented scale. The effects of this globalization create stresses on underdeveloped and developing nations and societies, which in turn create regional instability and unrest.

As a result of our current environment, war is not what it used to be. Traditionally defined forms of warfare such as counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare and guerrilla warfare are now lumped under the umbrella term of “irregular warfare.” We have commonly referred to the current conflict as the Global War on Terrorism, but this term means something else when translated into most other languages. Our current Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, identified it best when he wrote recently, “What is dubbed the war on terrorism, in grim reality, is a prolonged, worldwide, irregular campaign—a struggle between the forces of violent extremism and those of moderation.”<sup>1</sup> Regardless of how the term is defined, one thing remains constant: The type of warfare we fight on the ground is not determined by what forces we have on the ground; it is determined by our adversaries.

We need to be responsive enough to adjust rapidly to what the enemy throws at us, and we need to have the agility to transcend the spectrum of conflict. In many cases, fight at various levels of conflict simultaneously. The ability to do this successfully requires a holistic approach to warfare, aimed at both eliminating our most determined adversaries and eroding the conditions which led to their behavior.

### **The strategy**

The Department of Defense campaign strategy against terrorism is contained in Concept Plan (CONPLAN) 7500. Crafted at the United States Special Operations Command and approved by the Secretary of Defense—first Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and subsequently Secretary Gates—it serves as both the guiding plan within the Department of Defense and a supporting plan in the interagency environment for combating terrorism. It is supported by regional Global War on Terrorism plans crafted by each of the geographic combatant commanders around the world.

The United States Special Operations Command is uniquely suited to develop a campaign plan for what is essentially a global insurgency. Formed primarily out of U.S. Army Special Forces and Naval Special Warfare units created to combat the guerrilla and insurgent threats facing the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, the Command can draw upon the resident knowledge and institutional expertise required for counterinsurgency planning. Since the Army officially established its Special Warfare Center in 1956 for the purpose of training its service members in counterinsurgency operations, unconventional warfare and psychological operations, the officers and noncommissioned officers assigned to these specialty areas are drawing on five decades of experience in developing the doctrine for, and conducting, insurgent and counterinsurgent warfare.

### **The approaches**

CONPLAN 7500 provides the framework for two approaches for influencing the behavior of our adversaries: direct and indirect. While the direct approach focuses on isolating and defeating the threat, mostly through violent, kinetic actions, the indirect approach focuses on shaping and influencing the environment itself.

The direct approach consists of those efforts that disrupt violent extremist organizations—the polite way of saying capturing, killing, and interdicting terrorists and terrorist networks to prevent them from harming us in the near term. It also denies access to and use of weapons of mass destruction by violent extremist organizations, many of which have declared their specific intent to acquire and use such weapons to kill great numbers of people in the U.S. and elsewhere. These operations are conducted largely by the military. The direct approach is urgent, necessary, chaotic and kinetic, and the effects are mostly short term.

But they are not decisive. Enduring results come from the *indirect* approaches—those in which we enable partners to combat violent extremist organizations themselves by contributing to their capabilities through training, equipment, transfer of technology, wargaming, and so forth. It consists of efforts to deter tacit and active support for violent extremist organizations where the government is either unwilling or unable to remove terrorist sanctuaries. It is the efforts to shape and stabilize the environment that impact the enemy in the longterm. This is truly “draining the swamp,” rather than simply attempting to capture or kill all of the “alligators.”

In a global campaign against terrorism, these two approaches are rarely mutually exclusive of one another. While the direct approach is mostly decisive in its impact, it also buys the time for the indirect approach to have its desired effect. Capturing and killing adversaries will always be necessary, but we will not kill or capture our way to victory. Nor will we talk our way to victory. The key to long-term success in a global campaign against terrorism lies in changing behavior.

### **From theory to practice**

Although these two approaches are easily defined in theory, they are often difficult to distinguish in practice. People, units and capabilities cannot be categorized as direct or indirect in nature; only *activities* can be, and only at the time they are occurring. Oftentimes, they are intertwined and occurring simultaneously.

A great example is what most Special Operations Forces are doing on most days in Iraq—eating, living, planning, preparing, and fighting with the Iraqi Special Operations Forces. When these forces fight, they look like us, they move like us, they shoot like us; they take all of the actions

at the objective that we would. Through night-vision video, it is difficult to tell them apart from us. And that, after all, is the point. The ultimate effect is the enabling of our partners to combat violent extremist organizations themselves, so that eventually we can turn the operations over to them—and they will be able to control their own destiny. That intertwining happens several times a night, in several places across Iraq, and it consumes most of our force there on any given day. Disrupting violent extremist organizations has had a powerful impact in Iraq, and we are seeing a dramatic reduction of al-Qaeda's capability there.

Another example of the direct and indirect approaches to warfare can be seen in the counterinsurgency efforts being conducted by our Special Forces detachments in Afghanistan. During a recent seven-month deployment, the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan, consisting of about 2,400 total personnel, conducted nearly three thousand operations where the operation was expected to be non-kinetic (with no anticipation of an exchange of gunfire). Additionally, its soldiers conducted over two thousand operations where they anticipated, or experienced, an exchange of gunfire, resulting in several thousand enemies killed or captured. More importantly, they also treated 50,000 local nationals in medical, dental and various other kinds of clinics. Among their various humanitarian operations, they dropped nearly a million pounds of supplies in places that would not have otherwise received aid. They established 19 local radio stations and distributed almost 8,000 radios to ensure the broadcasts could be heard. They completed a large number of construction and engineering projects, often in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In turn, these projects, consisting of the construction of culverts, bridges, irrigation systems and schoolhouses, have had a tremendous impact on the local population.

Throughout the same period, the same task force—along with representatives from other branches of the U.S. military, various U.S. government agencies, and local Afghan security forces—employed 1,347 Afghans, and engaged heavily with the local population. In the event of a *shura* (an organized meeting of local leaders), a Special Forces A-Team Commander attended and negotiated any number of issues: “How can we help? How can we engage? What do you know that we might want to know?” During their seven-month deployment, these detachments went to such meetings more than 300 times. They also conducted less formal meetings, where, while on routine patrol, they would stop in a village and talk to the village elder. There were 950 of these meetings during the same period. A total of 1,200 engagements with local leaders took place during the course of that deployment, and these *intertwining actions* had a powerful effect on the battlefield.

The application of the balanced approach is not limited to areas where we are engaged in armed conflict, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Our nation's Special Operations Forces are also at work applying the indirect approach to combating terrorism in several other parts of the world as well. On a typical day, the operational forces of the U.S. Special Operations Command can be found in 60 to 70 countries, primarily conducting foreign internal defense (FID) and civil affairs operations.

In the case of FID, the effort is focused on enhancing the internal security of other nations, primarily through unit-to-unit engagement and training events. These operations either involve an Army Special Forces A-team, a Navy SEAL platoon, Air Force combat aviation advisors, or a Marine special operations team working in a remote place with a handful of counterparts. For many of the partner nation units, this is the most prestigious training they will get all year, and the participants are handpicked. Very important relationship building occurs during these FID events.

Civil affairs operations, some of which occur in conjunction with FID, nation building, and humanitarian assistance missions, are different. Under the umbrella of civil affairs operations, we do not paint schools and dig wells, but we help determine which schools need to be painted and where the wells should be dug. We normally contract with local organizations to do the work so everybody benefits. This also helps empower local leaders in their efforts to provide improved governance and services.

### **Persistent presence**

The key to success in applying the indirect approach is persistence. Building partnerships requires the development of meaningful military-to-military relationships. That effort is long-term, and the effects are enduring. This approach not only builds partner nation capacity and regional stability, but it also deters the tacit and active support of sanctuaries that foster and develop future terrorists. Again, the effect is to drain the proverbial swamps—the perceived social injustice, and the persecution and intimidation—that can feed the germs of terrorist activity.

The decisive effects of such persistent engagement can be seen in places like the Philippines, where for over five years Special Operations Forces have been advising and assisting that nation's armed forces in their successful campaign against Islamic insurgents. Even more pronounced are the effects of our nation's persistent partnership with, and military engagement in, Colombia. For over 10 years, U.S. Special Operations Forces have been advising and assisting the armed forces of Colombia in the fight against the leftist Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). In recent years, the Colombian armed forces have dealt serious blows to that organization, culminating with the recent dramatic and brilliant rescue of U.S. and Colombian hostages in 2008 in an operation that was completely planned, led and conducted by Colombian forces.

### **Staying the course**

The concepts behind balancing these direct and indirect approaches in what amounts to a global counterinsurgency effort are not new to irregular warfare. They are the product of the doctrine developed over decades by our Special Operations Forces. In a 1962 address to the U.S. Army Special Forces on the topic of what was then referred to as “special warfare,” President John F. Kennedy stated:

*Pure military skill is not enough. A full spectrum of military, paramilitary, and civil action must be blended to produce success. The enemy uses economic and political warfare, propaganda and naked military aggression in an endless combination to oppose a free choice of government, and suppress the rights of the individual by terror, by subversion and by force of arms. To win this struggle, our officers and men must understand and combine the political, economic and civil actions with skilled military efforts in the execution of this mission.<sup>2</sup>*

Regardless of the name we use—*special warfare, counterinsurgency warfare, irregular warfare*—one thing is for certain: it characterizes the nature of warfare we are experiencing, and will experience, for the foreseeable future. We must recognize that “pure military skill” will not be enough. While the ability to conduct high-end, direct action activities will always remain urgent and necessary, it is the indirect approaches, working through and with others in building a global network of partners, that will have the most decisive and enduring effects.

**Endnotes**

1. Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2009.
2. John F. Kennedy, Speech to the United States Army, April 11, 1962, as reprinted in *Special Warfare: An Army Specialty* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962).



## Irregular Warfare *is* Warfare

**Kenneth C. Coons, Jr. and Glenn M. Harned**

Reprinted with permission from the 1st Quarter 2009 issue of *Joint Force Quarterly*.

Violent extremism is the most likely and dangerous threat the Nation will face between now and 2020. U.S. superiority in conventional warfighting has driven our adversaries to avoid direct military confrontation. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) began with the recognition that irregular warfare (IW) has become the “warfare of choice” for our adversaries, who employ a strategy of physical, economic, and psychological subversion, attrition, and exhaustion to undermine and erode the power, influence, and will of the United States and its strategic partners. They fight us among the people in protracted struggles for popular support and legitimacy, limiting the utility of conventional applications of our military power.

Our adversaries are unconventional, and so our approach for defeating them must be unconventional as well. We cannot defeat them solely by force; we must use a blend of political, informational, military, economic, and sociocultural approaches, in combination with foreign governments, security forces, and populations.

### Potential Struggles

Violent extremism is not the only threat our nation will face in the near future. The danger of interstate war has not passed. The United States must maintain its dominance in interstate warfighting capabilities in order to deter and, if necessary, win such wars. However, the character of interstate warfare is changing. IW and conventional warfare are combining into new forms of hybrid warfare,<sup>1</sup> as potential state adversaries are more likely to possess chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons and delivery means; sophisticated antiaccess capabilities; significant irregular capabilities for horizontal escalation; and populations mobilized to resist U.S. military intervention. Future interstate warfare is more likely to be some form of hybrid warfare than the conventional warfare for which the Armed Forces are preparing. Should the United States confront such states, its military will most likely need robust IW capabilities to wage hybrid warfare among a hostile population.

By the end of the QDR, the Department of Defense (DOD) senior leadership had come to the following assessment with regard to IW:<sup>2</sup>

- U.S. forces were primarily organized, trained, educated, and equipped for conventional warfighting, and these capabilities remained essential to deter and fight conventional wars.
- U.S. forces were not as well organized, trained, educated, or equipped for protracted IW on a global scale.
- DOD was underinvested in general purpose force (GPF) and special operations force (SOF) capabilities and capacity for protracted IW.

Senior leadership emerged from the QDR not knowing exactly what IW was, but knowing that DOD needed dramatically greater IW capabilities to wage and win current and future struggles.

### Defining IW

The DOD-wide IW effort during the QDR generated a year-long disagreement over the definition of IW. Some within DOD advocated an IW definition based on *who conducts it* (the actors) while others advocated a definition based on *how it is conducted* (the methods). In the end, DOD senior leadership agreed that the IW definition should be based on *why it is conducted* (strategic purpose). In January 2006, the Deputy Secretary of Defense approved a working definition so that IW concept and capability development could proceed, and this working definition with slight modification became the approved definition on April 17, 2006:

*IW is a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.<sup>3</sup>*

Some within DOD advocated an irregular warfare definition based on who conducts it, while others advocated a definition based on how it is conducted.

### Execution Roadmap

In December 2005, DOD began crafting a QDR IW Execution Roadmap. Its purpose was to facilitate implementation of the IW-related policy decisions of the QDR. The IW Roadmap was a temporary vehicle intended to enable a successful transition from the QDR to execution planning and programming with a near-term focus on the fiscal year 2008–2013 defense program. On April 26, 2006, the Deputy Secretary of Defense directed execution of the IW Roadmap with 28 tasks organized into 5 major initiatives for developing IW capabilities and capacity within DOD. The initiatives were:

- Transform the way DOD manages its military and civilian personnel to meet IW operational requirements (first priority), which entails changing the way the military Services identify, access, educate, train, develop, utilize, and retain personnel with IW-associated expertise and increasing opportunities for DOD personnel to obtain, maintain, and improve language proficiency and understanding of foreign cultures.
- Rebalance GPF capabilities and capacity to conduct long-duration counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism (CT) operations; train, equip, and advise large numbers of foreign security forces; and foster the development of civil society and effective governance in ungoverned and undergoverned areas.
- Increase SOF capability and capacity in two classified mission areas and to meet SOF air mobility requirements.
- Increase DOD capability and capacity to conduct counter-network operations, which entails identifying, locating, characterizing, perturbing, and disrupting extremist cells, networks, and individuals, and predicting their operational behavior.
- Redesign joint and Service military and civilian education and individual and unit training for the conduct and support of IW.

The IW Roadmap also provided an illustrative list of irregular warfare activities. This list was important because it bound the scope of IW. The roadmap noted that U.S. Government agencies do not conduct terrorism and transnational criminal activities as a matter of national policy or law. This list has stood the test of time and, with the addition of strategic communication, remains intact:<sup>4</sup>

- insurgency and COIN
- terrorism and CT
- unconventional warfare
- foreign internal defense
- stability operations when conducted within the context of an IW strategy or campaign aimed at gaining or maintaining the support of a host population
- transnational criminal activities that support or sustain IW and the law enforcement activities to counter them
- civil-military operations
- psychological operations
- information operations
- intelligence and counterintelligence operations

### **Joint Operating Concept**

Among other tasks, the IW Roadmap directed U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to develop a joint concept for IW. In November 2005, USSOCOM and the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) agreed to develop a Multi-Service Concept for Irregular Warfare to lay the intellectual foundation for a future IW joint concept. The Multi-Service Concept was approved in August 2006, shortly after the same writing team began work on the IW Joint Operating Concept (JOC).

The IW JOC identifies the following joint force problem: “How can Joint Force Commanders employ conventional and nonconventional military capabilities in support of integrated [U.S. Government] and multinational partner efforts to gain or maintain control or influence over a relevant population?”<sup>5</sup> The central idea of the IW JOC is that the joint force will solve this problem by conducting “protracted regional and global campaigns using indirect approaches against state and non-state adversaries to subvert, coerce, attrite, and exhaust adversaries rather than defeating them through direct conventional military confrontation.”<sup>6</sup> These campaigns will be population-oriented, not adversary-oriented, and will emphasize winning the support of the relevant populations, promoting friendly authority, and undermining and eroding adversary power, influence, legitimacy, and support. Below are the major propositions of current DOD thinking as captured in the IW Joint Operating Concept. They have been refined by more than a year of experimentation.

First, irregular warfare is “a major and pervasive form of warfare”<sup>7</sup> that occurs in politically unstable environments of persistent conflict among populations. It is *not* an environment or a type of military operation. Second, what makes IW “irregular”<sup>8</sup> is the focus of its operations—a relevant population—and its strategic purpose to gain or maintain legitimacy and influence over, and the support of, that relevant population through political, psychological, informational, military, and economic methods. Warfare that has the population as its “focus of operations” requires a different mindset and different capabilities than warfare that focuses on defeating an adversary militarily.<sup>9</sup>

Third, the foundation for IW is the centrality of the relevant populations to the nature of the struggle. All parties seek to undermine their adversaries’ legitimacy and credibility and to isolate their adversaries physically and psychologically from the relevant populations. At the same time, they also seek to bolster their own legitimacy and credibility with those same populations.<sup>10</sup> Popular support, per se, may not be relevant for certain terrorists and other extremists who simply coerce a population into compliance. However, defeating irregular challenges usually requires gaining legitimacy and influence over, and securing the support of, the relevant populations, not defeating an adversary primarily through direct military confrontation.

Fourth, IW is ultimately a political struggle with violent and nonviolent components. The use of the term *violent* in the definition was a particularly contentious issue. The term refers to the nature of the struggle, not the prescription of violence as the primary way to wage it. IW is “politics with guns.” The use or threat of political violence as a tool to undermine an adversary’s legitimacy and influence is one of its defining characteristics. It is the violent nature of the struggle that separates IW from the normal political process. Because IW is about finding political solutions (or managing intractable political problems), the military should always have a supporting role, even when it is providing the preponderance of resources.

Fifth, IW extends beyond the military domain. Governments and populations wage IW, not only armed forces. Influencing foreign governments and populations is a complex and inherently political activity. IW campaigns will fail if waged by military means alone. The nature of IW requires the U.S. Government to achieve the level of unified action necessary to integrate all available instruments of national power to address irregular threats. The Government will have to develop whole-of-government approaches to wage IW at the political, strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The relevant U.S. civilian agencies must build their capacity to operate in unstable or hostile environments.<sup>11</sup>

Sixth, IW depends on not only our military prowess, but also our understanding of such social dynamics as tribal politics, social networks, religious influences, and cultural mores. People, not platforms or advanced technology, are the key to IW success—patient, persistent, and culturally savvy people who can build the long-term relationships essential to executing IW.<sup>12</sup>

Last, waging protracted IW depends on building global capability and capacity. IW will not be won by the United States alone, but rather by, with, and through the combined efforts of our strategic partners. This requires the joint force to establish long-term sustained presence in numerous countries to build the necessary partner capability and capacity to extend U.S. operational reach, multiply forces available, and increase options for defeating our adversaries.<sup>13</sup>

The IW JOC also identifies four supporting ideas that contribute directly or indirectly to achieving the central idea of the concept:

- establish persistent global presence for IW
- establish and maintain interpersonal relationships to support IW
- expand the role of the GPF to support and execute IW missions
- create alternative command and control (C2) mechanisms for conducting and supporting IW when a joint task force (JTF) is not required to conduct major combat operations. Three such mechanisms include extending the joint interagency task force (JIATF) concept used today for counterdrug operations to regional subordinate unified commands and JIATFs with IW missions; establishing interagency advisory assistance teams at sub-national levels of government; and expanding the use of U.S. Military Groups (MILGRPs) to conduct and support irregular warfare as integral components of U.S. missions abroad.

### **Wargames**

As the sponsor of the irregular warfare JOC, USSOCOM was responsible for experimenting with the concept during the first year of its life. As part of the experimentation process, USSOCOM cosponsored the Unified Quest 2007 and 2008 (UQ 07 and UQ 08) wargame series with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM). The IW JOC was tested against complex scenarios without discovering any substantive problems with its logic, description of future operating environments, or fundamental descriptions of operational requirements for the future joint force. No other JOC has been so tested. As the spiral game play evolved, so did participant discussion of the dynamics of IW, with certain areas deserving particular attention discussed below.<sup>14</sup>

***Planning and Preparation.*** Players recognized the need for a different type of planning, assessment, and preparation period. Players recognized that IW is a “messy” form of warfare that does not lend itself to clean formulas or predictable outcomes. UQ participants struggled to determine the appropriate approach to the irregular problem set they faced. Many civilian participants considered the military planning process stovepiped and rigid. They stated that the U.S. Agency for International Development in particular has a more dynamic planning process that is derived from the political and cultural nature of the interagency process and, unlike the military planning process, factors in more ambiguity and longer term objectives (years, not months).

***Ambiguity of IW.*** The challenges of building IW campaigns demonstrated the discomfort and confusion of GPF players when forced to wrestle with the ambiguity inherent in IW. While players generally agreed that the ideas introduced in the IW JOC were valid and central to future warfighting, they struggled with the nature of this form of warfare, especially when they were unable to articulate the risk associated with various indirect approaches.

***Population as Focus of Operations.*** UQ participants overwhelmingly validated the idea that IW should be population-oriented and that conventional approaches to warfare do not fully accommodate this notion.

***MILGRPs Conducting and Supporting IW.*** The use of MILGRPs as an alternative C2 mechanism for IW was a recurring theme during UQ 07 and UQ 08. Participants generally agreed that MILGRPs with enhanced legal and budget authorities have distinct advantages over JTFs when conducting or supporting IW activities in the absence of major combat operations.

***Importance of Strategic Communication.*** These activities depend on early crafting of a compelling narrative that resonates with all relevant populations, legitimizing friendly IW messages and actions while discrediting the messages and actions of adversaries in the minds of the relevant populations. One of the most profound ideas to emerge during UQ 07 was the concept of narrative advanced by Michael Vlahos of The Johns Hopkins University. A *narrative* is a story that a party to an armed struggle uses to justify its messages and actions so they become legitimate and favorable to the relevant populations. Strategic success in IW requires a narrative that not only counters and discredits adversary narratives but also offers an alternative that is at least as compelling to the relevant populations. The respective narratives become the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual foundations for each party's policies, strategies, campaigns, and operations.

***Difficulty with Whole of Government.*** The whole-of-government approaches that the IW JOC seeks to implement depend on achieving unified action through agreed interagency processes and procedures that do not exist. Implementation is unlikely without a collaborative effort between the President and Congress. The requirements for U.S. Government civilian agencies to conduct IW do not reflect the reality of interagency barriers to implementing whole-of-government approaches. The senior civilian participants in the 2008 seminar wargame agreed that implementing the IW concept is about leveraging *relationships* within the interagency community. This process is ad hoc and will never be as efficient as the military planning process. Civilian participants generally were more comfortable with this as an approach to the ambiguities of irregular challenges than were the military participants. DOD preaches unified action but non-DOD senior participants argued instead for the more realistic goal of managing diverse institutional cultures, relationships, and politics.

The U.S. Agency for International Development has a planning process derived from the political and cultural nature of the interagency process and, unlike the military planning process, factors in more ambiguity and longer term objectives.

In 2007, the Office of the Secretary of Defense sponsored a three-part IW wargame to inform DOD efforts to develop new operational and organizational constructs and identify capability and capacity shortfalls. The game tested the use of GPF and SOF to stabilize a large, failing country. The IW JOC held up well. Significantly, no team recommended a direct military intervention with GPF ground forces; all wanted to pursue a more indirect approach in support of host country security forces. All teams agreed that the problem was primarily political and that the Department of State should have the lead. They also agreed that the problem was regional and asked that MILGRPs be established or reinforced in the threatened country and in all neighboring countries.

Most players did not think Congress would allow the executive branch to transform for IW and believed that U.S. civilian agencies would therefore be unable to build sufficient IW capacity to fill their shortfalls. Some players argued that even if the agencies could build adequate capacity, it might be more cost-effective to expand DOD civil affairs, psychological operations, and

foreign area officer capabilities and detail these resources to the civilian agencies or assign them to MILGRPs to function under the direction of Foreign Service Officers, especially in unstable or hostile operational environments where civilian agencies cannot operate effectively.

Moreover, the teams could not agree on how to build up the host country national police and the associated judicial and penal institutions. They saw the problem as magnitudes more difficult than building up a foreign military. DOD does not have a constabulary-like paramilitary force with police powers; the Coast Guard and Border Patrol are the closest government organizations to a European-style constabulary. There is no clear-cut solution to this critical shortfall in capability to conduct COIN and CT missions.

### Capability Assessment

When USSOCOM completed the final draft of the IW JOC in December 2006, it knew that appendix C (Table of Operational Effects and Broad Military Capabilities) needed further refinement. Continuing their collaboration, USSOCOM and MCCDC in January 2007 invited the other DOD components to join in an effort to identify and prioritize the key capabilities the joint force needs to conduct global IW operations. Three teams applied the ideas in the IW JOC against selected steady-state security posture scenarios to write three concepts of operations (CONOPS) for waging IW in friendly states, hostile states, and nonbelligerent states. From these CONOPS, the teams developed a framework of key IW capabilities in terms of tasks, conditions, and effects.

The Coast Guard and Border Patrol are the closest government organizations to a European-style constabulary.

The teams found that many of the *tasks* that joint forces perform in IW are essentially the same as the tasks they perform in conventional warfare. However, the *conditions* under which they perform them in IW are fundamentally different from the conditions under which they perform other military operations. These different IW conditions require the joint force to reexamine how it performs these common tasks in IW. The teams also found that many of the desired *effects* for the tasks are different when conducted in IW because the effects are more focused on the relevant populations than on adversaries.

The teams completed the revised appendix C in late July 2007, in time for its use during fiscal year 2010–2015 program development. USSOCOM and MCCDC are using it as the starting point for a co-led IW-focused Joint Capabilities-based Assessment (CBA) that began in August 2007. The Joint Staff approved its joint capabilities document in August 2008, and the functional solutions analysis is underway.

### Current Assessment

DOD has made great progress over the last 3 years. There is growing consensus on the definition, character, and scope of IW. The Deputy Secretary of Defense has approved multiple plans for correcting IW shortfalls. The fiscal year 2008–2013 program devoted significantly more resources to IW. The Secretary of Defense approved and signed the IW JOC on September 11, 2007. The 2007 version of Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, incorporates IW concepts into joint doctrine for the first time, and new joint publications

on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism are being written. The Joint Staff completed its assessment of GPF requirements for COIN and CT and presented their options for meeting those requirements to the Deputy Secretary of Defense in December 2007. The Services and other DOD components have a greater appreciation for their IW requirements. An IW-focused CBA is under way, and its products will help drive DOD requirements and programming efforts. USSOCOM and USJFCOM are collaborating on a series of IW workshops and experiments to further refine the IW concept. Other government departments and agencies have not embraced the term *irregular warfare* but support State Department initiatives to improve the ability of the U.S. Government to plan and conduct State-led “complex operations.” The State Department has issued an interim *Counterinsurgency Guide for U.S. Government Policy Makers*, is co-sponsoring with DOD an Interagency Consortium for Complex Operations, and has expressed interest in expanded strategy and planning coordination between DOD and State.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done. As a whole, DOD institutions remain too oriented on peacetime processes to sustain and enhance conventional warfighting capabilities, at the expense of modifying those processes to meet current wartime demands, improve outcomes, and prepare for persistent conflict in the future. The correct metrics for measuring IW transformation are programs funded and capabilities and capacity fielded—not briefings given, plans written, and processes followed. Many in DOD disagree on the appropriate balance among conventional warfighting and IW capacities and the appropriate balance of effort required among U.S. Armed Forces and civilian departments and agencies. There is widespread institutional resistance to the concept of transforming DOD to wage persistent and protracted irregular warfare on a global scale. Some within DOD also see IW as a temporary inconvenience that will go away when U.S. major combat forces leave Iraq, a belief reinforced by the fact that DOD has not clearly articulated what the force employment requirements are for waging IW globally. Absent a defined endstate for IW transformation, the best DOD has been able to achieve are marginal improvements to existing capabilities.

There are still debates over whether IW and hybrid warfare will replace conventional warfare. In some respects, the current combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan tint the lens of the debate, but the measures of effectiveness for IW transformation should not be improvements to current operations but rather how well DOD prepares for the broader ongoing effort against violent extremists and their state and nonstate sponsors.

DOD continues to struggle with how to deal with the inability of relevant civilian departments and agencies to expand their own capacities to perform nonmilitary tasks (governance, essential services, economic development, and so forth) that are vital to waging IW and conducting complex operations.

But we must get past these challenges and seize the momentum of the IW JOC. The Armed Forces have been assigned an important new IW mission and must now adapt their portfolios, requirements, programmatic funding, and conventional mindsets to IW.

### **A Way Ahead**

Transformation efforts of this scale are difficult, but a path does exist. The major initiatives of the IW Roadmap are still valid, and DOD should continue to pursue them as it moves forward in the fielding of new IW capabilities and capacity.

USSOCOM needs to increase its SOF capabilities and capacity to perform unconventional warfare and other indirect IW activities on a global scale, and particularly outside the U.S. Central Command area, where by our absence we have ceded the strategic initiative to our adversaries. Our nation cannot “kill or capture” its way to victory in this struggle. At best, our manhunting efforts buy time for more decisive indirect IW activities to achieve their desired effects.

DOD needs to implement the options identified in the Joint Staff assessment of GPF IW capabilities and capacity. The general purpose forces need a new COIN and CT paradigm; the current paradigm of U.S.-based joint expeditionary forces organized into JTFs is inappropriate for steady-state IW requirements. DOD should embrace a return to the Cold War paradigm of large numbers of empowered MILGRPs operating under the direction of U.S. Chiefs of Mission and collaborating regionally to defeat transnational adversaries. The leading advocate of this paradigm shift is noted strategist Colonel Robert Killebrew, USA (Ret.), who has written a study<sup>15</sup> for the Center for a New American Security and an article in *Army* magazine<sup>16</sup> on the need to adopt such a paradigm shift.

The DOD intelligence components and unified commands need to accelerate their efforts to improve counter-network operations. As the IW Roadmap states, “Vital to this effort is increasing the ability of DOD to capture and integrate knowledge from anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, demographers, and other social scientists into intelligence and operational analysis at all levels down to the tactical.”

The military departments and Services, unified commands, and National Defense University need to institutionalize the changes they have made to joint and Service education and training for IW. The U.S. military has a century-long history of adopting temporary solutions in response to irregular challenges, only to scrap them when the challenges pass. This current struggle will not pass in the foreseeable future. Our education and training base needs permanent solutions to meet the demands from the field that will come once the general purpose forces adopt a new paradigm for waging IW.

Most important of all, the military departments need to create or improve career paths, incentives, and advancement opportunities for DOD personnel with critical IW-related skills and knowledge. If we do not create new demands that force the Service personnel management systems to transform, we cannot hope to identify, access, educate, train, develop, utilize, and retain adequate numbers of the people we need to wage protracted IW on a global scale.

The 2006 *QDR Report* states that “to achieve global effects across countries, regions, and groups, the United States must localize and defeat terrorist extremist cells with approaches tailored to local conditions and differentiated worldwide.”<sup>17</sup> Seven years into this struggle as it was redefined on 9/11, the Department of Defense must do everything it can to accelerate the fielding of new capabilities and capacity to wage irregular warfare and win this struggle.

### Notes

1. *Hybrid warfare* is the simultaneous and intertwined application of conventional and irregular warfare methods to achieve strategic objectives.
2. U.S. Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare Execution Roadmap* (IW Roadmap) (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, April 28, 2006), 6.

3. Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, May 14, 2007), I-1.
4. Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (IW JOC), version 1 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, September 11, 2007), 8.
5. IW JOC, 15.
6. *Ibid.*, 17.
7. JP 1, I-6.
8. Some IW advocates would prefer a different term, such as *unconventional*, *nonconventional*, or *traditional* warfare, but *irregular warfare* is the term of record at least for the remainder of this administration.
9. JP 1, I-7.
10. *Ibid.*
11. IW JOC, 1.
12. *Ibid.*, 1.
13. *Ibid.*
14. U.S. Southern Command, *Unified Quest 07* Analytical Report (June 4, 2007), 5-8 and 12-23.
15. Robert B. Killebrew, *The Left-hand Side of the Spectrum, Ambassadors and Advisors in Future U.S. Strategy*, The Future of the U.S. Military Series (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, June 2007).
16. Robert B. Killebrew, "The Army and the Changing American Strategy," *Army* (August 2007), 25-34.
17. Department of Defense, *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 6, 2006), 22.

## Ramping Up to Face the Challenge of Irregular Warfare

LTC Mark Grdovic

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So long as the present ideological conflict between East and West continues, so long as the mutual balance of terror makes a hot war improbable, and so long as the stresses and strains of nationalism and radicalism add fuel to the fire, the Western allies are likely to find themselves involved willy-nilly in a prolonged series of cold war operations, in many of which, by their very nature, the guerrilla and counter guerrilla will inevitably have their part to play. It is therefore important to keep under constant review the laws and principles which govern the conduct of irregular warfare.

— Sir Fitzroy Maclean as part of the foreword to Charles Thayer's *Guerrilla*<sup>1</sup>

In the 1960s and again in the 1980s, the U.S. military experienced a revival of interest in irregular warfare, or IW, similar to the one that is occurring today. In both of the previous periods, the topic enjoyed a celebrity-like popularity in professional military forums until such time that circumstances allowed it to be relegated back to the margins in favor of a return to “proper soldiering.”

Both previous revivals produced high-quality doctrine and curriculum in professional-education courses. So why, then, did IW fail to become ingrained as part of the military mainstream? The manner in which a topic is framed can significantly influence the opinion of the target audience. Suggesting that IW is the graduate level of warfare, while clearly expressing the topic's difficulty, fails to recognize the considerable effort that the Army has invested in mastering major combat operations, or MCO. Given the imbalance between the Army's investment in MCO and in IW, it's not surprising that, by comparison, IW appears more difficult and complex. Over the last several decades, old IW concepts have often been reintroduced or reinvented under new names, such as “low intensity conflict” and “military operations other than war.” While there is no question that those concepts are complex, presenting them as new byproducts of emerging and changing world conditions, such as globalization, urbanization and radicalization, brings into question not only the enduring nature of the IW requirement but also whether these conflicts are, in fact, merely anomalies to be weathered. While labels and marketing techniques may be helpful in reconciling our collective discomfort with the topic, they undermine the overall integration of the topic by further entrenching skeptics.

As was the case in the past, today's debate has the potential to divide the military into two camps: advocates and skeptics. Regrettably, the discussion often moves away from the specifics of IW to devolve into a debate over whether conventional or irregular warfare is superior or more difficult and how limited resources should be allotted. The argument for either discipline to take precedence over the other will likely remain a self-defeating one in the long term. The reality seems clear that whether or not the U.S. military accepts IW as an enduring part of the realm of conflict, it has been a normal condition throughout the last century, and all indications are that it will remain so through the first half of this century — alongside major, large-scale combat operations. While the topic of IW is clearly not new, the concept of how it will be defined, what it will encompass and how it will be integrated into the current portfolio of the U.S. military is.

The terminology chosen to define this topic will be critical, not only in terms of its clarity but also for the perception that must accompany it. Unfortunately, the topic comes already enmeshed in the significantly confusing terminology created during previous periods of interest.

The joint operating concept, or JOC, outlines the process of incorporating IW within the military. JOCs are different from doctrine, which is based on time-proven practices. JOCs are intended to link strategic guidance to the development of future capabilities. JOCs can ultimately lead to changes in policy, doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, education, personnel and facilities.

IW is currently defined in DoD Directive 3000.07 as a violent struggle among state and nonstate actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities in order to erode an adversary's power, influence and will."<sup>3</sup>

The current definition for IW was deliberately written to emphasize its focus on the population. DoDD 3000.07 also identifies five subordinate categories that compose IW: counterinsurgency, or COIN; counterterrorism, or CT; foreign internal defense, or FID; stability operations, or SO; and unconventional warfare, or UW.<sup>4</sup>

Since 1954, the Army has maintained a continuous base of significant expertise in IW within the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, N.C. (renamed the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, or SWCS, in 1963, following the death of President John F. Kennedy). The Special Warfare Center originally taught three training courses: the UW Course, the COIN Course and the Psychological Warfare Course. Since that time, the SWCS course load has expanded to encompass a much larger variety in courses of instruction, with an increasing throughput of students. SWCS also maintains more than 80 doctrinal and training publications and has technical review authority for three joint publications.

### **Unconventional Warfare**

UW is defined as activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary or guerrilla force in a denied area.

The concept of UW was developed largely from the experiences of World War II Soldiers who worked with resistance movements. The term UW was formally introduced into doctrine in 1955, specifically to convey a wider responsibility than simply working alongside guerrilla forces and conducting guerrilla warfare. Early leaders within the Special Forces, or SF, community recognized the criticality of achieving a holistic strategy that would not exclude the less familiar but equally important aspects of resistance, such as subversion, developing supporting clandestine infrastructure, sabotage and intelligence-related activities.

SF (and SWCS) have been and remain the Army's proponent for UW training, doctrine and execution. The UW Course was designed to prepare NCOs and officers to infiltrate enemy territory, link up with resistance forces and provide the full spectrum of training, support and advice needed to enable those forces and synchronize their efforts with those of the U.S. The course continues to this day, although it is now formally referred to as the Special Forces Qualification Course, or SFQC, or as the "Q Course."

### **Counterinsurgency**

COIN is defined as those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken by a government to defeat an insurgency.

A logical counterpart to the UW instruction was the development of the Counterinsurgency Course. SWCS began incorporating doctrine on COIN operations into FM 31-21, *Special Forces Operations*, in 1965. The schoolhouse also established the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center Department of Counterinsurgency that collaborated on other Army doctrine such as FM 31-15, *Operations Against Irregular Forces*; FM 3116, *Counterinsurgency Operations*; and special texts such as ST 3176, the *COIN Planning Guide*.

### **Foreign Internal Defense**

FID is defined as participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency.

As troop levels in Vietnam began to draw down in 1970, interest in COIN doctrine began to wane. The result was that the doctrine of the 1970s retained the COIN lessons learned in Vietnam and reflected the topic as military assistance to allied partner nations. In 1977, a chapter on FID replaced the chapter on COIN in FM 31-20, *Special Forces Operations*. Since the development of the FID concept, SWCS has remained the proponent for its doctrine. The Military Assistance Training Advisor Course, which stood up at the Special Warfare Center in 1962, trained joint military personnel in the skills required to serve as advisers, predominantly in South Vietnam. The training included language instruction that was similar to that of the UW Course. Although the MATA course closed in 1970, many of its lessons were retained and incorporated into the Special Forces, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs courses. The topic of FID proved to be so valuable that in 1994, SWCS produced the first FID field manual. That eventually led to the development of JP 3.07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense*, which was written for the joint military community by the U.S. Special Operations Command.

### **Stability Operations**

SO is an overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or re-establish a safe and secure environment and to provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction and humanitarian relief.

Stability operations, like FID, saw doctrine developments as interest in COIN lessened following Vietnam. Much COIN doctrine was incorporated into the stability operations chapter of FM 31-20, as well as into the Psychological Operations, SF and Civil Affairs courses. In 1967, the handbook from the MATA course was used to develop Field Manual 31-73, *Handbook for Advisors in Stability Operations*.

That, in a nutshell, is what makes the difference between defeat and victory in revolutionary war: the people and the army must emerge on the same side of the fight. And that is why it is so important to understand that guerilla warfare is nothing but an appendage of a far vaster political contest, and that no matter how expertly it is fought by competent and dedicated professionals, it cannot possibly make up for the absence of a political rationale.

— Bernard Fall, *Street Without Joy*<sup>2</sup>

### Counterterrorism

DoDD 3000.07 defines CT as operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt and respond to terrorism. Although there is little doctrine or curriculum related to the topic of CT, FM 3.05.20 (formerly FM 31-20), *Special Forces Operations*, has included material on CT since 1977, and SWCS continues to conduct several courses related to countering terrorism. The subordinate categories of CT are: hostage rescue, recovery of sensitive material from terrorist organizations and attacks against terrorist infrastructure. As indicated in Title 10, U.S. Code, CT, along with UW and FID, has been a core activity for special-operations forces since 1987.

As it did during the mid-1960s and -1980s, the Army has done an exceptional job of relearning, re-establishing and re-institutionalizing its capability in the IW realm, but at a significant cost. In order for this period of interest to succeed where previous ones have failed, the focus must remain on institutionalizing the subject as a valid peer to other military subjects. IW must become a mainstream topic of the profession of arms rather than merely a fringe specialty relegated to a select few. Conversely, it must not be regarded (by the few) as an elite discipline, with the attendant pejorative view toward other military disciplines. History has shown that insurgency and terrorism will remain a normal part of the spectrum of conflict, often requiring the application of military power in order to preserve or protect U.S. national interests. The new challenge for this millennium is not the threat posed by IW or even how the Army will meet the challenge but rather how the Army will prepare itself for long-term success.

### Notes

1. Charles W. Thayer, *Guerrilla* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).
2. Bernard Fall, *Street Without Joy: The French Debacle in Indochina* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1994).
3. DoD Directive 3000.07 (Dec. 1, 2008), 11.
4. DoD Directive 3000.07, 2.

## Preparing for Hybrid Threats: Improving Force Preparation for Irregular Warfare

William Fleser

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As the United States military transitions in Iraq and addresses new challenges in Afghanistan, a strategic question looms: “And then what?” The challenges of those two wars have consumed much of the strategic thinking over the past eight years, and while those operations retain priority, it is probably prudent at this point to think about what today’s challenges tell us about the nature of future conflicts.

As Karl von Clausewitz noted, it is important to understand the nature of the war before engaging in it, but in some respects, we don’t have that luxury.<sup>1</sup> In February, the Department of Defense released its 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, or QDR, which provides a more-than-adequate discussion of the pre-eminent security challenge facing our nation today and into the future:

*The continued dominance of America’s armed forces in large-scale, force-on-force warfare provides powerful incentives for adversaries to employ methods designed to offset our strengths. From nonstate actors using highly advanced military technology to states employing unconventional technologies, our current adversaries have shown they can and will tailor their strategies and employ their capabilities in sophisticated ways.*

Thus, the QDR moves away from its previous Long War strategic construct toward more flexibility: It recognizes the increased complexity of war, the multiplicity of actors involved and the resulting tendency to blur the lines between traditional forms of conflict. It recognizes that today’s adversary may engage in “hybrid approaches” that demand preparation for a broad range of potential conflicts.<sup>2</sup> Hybrid adversaries, including state-sponsored entities, independent individual actors with access to high technology, terror franchises and aligned criminal organizations, may use terror as a tactic, as an operational concept or as a strategic gambit. They often use international humanitarian organizations to raise funds, and they employ proxies where needed to accomplish their ends. Hybrid threats readily employ the technologies of the 21st century to provide security, perform operational planning, obtain lessons learned and provide safe havens. They often act like nation states with state foreign-policy objectives while simultaneously employing terror, paramilitary militia, humanitarian, political, criminal and even conventional military capabilities.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this paper is not to engage in another debate over a new military term. Let’s simply start with the assertion that it does not matter what terminology we use, because, in the end, the enemy gets a vote. And although he routinely reads our doctrine, he doesn’t care about our internal intellectual debates. This paper is intended only to advance some ideas on what can be done to better prepare “the force” (special operations forces, or SOF) to deal with irregular or hybrid threats. Given that our forces have been involved in nonstop combat operations since mid-October 2001, we have gained a great deal of operational experience. But our adversary has also learned. What can we expect to deal with in the future, and how do we deal with emerging hybrid threats?

The experiences of the Israeli Defense Force, or IDF, during the 2nd Lebanon War provide some examples of the challenges inherent to hybrid conflicts. This is not to say that what they learned automatically translates to our situation, because the adversary also learns by experience. In 2006, Hezbollah, operating in Lebanon, was simultaneously a state-sponsored terrorist group, a political movement, a humanitarian organization and a conventional military force. Hezbollah employed new technologies as force multipliers, including strategic rocket assaults, unmanned aerial vehicles, night-vision technology, IEDs and the latest antitank guided missiles. To combat Hezbollah, the IDF was forced into a type of hybrid warfare: warfare that goes beyond conflict between states and armed groups and includes multiple forms of combat simultaneously, including conventional maneuver warfare, irregular tactics, information warfare, terrorist acts and criminal disorder.<sup>4</sup>

Revisiting the 2nd Lebanon War in detail is also not the purpose of this paper (for an excellent discussion of the conflict, see Russell W. Glenn, *All Glory is Fleeting: Insights from the 2nd Lebanon War* (Suffolk, Va.: National Defense Research Institute, 2008). From a force-preparation perspective, i.e., “How do we get ready for this kind of warfare?,” we can draw at least three insights from IDF experiences in Lebanon and Gaza.

The first insight is that there is a need to understand the nature of irregular or hybrid adversaries. The IDF noted that hybrid organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas, which combine criminal and terror activities along with political, religious and civic roles, seek victory through non-defeat and “disappearance” into the local population. That strategy has inherent weaknesses that can be exploited. The organization’s need to hide within the population makes that population vulnerable to the kind of retaliation visited on the region of southern Lebanon in 2006. Simultaneously, there is a need to protect that host population, to the greatest extent possible, from the ravages of war and to ensure that the people understand where the real problem lies. That was Hezbollah’s strategic paradox: By inviting open warfare with Israel, they also put at risk the support of the population on which their continued legitimacy depended.<sup>5</sup> By not exploiting that weakness, the IDF enabled the international press and biased information outlets to praise Hezbollah for “standing up” to Israel, while locally, Hezbollah was able to win hearts and minds through the distribution of humanitarian aid, gaining a victory by information.<sup>6</sup>

During a rigorous self-examination following the war, the Israelis noted their unpreparedness for that kind of conflict. They recognized that military power alone is insufficient for dealing with the complex problem sets posed by the geopolitical situation unfolding during the summer of 2006.<sup>7</sup> The IDF’s military-heavy approach left it unable to capitalize on the inherent contradictions between Hezbollah’s hybrid nature (a terrorist organization with conventional capabilities masquerading as a humanitarian governing agent), and thus the IDF lost the strategic narrative, both at home and abroad.

Conversely, in 2008 the IDF successfully adapted and exploited the contradictions and friction between the various factions within Hamas, achieving a favorable strategic outcome. IDF operations against Hamas were characterized by precision air strikes, a skillful combination of ground maneuver and special operations — synchronized with the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian population — and homeland defense measures, all reinforced by an active information campaign. In short, the IDF successfully applied the lessons of 2006 to achieve victory.<sup>8</sup>

This is useful information for the theorist and the strategist, but it does not provide any actionable conclusions or templates that can be used to prepare the joint force to deal with hybrid threats. There were no templates generated from the 2nd Lebanon War, because the adversary also adapted after the conflict. That the IDF learned and adapted from its 2006 experiences was obvious by the results of the 2008 conflict. In the case of our current hybrid adversaries, they also learn from their mistakes and successes, and they adapt. In preparing for the next hybrid conflict, teaching U.S. and partner-nation organizations how to deal with complex problems and to find unique, adaptive and innovative solutions is as important as teaching them to perform tasks to doctrinally acceptable standards during a training exercise.

All that leads to the second insight, namely, that preparation for hybrid warfare necessitates that we teach staffs and leaders how to think, not what to think. Prior to 2006, the IDF had been immersed in irregular warfare and counterinsurgency, or COIN, including an 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon. During that time, the IDF lost much of its proficiency in high-end joint operations of the type that characterized its rapid victories in the Yom Kippur and Six Day wars. It was essentially not prepared for a new emerging scenario in 2006.<sup>9</sup>

Engagement in long-term COIN did not prepare the IDF for the incursion into Lebanon, leading to the conclusion that operational activity is no substitute for training against emerging scenarios. The lesson to a force that has constantly been in conflict since October 2001 is obvious but painful: All that operational experience is potentially negated if we do not develop opportunities for “thinking through” hypothetical but realistic scenarios of what a hybrid adversary might throw at us.

The third insight on hybrid warfare comes from the author’s personal interview with an IDF officer in 2006.<sup>10</sup> While discussing the relationship between close cooperation and interoperability between SOF and conventional forces and success against hybrid adversaries such as Hezbollah, the author asked an Israeli colleague for his views on the role of leadership in operations involving conventional forces and SOF. The Israeli officer stated that in the IDF, it is common for conventional units to be subordinated to or directly support a special-operations unit, regardless of the rank of the SOF commander. This was particularly true when the SOF unit had been operating in the area and knew the population and terrain better than its conventional counterpart. In the IDF, experience and combat perspective outweighed considerations of rank as deciding factors in determining supporting/supported relationships. The Israeli colleague also stated that IDF special-operations forces were well-versed in employing conventional units as part of their operations. It seems that successful leadership against hybrid threats is more a function of experience and knowledge, both cultural and geographic knowledge, than it is a matter of rank.

So what can be gleaned from these insights and turned into actionable recommendations? It would be easy at this point to dismiss some of these observations by noting the differences between the IDF and the U.S. Department of Defense. The IDF is smaller, with different strategic considerations that come from being surrounded by enemies and having a lack of strategic depth, a reliance on its reserves for major operations, etc. Conventional wisdom might say that there is nothing to be learned from the IDF because of its inherent differences in size, make-up and strategic focus. However, if there is genuine concern over “what next after Afghanistan,” there is one potential challenge in the SOF community that can be addressed, based on the IDF’s experiences.

Current joint-training programs do not adequately train leaders and teams to think adaptively under pressure in regard to dealing with future hybrid threats and adversaries. Joint training is often focused on the process, not on problem-solving. As a result, the joint force could lack the kind of agile command and control necessary to combat adaptive adversaries, if it is not offered the opportunity to think about the problem set.

“The experiences of the IDF in Lebanon are an instructive example of the challenges of dealing with a hybrid or irregular enemy.”

Additionally, SOF are rarely the supported elements in joint operations and are more often than not seen as enablers instead of as the main effort — a fact somewhat inconsistent with the nature of hybrid threats. U.S. conventional forces sometimes have cultural difficulty supporting SOF. Also, SOF organizations, with very few exceptions, do not consistently train to be the supported command. The 2010 QDR notes the need for more supporting and enabling capabilities for SOF, but absent creative thinking on how to employ them and effective command and control, employment of “enablers, support and sustainment” capabilities could be sub-optimal in future conflicts.

Smart people can make the complex sound really simple. A professor at the National Defense University once captured the essence of irregular or hybrid warfare: “Put your best plan in place and then play for the breaks.” The problem is, without aggressive training against complex scenarios, staffs and leaders will lack the kind of agility necessary to effectively “play for the breaks.” There may be a trend in the SOF community similar to one the IDF experienced leading up to 2006: specifically, viewing operational activity as a substitute for training and wargaming against future scenarios. At the same time, that operational activity constrains SOF from participating in training exercises. Given the cycle times between deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, there is no room for new training programs. Also, programs like joint mission-readiness exercises do not provide optimum training experiences for SOF leaders and staff teams. SOF presence in those programs normally consists of “response cells” focused on the integration of SOF and conventional forces. A force-preparation experience that builds staff proficiency in complex problem solving is missing. Finally, exercising SOF as a supported command may sound like a minor consideration, but if in future conflicts SOF are called into a lead role, they may be poorly prepared to employ the wide array of joint enablers available and needed for victory. That will likely require cultural as well as operational innovation. “Who’s in charge” makes a difference.

While this problem is in itself complex, the following recommended actions could be undertaken now to help improve force preparation for hybrid threats.

The first recommendation is that we develop a joint training working group as part of the Global Synchronization Conference, or GSC, hosted by the U.S. Special Operations Command approximately every six months. It is a true global forum, during which participants discuss strategies for dealing with current problem areas and formulate solutions. The GSC audience includes combatant commands, or COCOMs; theater special-operations commands, or TSOCs; other government agencies; and allied partners. A GSC joint-training working group could be focused on identifying best training practices and opportunities, and on developing a broad community approach to training.

A second recommendation is to add wargaming to the force-preparation toolbox, particularly for the TSOCs. As the operational SOF entity in each COCOM, TSOCs have an inordinately high operational tempo. While training exercises provide some means for gaining proficiency in problem-solving, rarely do TSOCs have the ability to “wargame” their potential strategies and test assumptions about their own theater and operational plans. As we move into the realm of steady-state irregular warfare, TSOC theater plans need to be wargamed to determine a potential steady-state demand signal for both SOF and conventional forces. In recognition of the fact that conventional-force capabilities are needed for steady-state IW, TSOC wargames would be better identified as “subordinate unified command” wargames. The intent would be to provide the TSOCs with a forum, prepared and executed by an outside supporting agency, in which they could build proficiency in complex problem-solving while also building an understanding of the joint functional requirements necessary for addressing hybrid-warfare contingencies.

A related recommendation would be to pursue development of immersive training simulations that would enable TSOC and SOF-unit staffs to take advantage of available training time in small blocks in order to build proficiency. These simulations could be configured to push staffs to the limit against “virtual” adversaries, providing the kind of stresses that are not practical in larger exercises. This capability would be intended to provide training capabilities “to the edge,” for use when and where unit leaders find time available. The U.S. Joint Forces Command’s Small Group Scenario Trainer is an example of this kind of emerging technology.

We know that we are engaged in a protracted conflict and that our adversaries will continue to adapt and find new ways of exploiting our weaknesses. The experiences of the IDF in Lebanon are an instructive example of the challenges of dealing with a hybrid or irregular enemy. What is perhaps more instructive are the improvements the IDF made between Lebanon and Gaza to institutionalize advancements in its capabilities: rigorous analysis, application of lessons learned, wargaming of new approaches and the addition of new training programs. As a result, they out-adapted Hamas in Gaza. Making institutional changes to force-preparation turns out to be one of the key ways to out-think, out-adapt and out-fight our hybrid adversaries.

### Notes

1. Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 88.
2. U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review*, February 2010 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2010), 8.
3. Frank Hoffman, “Hybrid Warfare and Challenges,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 52, 1st Quarter 2009, 34, available at <[http://www.ndu.ouu/inss/Press/jfq\\_p3.ges/editions/IS2/9.pdf](http://www.ndu.ouu/inss/Press/jfq_p3.ges/editions/IS2/9.pdf)>.
4. Hoffman, 34.
5. The initial IDF invasion into Lebanon was in retaliation for the ambushing and kidnapping of Israeli soldiers. See “2nd Lebanon War”: <[http://www.zionism-israel.com/dic/Second\\_Lebanon\\_war.html](http://www.zionism-israel.com/dic/Second_Lebanon_war.html)>.
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## **Winning Damaged Hearts and Minds: An Irregular Warfare Concept**

**David L. Grange, S. Swanson, and Patrick Christian**

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In ungoverned and under-governed environments, the local populace is usually the center of gravity. Other centers of gravity within the population may include the will of the people that takes form as support for the governing authority or other political, economic and ideological forces. To win their hearts and minds and wean them off our adversaries' control requires effective communication using the local "information systems." Effective communications at the local level earns trust, which, in turn, establishes loyalty to our cause, commitment, and eventually buy-in to the regime we support. It also requires a focus on the local economic ecosystem that delves down to the community level, improves basic prosperity, honors local culture, and reinforces what's important to the people. It requires a focus on the local political system that respects local codes, social networks, and empowers local leaders that eventually will connect to the state, region, and national political system.

Our goal must be to establish capabilities that support the creation of enduring, safe, and secure environments with local participation and responsibility. We want to develop Community Internal Defense (CID) participation with local, state, and foreign governmental and civilian agencies with, and for, the people with the purpose of protecting its citizens. This community provides a safe and secure environment, economic and social well-being, effective governance, human rights, and rule of law with a capacity to counter lawlessness. This is similar to the end-state of America's historic "Wild West" communities.

To properly develop CID in ungoverned and under-governed environments and to focus on critical factors of the local social, economic, information, and political systems, our forces must develop tacit knowledge and use "below the waterline" intelligence (gathered within often hard to penetrate or denied spaces of cultural, sociological, relationship-driven, and historically linked associations). U.S. forces must understand that this is a long-haul commitment and that we must use all elements of national and foreign power to include not only military and other governmental agencies, but the for-profit and non-profit capabilities of the private sector as well. The term Whole of Nation (WON) approach is used for this purpose.

The establishment of CIDs supports Foreign Internal Defense (FID) doctrine and the Counterinsurgency (COIN) "oil-spot" principle of clearing, holding, and establishing secure base areas, normally in population centers, that gradually expand outward from the bases in a fashion similar to oil spreading across water. Once ungoverned and under-governed areas are cleared by coalition forces in selected "oil spot" areas, focus should shift to winning the hearts and minds of the local populace. The locals hold cleared areas, the public and private teams build or rebuild the areas, and foreign support forces focus on outside interference. In most cases, however, the people themselves need to be rebuilt first for CID to be effective.

### **Winning Hearts and Minds**

The mottos of "Winning Hearts and Minds" and "Free the Oppressed" are more than catchy mantras; they are the embodied missions and core promises from US Army Special Operation Forces (SOF) to help people in need throughout this world. The "hearts and minds" missions

and strategic objectives are also integral to tactically defeating enemies that are staging a parallel social offensive to support their own agenda—often through insurgency. By addressing the political and social grievances in a way that demobilizes the will of the people to support the ideology of a hostile movement, current military unconventional warfare teachings suggest that a conflict’s momentum can be decreased and hopefully contained and defused. The COIN doctrine similarly addresses aspects of neutralizing the message of the insurgents and disrupting their recruiting systems to secure the population, but how can the oppressed be freed or won when their hearts and minds are damaged or so fraught with fear and desensitization that typical civil, stability and psychological initiatives are rendered virtually useless? The “oil spot” then turns inward and evaporates as opposed to expanding.

Unfortunately, many historic guidelines of guerrilla target selection are not guidelines of today’s adversary. Acts to increase prestige with civilians and precautions to assure civilians are not subjected to reprisals. Therefore, the response to current adversary tactics and strategy lies in part with enhancing our Irregular Warfare “hearts and minds” campaigns and Range of Military Operations (ROMO) with improved situational understanding and Cross Cultural Leadership skills as the initial requirements of CID. These enhancements will enforce better contextual planning according to each unique environmental priority and should be driven by enhanced area intelligence assessment support—ones that are much deeper and operationally specific than they are currently—to ensure better situational awareness. Social-cultural “hearts and minds” destitution can only be understood and aided through the perspective of the full environmental oppression knowledge, or more simply, one can never know what lengths of support are required for a community or individual until the depth and source of their fear and needs are fully realized. At this point, cross cultural leadership skills can help rebuild a community that has been emotionally destroyed and empower them with the necessary psychological assistance to minimize future threats.

### **The Tactics of Strategic Terror**

Many conflicts today are hybrids of terrorism and insurgencies that blend brutal acts of violence against civilian and non-military targets with little regard for past rule of war conventions that many guerrillas and insurgents tended to acknowledge in the past. Women and children are increasingly the targets and comprise the bulk of contemporary armed conflict victims. Their traumatic pain is leveraged to destabilize populations and destroy cohesive will and bonds within the society. Whereas the majority of historical guerrilla warfare objectives have largely focused on targeting a state’s defense, economic centers of gravity, state-sponsored authority mechanisms and political authority, today many terror-blended conflicts now target the civilian base to raise the tactical intensity of war to a more strategic transnational stage to affect a wider base of political actions.

Groups like the Somali extremist group Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizbul Mujaideed, and Bangladesh’s Harkat-ul-Jiad-al-Islami, to name only a handful, are known to attack aid workers, threaten peacekeepers, bomb civilian population centers, and are often linked to tribal warlords, transnational business cartels, local political insurgents, regional illicit goods smugglers and other “terror” groups. These groups are much less concerned with the classic strategies of mass mobilization and political aspects of guerrilla warfare, and find it easier to terrorize and intimidate the population to change politics through fear as opposed to winning civil support for their movement. The adversary groups’ support ends up being based on a much wider ideological belief system—Islamic Extremism—which does not require popular support when imposed through violence and show of force that gains a stronger

movement enabler by like-minded individuals to obtain global financing, personnel allocation (safe haven and foreign fighters) and international attention. The Pakistani Taliban in the Swat Valley is a perfect example of this approach where school destruction, public executions, and acts of terror against the local population have been the preferred mechanism used by the extremists to control the valley while also tapping into a larger Islamic movement.

Another tactic that is widely used and is quite possibly one of the more destructive acts is rape. In war, rape assaults the individual woman, her family, and the community. Historical and anthropological evidence of rape in the context of war dates back to ancient practices, particularly in conflicts defined by racial, tribal, religious and other divisions. Military forces often use rape to systematically force families to flee their villages by humiliating the family unit, instilling fear to control them and subsequently destroying the community social fabric, often contributing to the goal of ethnic cleansing. Public rapes in Bosnia, Sudan, and Rwanda have been used to instigate the expulsion of entire communities that were tied to forced impregnation, intentional disease transmission and genital mutilation. In Pakistan, Afghanistan and parts of Africa, political rape has evolved to destroy the honor of political or power rival foes, leaving the target and their families with feelings of isolation, guilt, helplessness, depression, anxiety and embarrassment. Many US soldiers and aid workers come into post-rape environments and gain a sense of the dark emotions and fear without being able to really identify the root spiritual burden that has engulfed the hearts and minds of entire villages leading to distrust and personal apathy.

Situations surrounding rape are worsened with particular religious and cultural attitudes around rape that are typically found in the areas that most rape infractions are occurring. Married women can be disowned by their husbands and ostracized by their community, unmarried women may never marry due to the attitudes that they are “spoiled,” and a child born as a result of rape is often considered a child of the enemy and later abandoned if not killed outright. As a result of the conflict in Afghanistan, those women who were raped and brutalized resulted in many honor killings. In Afghan raids where men and women were to be killed, some young virgin girls were raped before killing based on the belief that virgins should not be executed. Women or young girls resisting rape are reportedly beaten, shot, stabbed, killed, and/or tortured in many conflicts throughout the world and history. Other times, the female’s arms and legs may be broken to prevent escape, while some young girls are abducted to be later used for means of sexual pleasure, slavery, and even taken and/or sold as child brides.

The toll that this takes on a community consists of extreme emotional, psychological, and physical symptoms that relate to long-term, complex and severe consequences, and interpersonal changes like distrust, anger, isolation and psychiatric disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Children are particularly vulnerable to long-lasting mental and emotional effects and require special care and counseling that is not typically available. The excessive amounts of fear cannot only transform a person temporarily; it can also modify behavior permanently within the brain’s structure to entire communities. The high levels of aggression-related hormonal changes in children who witness the violence, war-related horrors, and family loss, as well as face constant danger or threats enhances their own development along similar paths of fighting, aggression, and dehumanizing the enemy.

So, while civil interventions by US SOF, aid or relief groups, and policy may include protection; water and sanitation; food security and nutrition; shelter and site planning; health and community services; education; etc., psycho-social understanding tied to ethnic, tribal, clan, and family values should be a priority in order for other interventions to be maximized in effectiveness. After all, while there may not be a single agreed upon terrorist personality or profile, most

research suggests inherent themes of injustice, abuse, and humiliation as traits that are good predictors of future violent and adversarial behavior. This would suggest that those affected by terror can easily gravitate to similar tendencies as well as issues with trust and compliance to those trying to help, despite the CID COIN assistance being provided. Those surviving individuals who would typically be viewed as leaders in a community are equally as damaged and will likely not retain the necessary emotions to ethically support their people.

### **Treating Hearts and Minds**

The reality of human suffering has a certain feel, a different smell which cannot be adequately explained in words or conveyed in pictures. The raw pain—physical, emotional and spiritual—of another human being in close proximity calls out for assuagement to that secret place of compassion hidden in all of us. To really win hearts and minds and improve a community's situation, the cross-cultural leader must be able to accept the responsibilities inherent in responding to such damaged cultures engaged in complex cycles of violence. As a first step in the negotiation of cultural and political violence, the SOF soldier must understand the psychological cultural identities and the damage sustained to the local socio-cultural norms within the area of operation. This presents a unique opportunity for SOF through cross cultural leadership skills to help a community rebuild to a more sustainable condition, in accordance with their social-cultural views. Most Western aid and psychological assistance starts with emphasizing individualism, self-reliance, and self-initiated actions to solve problems and cope with adversity. This seriously contrasts with the reality of many communities that are under current siege. Even imposing Western trauma guidelines may exacerbate the situation of refugees and victims, thereby undervaluing their own local beliefs and connections to their local social and community support means.

One of the best ways to obtain and apply this understanding is through deeper and wider pre-plan area assessments along with an awakening of the interconnectedness of the leader (commander) to the people they would serve. Off-the-shelf area studies can provide some answers to intelligence requirements, but appropriate Irregular Warfare-based programs and pre-mission planning must be more focused on contextually operationalized historical and social cultural aspects that dictate the success of an operation and the appreciation of the plight. Requirements are also the cornerstone as to whether particular missions will have enduring effects or whether they will be short-term solutions only to fall by the wayside despite risks to individuals and the expense of resources.

In many of the countries where SOF currently operates, there is a complete breakdown of social equity, justice, and systems to identify, build and provide ethical and moral leadership. The required leadership principles exist in a specific context: that of social-cultural leadership in a time where few political structures can claim cultural homogeneity. In countries such as Sudan and Somalia, two of the least governed areas of the world today, people are no longer able to feel the grief or suffering of mind over the plight of their loved ones. Generations of children are being raised in environments of sheer brutality where the grief of others and compassion is beyond their emotional capabilities. They will never grow to lead communities or even their own household with ethical balance and human compassion. Instead of ethical leadership, they will likely be part of the warlord mentality that continues to arise where individuals are taught to do unto others before they could do unto them. Such warlords are not leaders, and they do not feel the ethical pull to motivate them into accepting responsibility for the physical, mental and emotional condition of their fellow humans. Even in the face of collaboration or resistance to Islamic Extremists, such leaders will often only think of personal benefit and force others to

submit to their will. Communities under this rule continue to live under inhumane social and emotional conditions.

SOF soldiers who have studied and practiced cross cultural leadership in complex war zones have codified the philosophy of leadership from amorphous thoughts and feelings to demonstrating leadership principles that can be imparted on war-torn communities. These principles must continue to be understood and embraced by military leadership and applied to current Irregular Warfare activities and training both in the United States and abroad in conflict zones around the world. In his book, *Ethics for the New Millennium* (2006), Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, writes:

*“...when we enhance our sensitivity toward other’s suffering through deliberately opening ourselves up to it, it is believed that we can gradually extend out compassion to the point where the individual feels so moved by even the subtlest suffering of others that they come to have an overwhelming sense of responsibility toward those others.”*

When our missions are geared towards improving hearts and minds of people and building their psychological well being, we can then add on other programs and missions that correlate to military CID strategy and tactics. The alternative is that short-term efforts are not likely to produce the intended results, and once our forces leave a particular area, there is no effective leadership to support the community needs. The hearts and minds battle will again be lost.



## The Great UW Debate

COL David M. Witty

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Un-con-ven-tion-al War-fare: *noun*

Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area.

— approved definition June 2009

The Special Forces community has been trying to articulate a definition for unconventional warfare, or UW, for well over 50 years. The pages of previous issues of this magazine are full of articles discussing the definition and scope of UW. The community's failure to clearly state a concise definition of UW to itself, the Army, the joint force, and other government agencies makes it appear that it is at best, doctrinally adrift, or at worst, intellectually lacking. Given the increased emphasis on irregular warfare and the fact that UW is one of the five IW activities,<sup>1</sup> the SF community needs to agree on what UW is or risk losing credibility.

This article will: 1) review previous UW schools of thought; 2) briefly review how the original founders of SF defined UW and the confusion caused by the various doctrinally approved UW definitions; 3) discuss the most current beliefs about UW; 4) describe the results of the UW Definition Working Group held at the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, or SWCS, in April 2009; and 5) examine the merits of the new UW definition approved by the commanders of the U.S. Special Operations Command, or USSOCOM, and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, in June 2009.

### Schools of Thought

A review of articles on UW published in *Special Warfare* reveals that until recently, there were three primary schools of UW thought, named here as the “traditionalist,” “methodologist” and “universalist.” The traditionalists believed that UW was exclusively either support to indigenous resistance movements aimed at ending foreign occupations or support to indigenous insurgencies aimed at coercing or overthrowing hostile governments.<sup>2</sup> UW could be employed in support of a conventional-force campaign, but it would still have to be conducted through an indigenous resistance movement or insurgency.<sup>3</sup> UW could not be employed against nonstate actors, because they have no overt infrastructure or occupying force to attack.<sup>4</sup> Traditionalists made a clear distinction between UW; foreign internal defense, or FID; counterinsurgency, or COIN.<sup>5</sup> FID defends a government, while UW coerces or overthrows one.<sup>6</sup> UW should be defined in terms that leave no doubt about what it is.<sup>7</sup> The traditionalist school of thought appears to be closest to what the original founders of SF meant by the term UW.

The methodologist school believed that UW was defined by its means of working by, with or through indigenous forces.<sup>8</sup> In many cases, anything that was not an SF unilateral mission was considered UW, including FID and COIN.<sup>9</sup> The term “unconventional operations,” or

UO, although never accepted in doctrine, was coined to describe working through indigenous counterparts; UO supported FID during peace and UW during war.<sup>10</sup> In other writings, methodologists said that SF's core purpose was to conduct UW; FID; special reconnaissance, or SR; direct action, or DA; and counterterrorism, or CT, through indigenous populations.<sup>11</sup> Finally, methodologists believed that by using indigenous forces, UW could be employed against nonstate actors or insurgents inside sovereign regimes that the U.S. supported.<sup>12</sup> A variation of the methodologist school gained considerable influence during the years following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when its viewpoint was codified into doctrine.

The universalist school believed that UW was everything and that the definition of UW needed to change to ensure its applicability. UW was SF's primary task, and everything else was a subset of it, including DA, SR and FID.<sup>13</sup> They held that UW was applicable in every operational environment.<sup>14</sup> Even before the attacks of 9/11, universalists believed, SF was involved daily in UW in scores of countries.<sup>15</sup> Because UW was the core purpose of SF,<sup>16</sup> its definition and scope needed to be greatly broadened to make it relevant for the 21st century.<sup>17</sup> In fact, linking UW to guerrilla warfare and insurgency made it irrelevant, because the U.S. would never support a resistance movement or insurgency in the future.<sup>18</sup> UW needed to be redefined so that SF could conduct UW unilaterally without indigenous or surrogate forces.<sup>19</sup> The universalist school had much influence at the turn of this century, and in the summer of 2001, the U.S. Army Special Forces Command, or USASFC, adopted UW as an all-encompassing term for everything that SF conducts,<sup>20</sup> although that was never accepted into doctrine. The universalist school has faded in recent years, likely because of the success of UW campaigns employing resistance movements in Afghanistan in 2001 and in northern Iraq in 2003, thus proving the continuing relevance of the traditionalist school.<sup>21</sup>

### Original Concept, Definitions

When the founders of SF, Aaron Bank and Russell Volckmann, defined their term for UW, special forces operations, or SFO,<sup>22</sup> it was support to resistance movements, based on their experiences during World War II.<sup>23</sup> SFO were defined as "the organization of resistance movements and operation of their component networks, conduct of guerrilla warfare, field intelligence gathering, espionage, sabotage, subversion and escape and evasion activities."<sup>24</sup> Bank believed that a resistance movement had to have external support in order to gain liberation from a foreign occupation or freedom from a hostile regime.<sup>25</sup>

However, through the years, the original scope and definition of UW was poorly defined in doctrine, although doctrine still had to serve (as it does today) as the basis for any UW discussions. Doctrine provides a common language of understanding and a body of thought on how to operate. It is intended to serve as a general guide, not as a fixed set of rules that must be rigidly applied in every situation. FM 3-0, *Operations* (February 2008), states that doctrine provides "an authoritative guide for leaders and Soldiers but requires original applications that adapt it to circumstances."<sup>26</sup> Doctrine also drives training and resource allocation, and it is agreed-upon by all concerned parties. But from the inception of SF, doctrinal confusion always existed about its roles and missions,<sup>27</sup> and even Bank expressed concern about the misuse of terms concerning UW.<sup>28</sup>

As of June 2009, there have been 10 different doctrinally approved UW definitions,<sup>29</sup> many of which have been vague or confusing. Although amplifying paragraphs in doctrinal publications following the definitions of UW usually tied it to resistance movements and insurgencies,<sup>30</sup> the definitions themselves were often created with ambiguity. The first doctrinal definition, found

in FM 31-21, *Guerrilla Warfare* (May 1955), states, “UW operations are conducted in time of war behind enemy lines by predominantly indigenous personnel responsible in varying degrees to friendly control or direction in the furtherance of military and political objectives. It consists of the interrelated fields of guerrilla warfare, evasion and escape, and subversion against hostile states (resistance).”<sup>31</sup>

In February 1969, FM 31-21, *Special Forces Operations*, stated “UW consists of the military, political, psychological or economic actions of a covert, clandestine or overt nature within areas under the actual or potential control or influence of a force or state whose interests and objectives are inimical to those of the United States. These actions are conducted unilaterally by United States resources, or in conjunction with indigenous assets, and avoid formal military confrontation.”<sup>32</sup> This definition introduces the concept of unilateral UW.

In December 1974, FM 31-21, *Special Forces Operations*, defined UW as “a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy, enemy-held, enemy controlled or politically sensitive territory. UW includes, but is not limited to, the interrelated fields of guerrilla warfare, evasion and escape, subversion, sabotage, direct action missions and other operations of a low-visibility, covert or clandestine nature. These interrelated aspects of UW may be prosecuted singly or collectively by predominantly indigenous personnel, usually supported and directed in varying degrees by (an) external source(s) during all conditions of war or peace.”<sup>33</sup>

FM 31-21A, *Special Forces Operations* (December 1974) (Secret), the classified portion of FM 31-21, expanded on the above definition by stating, “UW operations may be conducted against the external sponsor of an insurgent movement in a host country, or against insurgent movement in a host country, or against insurgent activities in a third country which either willingly or unwillingly accepts the use of its territory by the insurgents for bases, movement, or sanctuary. Their purpose is to support or complement IDAD (internal defense and development) in the host country.”<sup>34</sup> The ambiguity of the 1974 definition is evident.

In 2007, there were two doctrinally approved definitions of UW, one in joint doctrine and the other in Army/Army special-operations forces, or ARSOF, doctrine. The joint definition of UW found in JP 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (December 2003), defined UW as “a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities and unconventional assisted recovery.”<sup>35</sup> This definition is also ambiguous, because it contains words and phrases that provide no specificity, such as “a broad spectrum,” “normally of a long duration,” “predominantly,” “in varying degrees” and “includes, but is not limited to.”

At the same time, the ARSOF definition approved by the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, commander in January 2007<sup>36</sup> and found in FM 3-05.201, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare* (September 2007) (Secret) and FM 3-05.130, *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (September 2008), defined UW as “operations conducted by, with or through irregular forces in support of a resistance movement, an insurgency or conventional military operations.”<sup>37</sup> Irregular forces are defined as “armed individuals or groups who are not members of the regular armed forces, police, or other internal security forces.”<sup>38</sup>

Doctrine developers believed that the new ARSOF definition would end confusion about the scope of UW by clearly defining its purpose as support to resistance movements, insurgencies or conventional military operations. Stating that UW could support conventional military operations demonstrated UW's relevance to the Army and the joint force. Including "by, with or through irregular forces" was meant to end confusion of UW with FID or other coalition activities that use regular forces.<sup>39</sup> FM 3-05.130 (September 2008) also states that UW can be used against nonstate actors, increasing its relevance to the Global War on Terrorism while recognizing that nonstate actors do not have the same centers of gravity or infrastructures that have been critical in the past to traditional uses of UW. It also says that UW campaigns can be conducted "within or behind the laws of nonbelligerent states with which the United States is not at war."<sup>40</sup>

"The community's failure to clearly state a concise definition of UW to itself, the Army, the joint force and other government agencies makes it appear that it is at best, doctrinally adrift, or at worst, intellectually lacking."

USSOCOM non-concurred with the new ARSOF definition and recommended that it be redefined to support current and future applications of UW. However, the real problem with the 2007 ARSOF definition was that it stated that UW can be used to support "conventional military operations," eliminating the requirement for UW to be tied to a resistance movement or an insurgency. The use of any irregular force to support conventional military operations, be they militias, gangs, mercenaries or criminal networks, constituted UW. Defining UW as operations by, with or through irregular forces also makes UW a methodology rather than a operation that has a specific purpose, such as to coerce, disrupt or defeat a hostile government. In addition, UW could be used not only against state and nonstate actors but also against insurgents or terrorists in states that the U.S. supports.

The existence of two doctrinally approved but different definitions — the joint definition and the ARSOF definition — caused more confusion, because the term UW could be applied to many things. SF units were said to be conducting UW when in fact they were conducting what others would classify as advising and training foreign security forces, creating intelligence networks, conducting DA and SR, or performing other tasks in support of FID and COIN.<sup>41</sup>

The USSOCOM Global Synchronization Conference of October 2008, attended by staff officers from USSOCOM, USASOC, USASFC, SWCS, the Naval Special Warfare Command and the theater special-operations commands, identified a lack of understanding of UW throughout the Department of Defense and within the special-operations community. The lack of understanding of UW was attributed to the joint definition's ambiguity and the ARSOF definition's narrow scope. In reality, the 2007 ARSOF definition was problematic because it was not specific enough and was open to a broad interpretation. Following the conference, USSOCOM tasked USASOC to examine the definition and provide a recommended solution to the problem.

In order to determine the extent of the misunderstanding of UW, SWCS developed a 75-question UW survey to solicit the community's thoughts on the scope, purpose and definition of UW. The survey was taken by two groups, one at the Advanced Special Operations, or ASO, Conference in March 2009 and one at the UW Definition Working Group, or UWDWG, in April 2009.<sup>42</sup> The results showed that there was little consensus on some fundamental issues concerning UW, particularly when it came to making a distinction between UW, FID, COIN and CT. See the chart below (Figure 6-1) for some statements from the survey and the groups' responses.

STATEMENTS	ASO			UWDWG		
	Agree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
The use of irregulars (such as militias, tribes or clans) in support of COIN or FID operations can be considered UW.	79	29		10	80	
The mission of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group, or CIDG, in Vietnam was a UW operation. <sup>43</sup>	30	26	43	15	70	
The CIDG mission of Vietnam was a FID/COIN operation.	59	3	38	70	15	
UW can be conducted against insurgent groups or terrorist networks.	87	10		30	50	
The use of irregular forces exclusively for the purpose of conducting DA/SR or intelligence-collections can be considered IW.	70	23		20	65	
The SF community has a problem articulating what UW is.	77	17		90	0	
The Army and DoD do not understand what we mean by UW.	90	3		85	5	

Figure 6-1

Another example that demonstrated the confusion over UW was an excerpt from a Combined Forces Land Component Command OPLAN previously used at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College: “2nd Battalion/10th SF remains responsible for FID in Georgia and conducts unconventional warfare (counterinsurgency) in conjunction with the Georgian SOF company to interdict ... insurgents.”<sup>44</sup>

### Current UW Schools of Thought

Based upon the results of the UW survey and numerous discussions within the SF community, SWCS determined that there are two current schools of thought, the irregular forces methodologist school (a variation of the methodologist school described earlier in this article) and the broad traditionalist school (a slight expansion of the original traditionalist school).

According to the irregular forces methodologist school, UW is an umbrella concept that encompasses a wide variety of activities conducted by irregular forces. The concept includes support to resistance movements and insurgencies, but it also includes other operations conducted by irregular forces. This concept distinguishes UW from other operations by the methodology of employing irregular forces: Any use of irregular forces would be considered UW operations. In this context, strikes, raids or sabotage missions conducted by SF and irregular forces are UW. The missions could be conducted against a state, terrorist organization or nonstate actor. The SF missions of DA, SR and CT are denoted as being exclusively unilateral or as actions taken with the recognized security forces of a state and not involving irregular forces.

The advantage of this school of thought is that it demonstrates that UW is relevant today and can be used against the United States’ principal enemy, al-Qaeda, a nonstate actor. However, if UW operations to end a foreign occupation or overthrow a hostile government employ irregular forces, such as militias, gangs, mercenaries, warlords, tribes, criminal networks or opportunists, who are not based in a resistance movement or insurgency that has the support of the civilian population, success is less likely.

In fact, using those types of irregular forces and attempting to manufacture resistance or insurgent movements that lack the support of a state's population can lead to failure. Mao Zedong considered the employment of those types of irregular forces a "corrupt phenomena" that should be eradicated because they are dissociated from the people and unorganized.<sup>45</sup> Examples include U.S. efforts in Albania and Latvia from 1951 to 1955, the Bay of Pigs in 1961, North Vietnam from 1961 to 1964, and Nicaragua from 1980 to 1988.<sup>46</sup> Developing a guerrilla element without first developing a sufficient base of support is an unsustainable and doomed practice. As Mao stated, any resistance movement that is not firmly grounded with the popular support of the population "must fail."<sup>47</sup>

Another drawback to the irregular forces methodologist school is that irregular forces are increasingly being employed on the battlefield by conventional forces, and by this school's line of thought, they are conducting UW, which endangers UW's status as a task conducted predominantly by SF. An excellent example is the Sunni Awakening Movement in Anbar Province in Iraq, also known as concerned Local Citizens, and later as the Sons of Iraq, or SOI. Many of the SOI were indigenous Sunni tribal insurgents who had fought with al-Qaeda in Iraq against the coalition and Iraqi security forces, but they later defected from al-Qaeda because of its brutality.

As irregular tribal militias, they began to assist coalition forces — who paid, organized, equipped and employed them to provide local security — and the movement later spread throughout Iraq. Although the coalition forces wanted to incorporate the SOI into the Iraqi security forces, the Shia-dominated government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was mistrustful of the SOI, and Iraqi security forces conducted raids against them and arrested their leaders.<sup>48</sup> Clearly, the SOI were not part of the regular security forces of Iraq and could only be labeled irregular forces. Conventional forces from the U.S. Army played a significant role in the organization and employment of the SOI.<sup>49</sup>

The other current school, the broad traditionalist school, is slightly more encompassing than the original traditionalist school. According to this school, UW is a specific type of special operation that enables resistance movements and insurgencies. According to the broad traditionalists, UW can involve numerous activities not exclusive to UW. These activities predominantly include guerrilla warfare, subversion and, to a lesser degree, escape and evasion using an indigenous network, sabotage and intelligence-collection. They could also include SR, DA, CT, advanced special operations, preparation of the environment and other activities employed in support of UW but not exclusive to it.

In this school's view, while the tactics, techniques and procedures associated with working with the components of resistance movements and insurgencies, i.e., guerrilla forces, undergrounds and auxiliaries, greatly enable SF to perform a wide array of other special operations, such as SR, DA, CT and FID, the use of irregular forces during the conduct of operations does not make them UW.

The broad traditionalist school categorizes operations by what they aim to achieve rather than the type of force that conducts them. Within that scope, the target of UW must be vulnerable to the effects of resistance and insurgency. The adversary must have some overt infrastructure that is susceptible to physical or psychological attacks. The adversary does not necessarily have to be a state government, but it does have to possess state-like characteristics, e.g., a de-facto government or an occupying military force exercising authority. Groups and networks that are strictly underground or clandestine in nature have different vulnerabilities and represent

different challenges; these challenges require different skill sets and approaches. In other words, UW cannot be employed against nonstate actors unless they take on significant state-like characteristics.

An advantage of this school of thought is that it makes it considerably easier to identify what is and what is not UW. However, critics of this school argue that UW would seldom be employed, and it could be seen as largely irrelevant, because the U.S. might lack the political will to support resistance movements or insurgencies in the future. Another criticism is that according to the broad traditionalist definition, UW could not be employed against nonstate actors, al-Qaeda in particular, until they have reached a point where they become de-facto states with overt ruling authority and infrastructure.

### **The UW Definition Working Group**

In an attempt to end the debate about the definition and scope of UW, SWCS convened the UW Definition Working Group, April 7–9, 2009, composed of key stakeholders in the SF community, to develop a consensus on the definition of UW. The UWDWG comprised 25 representatives selected from USSOCOM, USASOC, USASFC, SWCS, the Naval Postgraduate School, or NPS, the Joint Special Operations University, or JSOU, and the SOF Cell from the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. The methodology of the working group was: 1) present a series of briefings on doctrine, the operational environment and the history of the UW definition; 2) divide into three groups to develop three proposed definitions; 3) present each group's definition for discussion and debate; and 4) reach agreement, either through consensus or vote, on one definition. USSOCOM, USASOC, USASFC, NPS and JSOU had one vote each; SWCS served as the facilitator. The only stipulations placed on the definition were that it adhere to doctrine (i.e., non-doctrinal terms could not be used in the definition), that it adhere to Army standards for the content of doctrinal definitions, and that it be based on classic theories of warfare that are still valid.<sup>50</sup>

At the conclusion of the UWDWG, the members agreed on the following definition of UW: “activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area.”

Every word in this definition was thoroughly debated. UW was described as “activities” instead of “operations” because “activities” denote actions that could be nonmilitary, while “operations” are military-centric.<sup>51</sup> “Resistance movement and insurgency” were included to connect UW to its historical context. “To coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power” was included to define UW by its purpose rather than by its methodology of working with indigenous or irregular forces. “Underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force” were included because they are considered to be the three common components of insurgencies.<sup>52</sup> “Denied area” was included so that a support element far from the operational area would be described as “supporting UW” rather than “conducting UW.” Nonstate actor was not included in the definition because it has no overt infrastructure to attack and was not deemed vulnerable to UW.

The commanders of USSOCOM and USASOC approved the definition in June 2009, stating that it was immediately the only approved definition for SOF and will be proposed for inclusion in all doctrine. They directed SWCS to rescind the existing UW publications, FM 3-05.201 (September 2007) (Secret) and FM 3-05.130 (September 2008), and publish new doctrine.<sup>53</sup> SWCS is

currently developing a new publication, TC 31-20, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, which incorporates the new definition. The new definition is being included in all new doctrine.

### Merits of the new definition

Critics of the new definition will argue that it is so narrow that UW will seldom be conducted, if at all — the United States will not have the political will to support resistance movements or insurgencies in the future. However, the decision to make war utilizing UW is for policy-makers, not for those responsible for developing doctrine and training to maintain capabilities.<sup>54</sup> The United States has not employed nuclear warfare since August 1945; however, it did not attempt to redefine it to make it relevant. The fact that the United States possessed a nuclear capability was invaluable during the Cold War by deterring a Soviet attack. Today, the use of UW is at least as likely as the clash of regular armies in open warfare. In addition, it is conceivable that UW could be used in support of a FID or CT campaign. If a hostile government were to support an insurgency in a country where the United States is conducting FID to enable a host nation's COIN efforts, the United States could employ UW against the hostile government.

Another argument against the new definition is that it does not allow UW to be used against nonstate actors. UW is designed for use against a government or occupying power; a nonstate actor is neither. However, the fact that UW cannot be used against nonstate actors does not mean that those actors cannot be attacked — they could still be targeted using FID, DA, CT or SR. UW would be appropriate against al-Qaeda if the group accomplished its goal of establishing a new Islamic caliphate.<sup>55</sup> If there was a need to develop clandestine surrogate networks in a country without its knowledge for the purposes of targeting terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, that would be CT, not UW.

“The new definition provides clarity on what UW is, and while it might not be perfect, it does reduce confusion. In defining UW by what it is meant to achieve rather than by the methodology employed, we can ensure that we are training to achieve the required skills and capabilities.”

By maintaining the historical concept of UW as supporting a resistance movement or insurgency, the new definition makes evident that only SF are trained and equipped to conduct UW within the U.S. military and have specific supporting doctrine. Although other forces may be knowledgeable of techniques for employing irregular forces, that does not mean that they know how to advise or enable a resistance movement or insurgency. By defining UW as strictly support to resistance movements and insurgencies, we can ensure that we develop and maintain the skills needed to enable them. That will prevent what occurred in some previous UW attempts when planners demonstrated a lack of expertise in supporting resistance movements and insurgencies. In some U.S. efforts, planning started late or overly focused on the purely military aspects of creating units that were more like commandos than guerrilla units, with supporting clandestine elements with indigenous support. Supported forces were disconnected from the population and appeared to be manufactured by the United States.<sup>56</sup>

The new definition is also easily understood and is applicable to what an adversary does against U.S. interests. For instance, Iran has supplied weapons and advisers to multiple resistance movements in Iraq;<sup>57</sup> we can now clearly define that the Iranians were conducting a UW campaign in Iraq and conceptually respond to it.

In the course of attempting to redefine UW as a methodology for employing irregular forces, we changed doctrine to describe FID as not employing irregular forces, only the recognized forces of a host nation. We characterized UW as using irregular forces that are not part of a state's recognized security forces.<sup>58</sup> As noted already, if that were the case, conventional forces would have been categorized as having conducted UW in Iraq through the Sons of Iraq, who were not organized by or approved of by the Iraqi government. Furthermore, previous doctrine stated that the employment of irregular forces is an aspect of FID.<sup>59</sup> That is more doctrinally correct, as FID is actions taken to protect a government,<sup>60</sup> while UW is now clearly used for coercing or defeating one. The Sons of Iraq and the Civilian Irregular Defense Group of South Vietnam were employed to conduct COIN in support of FID, not UW. The employment of irregular forces that are not a part of the host nation's recognized security forces is still for the purpose of accomplishing the host nation's goals or U.S. goals for the host nation.

The most important aspect of the new definition is that it makes a clear distinction between UW and FID. That is vital, because the lines of effort in UW and FID are opposite. A line of effort "links multiple tasks and missions using the logic of purpose — cause and effect — to focus efforts toward establishing operational and strategic conditions."<sup>61</sup> It is often the only way to link tasks, effects, conditions and end states, especially in activities involving nonmilitary factors,<sup>62</sup> such as UW and FID. Lines of effort in FID could include developing security forces, conducting combat operations, securing the population, developing governance, establishing essential services and promoting economic growth.<sup>63</sup> However, in UW, the lines of effort could include organizing insurgent infrastructure, gaining popular support, conducting armed conflict to delegitimize a government and conducting subversion to undermine a government.<sup>64</sup> Thus, if one believes he is conducting UW and is in reality conducting FID, the wrong lines of effort could be applied. For example, following the overthrow of a hostile regime by a successful UW campaign, SF might not rapidly transition to FID lines of effort to protect the newly established government and instead remain focused on the UW line of effort of capturing former regime members who would then have little power or influence. That would allow other segments of discontent within a state the breathing space needed for them to establish insurgent undergrounds and transition to guerrilla warfare.<sup>65</sup> We would commit what Clausewitz considered the most grievous error in war: not determining the "kind of war" that we were conducting and instead turning it into something that is "alien to its nature."<sup>66</sup>

### **Ending the debate**

The definition and scope of UW have always been an emotional issue for the SF community. Perhaps because UW was the original, and for a time, only SF task, the community feels a need to be able to apply the term at any time. However, by calling something UW that is not, we endanger the capability of actually supporting resistance movements and insurgencies and following the correct lines of effort. We also continue to confuse ourselves. Should we continue to redefine the meaning of a term just because it might not be immediately relevant? Probably not, but that is what we have done with UW. We should accept the new definition, end the debate and execute the numerous tasks at hand rather than periodically dividing into schools of thought to debate the true meaning of UW. The new definition provides clarity on what UW is, and while it might not be perfect, it does reduce confusion. In defining UW by what it is meant to achieve rather than by the methodology employed, we can ensure that we are training to achieve the required skills and capabilities.<sup>67</sup> We hope the debate is over.

### Notes

1. Department of Defense Directive 300007, *Irregular Warfare*, 1 December 2008, 2.
2. MAJ Robert G. Brady, “Mass Strategy A Different Approach to Unconventional Warfare,” *Special Warfare*, Summer 1989, 27; MAJ Kenneth E. Tovo, “Special Forces Mission Focus for the Future,” *Special Warfare*, December 1996, 8; COL J. H. Crerar, “Commentary: Some Thoughts on Unconventional Warfare,” *Special Warfare*, Winter 2000, 38; and D. Jones, “UW/FID and Why Words Matter,” *Special Warfare*, July–August 2006, 26. A resistance movement is defined as “an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability.” See Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 12 April 2001 (as amended through 19 August 2009), 470. Insurgency is defined as “the organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself.” See JP 1-02, 268.
3. Brady, 27, and LTC Mark Grdovic, “Understanding Unconventional Warfare and U.S. Army Special Forces,” *Special Warfare*, September–October 2006, 20.
4. D. Jones, 25–26.
5. FID is defined as “participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.” See JP 1-02, 216. COIN is defined as “those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.” See JP 1-02, 130.
6. MAJ Mike Skinner, “The Renaissance of Unconventional Warfare as an SF Mission,” *Special Warfare*, Winter 2002, 19; D. Jones, 23; and Grdovic, “Understanding UW,” 18.
7. D. Jones, 27, and Grdovic, “Understanding UW,” 22.
8. COL Mark D. Boyatt, “Special Forces: Our Core Purpose,” *Special Warfare*, Winter 2001, 8; and CPT Robert Lee Wilson, “Unconventional Warfare: SF’s Past, Present and Future,” *Special Warfare*, Winter 2001, 27. Today, describing UW as by, with or through indigenous forces would be problematic, since UW would be widely conducted by U.S. conventional forces. For instance, General Raymond T. Odierno, Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq, said, “Our forces continue to conduct full-spectrum operations — by, with, and through the ISF (Iraqi Security Forces).” See “An Interview With Raymond T. Odierno,” *JFQ*, Issue 55 (4th Quarter 2009), 121.
9. MAJ Christian M. Karsner, “21st-Century Relevance of Mao’s Theory on Popular Support in Guerrilla Warfare,” *Special Warfare*, February 2005, 32; and Wilson, 24.
10. Boyatt, “Unconventional Operations Forces of Special Operations,” *Special Warfare*, October 1994, 10. Note that doctrinally, FID can be conducted during wartime.
11. Boyatt, “Special Forces: Who Are We and What are We?,” *Special Warfare*, Summer 1998, 37; Boyatt, “Special Forces Core Purpose: What vs. How,” *Special Warfare*, Winter 1999, 19; and Boyatt, “Special Forces: Our Core Purpose,” 8. SR is defined as “reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces. These actions provide an additive capability for commanders and supplement other conventional reconnaissance and surveillance actions.” See JP 1-02, 509. DA is defined as “short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives.” See JP 1-02, 163. CT is defined as “operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, pre-empt, and respond to terrorism,” See JP 1-02, 132.
12. MAJ Dean S. Newman, “Operation White Star: A UW Operation Against An Insurgency,” *Special Warfare*, April 2005, 29, 32–33.
13. COL Michael R. Kershner, “Unconventional Warfare: The Most Misunderstood Form of Military Operations,” *Special Warfare*, Winter 2001, 2–7.
14. Kershner, 4.
15. Kershner, 2–3.

16. COL Gary M. Jones and MAJ Christopher Tone, "Unconventional Warfare Core Purpose of Special Forces," *Special Warfare*, Summer 1999, 5.
17. Gary Jones and Tone, 9, 14.
18. Gary Jones and Tone, 9.
19. Gary Jones and Tone, 12–13; and Dr. Keith D. Dickson, "The New Asymmetry: Unconventional Warfare and Army Special Forces," *Special Warfare*, Fall 2001, 18.
20. D. Jones, 22–23.
21. A final UW school, although undocumented, is the Ambiguous School. The Ambiguosists desire to keep the definition of UW vague so that SF missions can be labeled as UW as required, for reasons that go beyond doctrinal considerations. In academic circles, UW is generally described as anything that is not conventional warfare, giving it a very loose definition. See Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future at Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 16.
22. Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Beret: The Birth at Special Forces* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1986), 152, 156.
23. Bank, 149–51; and Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare Its Origins*, Revised Edition (Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas Press, 2002), 120.
24. Bank, 163.
25. Bank, 132.
26. FM 3-0, *Operations*, February 2008, para 0-2.
27. Paddock, 120.
28. Bank, 151.
29. FM 31-21, *Guerrilla Warfare*, May 1955, 2; FM 31-21, *Guerrilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations*, September 1961, 251; FM 31-21, *Special Forces Operations*, June 1965, 4-5; FM 31-21, *Special Forces Operations*, February 1969, 3-1; FM 31-21, *Special Forces Operations*, December 1974, 3-1; FM 31-20, *Special Forces Operations*, September 1977 (Confidential), 43; FM 31-20, *Doctrine for Special Forces Operations*, April 1990, 3-1; JP 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*, December 2003, 11-7; FM 3-05, *Army Special Operations Forces*, August 2006, 2-1; and FM 3-05.201, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, September 2007 (Secret), 1-1.
30. For instance, see FM 31-20, April 1990, 3-2; FM 31-20-3, *Foreign Internal Defense Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Special Forces*, September 1994, 1-24; FM 3-05.20, *Special Forces Operations*, 2-1; and JP 3-05, December 2003, 11-7.
31. FM 31-21, May 1955, 2.
32. FM 31-21, February 1969, 3-1.
33. FM 31-21, December 1974, 3-1.
34. FM 31-21A, *Special Forces Operations*, December 1974 (Secret), 3-1. IDAD is defined as "the full range of measures taken by a nation to promote its growth and to protect itself from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. It focuses on building viable institutions (political, economic, social, and military) that respond to the needs of society." See JP 1-02, 276.
35. JP 3-05, December 2003, 11-7. This definition is also found in the current version of JP 1-02.
36. CW4 Jeffery L. Hasler, "Defining War New Doctrinal Definitions of Irregular, Conventional and Unconventional Warfare," *Special Warfare*, April–March 2007, 22.
37. FM 3-05.201, September 2007 (Secret), 1-1; and FM 3-05.130, *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare*, September 2008, para 1-2. Both FM 3-05.201 September 2007 (Secret), and FM 3-05.130, September 2008, have been rescinded.
38. JP 1-02, 282.
39. FM 3-05.130, September 2008, para 1 11.
40. FM 3-05.130, September 2008, para 3-90.

41. For instance, see Dr. C. H. Briscoe, "Reflections and Observations on ARSOF Operations during Balikatan 02-1," *Special Warfare*, September 2004, 56, where the 1st Special Forces Group leadership envisioned a UW campaign in the Philippines vs. FID following the 9/11 attacks; Dr. Cheryl A. Walley, "Civil Affairs: A Weapon of Peace on Basilan Island," *Special Warfare*, September 2004, 30, where the U.S. would apply a COIN model to UW efforts in the Philippines vs. FID; CSM William Eckert, "Defeating the Idea: Unconventional Warfare in the Southern Philippines," *Special Warfare*, November–December 2006, 18, where the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines is conducting UW in the Philippines vs. FID; and LTC Dave Duffy, "UW Support to Irregular Warfare and the Global War on Terrorism," *Special Warfare*, May–June 2007, 14, where SF is conducting UW in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban regime vs. FID or COIN.
42. The ASO Conference occurred March 23–27, 2009, at San Diego, Calif., and was attended predominately by warrant officers and senior NCOs from USSOCOM, USASOC, the Naval Special Warfare Command, the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command and the theater special-operations commands. Twenty-five personnel took the ASO Conference UW survey. The UWDG occurred April 7–9, 2009, at Fort Bragg, N.C., and was attended predominately by senior field-grade and warrant officers, sergeants major and civilians from USSOCOM, USASOC, USASFC, SWCS, the Naval Postgraduate School, the Joint Special Operations University and the Combined Arms Center SOF Cell. Twenty personnel took the UWDWG UW survey.
43. During the CIDG mission in South Vietnam, SF trained irregular forces to conduct pacification in interior regions and border surveillance activities along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to prevent infiltration from North Vietnam. At its height, the CIDG program constituted more than 40,000 irregulars. See Paddock, 158–59.
44. The OPLAN has not been used since 2007. E-mail exchange with LTC Casey J. Lessard, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 13 January 2010.
45. Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 44–45.
46. Mark Grdovic, *A Leader's Handbook to Unconventional Warfare*, SWCS Pub 09-01, November 2009, 32–36.
47. Mao, 43–44
48. Leila Fadel, "Key U.S. Iraq Strategy in Danger of Collapse," McClatchy Washington Bureau, August 20, 2008, available at <<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/227/v-print/story/49538.html>>; Ned Parker, "Iraq Seeks Breakup of Sunni Fighters: The U.S. backed force faces arrests could return to insurgency," *Los Angeles Times* – Article Collection, Aug. 23, 2008, available at <<http://articles.latimes.com/2008/aug/23/world/fg-sons23>>; Ron Synovitz, "Tension Runs Deep Between Iraqi Government and Awakening Councils," Radio Free Europe, Radio liberty, April 7, 2009, available at <<http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1604222.html>>; for a good overview of the Sons of Iraq, see William S. McCallister, "Sons of Iraq: A Study in Irregular War," *Small Wars Journal*, 2008, available at <<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/97-mccallister.pdf>>; and for a good overview of conventional forces employing the Sons of Iraq, see MAJ Andrew W. Koloski and LTC John S. Kolasheski, "Thickening the Lines: Sons of Iraq, A Combat Multiplier," *Military Review*, January–February 2009, 41–53, available at <[http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20090228\\_art007.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20090228_art007.pdf)>.
49. Kimberly Kagan, *The Surge: A Military History* (New York: Encounter Books, 2009), 197.
50. It was assumed that the beliefs of the classic theorists of war, such as Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Mao, were still valid, because the UWDWG had insufficient time to develop a new theory of warfare in three days.
51. JP 1-02, 5, 397.
52. Grdovic, *Leader's Handbook*, 10.
53. USASOC Message DTG 301341Z, Jun 09, Subject: Unconventional Warfare (UW) Definition.
54. Brady, 27.
55. D. Jones, 25–26, and Grdovic, "Understanding UW," 19, for a description of U.S. support to the Contras in Nicaragua.
56. Kagan, 159.
57. FM 3-05.202, *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense*, February 2007, para A-9.

58. LTC John Mulbury, “ARSOF, General Purpose Forces and FID: Who Does What, Where and When?” *Special Warfare*, January–February 2008, 19; FM 3-05.137, *Army Special Operations Forces Foreign Internal Defense*, June 2008, para 1-2; and FM 3-05.130, September 2008, para 1-11.
59. FM 31-20-3, September 1994, 1-19, 1-10; and FM 3-05202, *Special Forces Foreign Internal Defense*, February 2007, paras A-9, F-9.
60. JP 1-02, 216.
61. FM 3-0, Glossary-9.
62. FM 3-0, para 6-66–6-67. Army doctrine makes a distinction between lines of effort and lines of operations. A line of operations is a “line that defines the directional orientation of a force in time and space in relation to the enemy and links the force with its base of operations and objectives.” See FM 3-0, para 6-62. A line of operation is space-and-time based, while a line of effort is logic-of-purpose based. In Army doctrine, lines of effort were formerly referred to as logical lines of operations. See FM 3-0, 0-6. In joint doctrine, there are two types of lines of operations, physical and logical. Physical lines of operations are used to “connect the force with its base of operations and objectives when positional reference to the enemy is a factor.” Logical lines of operations are used to “visualize and describe the operation when positional reference to an enemy has little relevance.” See JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, 17 September 2006, incorporating change 1, 13 February 2008, IV 13-14. A line of effort in Army doctrine corresponds to a logical line of operations in joint doctrine.
63. FM 3-0, Figure 6-6; FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, December 2006, para 4-19; and D. Jones, 24. Note that D. Jones and FM 3-24 refer to these as logical lines of operations vs. lines of efforts. See endnote 62.
64. D. Jones, 24; Mark Grdovic, *Leader’s Handbook*, 9; and FM 3-05.130, September 2008, para 1-27. Note that Grdovic and FM 3-05.130 refer to these as lines of operations vs. lines of effort. See endnote 62.
65. D. Jones, 25.
66. Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 100.
67. Grdovic, “Understanding UW,” 23.



## **Long-Term Counterinsurgency Strategy: Maximizing Special Operations and Airpower**

**CDR John James Patterson VI**

The rapid, decisive campaign conducted against the Taliban by U.S. special operations forces (SOF), in conjunction with the Northern Alliance and supported by U.S. airpower, in the opening phases of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) captured the attention of military professionals throughout the world — allies and potential adversaries alike. Heralded as a template for future military transformation by the most enthusiastic proponents, even the less sanguine observers were forced to acknowledge an impressive synergy and economy of force in the SOF-airpower combination.

Nearly eight years later, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commander, GEN Stanley McChrystal, issued a tactical directive seeking, among other things, to limit the use of close air support (CAS) by NATO troops in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup> This action follows several high-profile incidents of collateral damage caused by airstrikes in support of ISAF and signals a broader shift in theater strategy toward a counterinsurgency-centric approach similar to that successfully employed in conjunction with the “surge” in Iraq.

While comparisons are inevitable, such a strategy must confront significant additional challenges posed by the unique cultural and geographical characteristics of Afghanistan, which could in effect make an unexamined restriction of airpower as significant a danger to the achievement of strategic objectives as the collateral damage that it seeks to avoid. One prominent dilemma is presented by the central role that SOF continue to play in performing many of the key strategic functions, such as counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations, and the paradox posed by the fact that the characteristics that render SOF an ideal choice for Afghanistan’s dispersed and geographically isolated rural insurgency also engender increased reliance upon the mobility, responsiveness, and firepower provided by airpower.

This article examines the unique suitability of SOF to meet strategic objectives in Afghanistan, explores the synergistic relationship between SOF and airpower, and assesses the strategic utility of this combat-proven combination in an irregular warfare environment.

### **Putting the “Special” in Special Operations**

SOF share a number of uniquely defining qualities that serve to distinguish them from their conventional counterparts. However, despite a broad consensus that SOF have a distinct military culture with distinctive capabilities, no universally accepted, definitive work exists codifying the character of special operations. There is, however, a substantial amount of published material on the subject, to which the author intends to contribute yet another example in an attempt to build a platform for further analysis by synthesizing the key elements of several notable, contemporary special operations theorists.

#### **Adaptability, flexibility, and versatility**

In his 2002 analysis of the decisive characteristics of SOF, following in the wake of the now iconic tactical and operational successes of U.S. SOF teamed with the Northern Alliance over Taliban forces in late 2001 and early 2002, COL John Jogerst notes, “You don’t know what you need until you need it. A wide range of capabilities in effective quantities is a good hedge

against tomorrow's threat.”<sup>2</sup> ADM Eric T. Olson, Commander, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), similarly posits: “We need to be responsive enough to adjust rapidly to what the enemy throws at us, and we need to have the agility to transcend the spectrum of conflict.”<sup>3</sup> Colin Gray affirms the innovative nature of special operations, further noting that successful SOF units, such as the British Special Air Service, have institutionalized the ability to “reinvent” themselves as national security interests require.<sup>4</sup> Building upon Gray's work, Australian squadron leader David Jeffcoat identifies “unorthodox means” as one of his proposed characteristics of SOF, which are “required to adapt their approach to each operation and come up ‘with a distinctive theory of victory.’”<sup>5</sup>

In short, SOF are traditionally (as they must be to retain their unique effectiveness) selected for innate adaptive ability, which is further cultivated in training. They are employed with the assumed capability to respond with agility to diverse, ever-changing, unforeseen threats from unpredictable enemies, often employing their own strengths asymmetrically while seeking to deny a similar advantage to their adversaries. Present-day SOF counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations in Afghanistan embody the sort of unconventional challenge in which the United States must capitalize on such adaptability, versatility, and flexibility to achieve success.

### **Speed, agility, and stealth**

Jeffcoat asserts that unique to SOF is “the expectation of commanders borne out of historical examples of SO [special operations] that SF [special forces] will invariably achieve relative superiority over a larger enemy and therefore win.”<sup>6</sup> Achievement of tactical surprise is often cited as one of the keys to victory in the face of a numerically superior foe. Specifically, however, in terms of SOF themselves, it is the characteristics of speed, stealth, and agility (with a healthy dose of technology) that enable this critical principle.<sup>7</sup> It is the ability of SOF to appear on the battlefield at an unexpected place and time of their choosing, which, coupled with an offensive mindset, enables them to retain the initiative and achieve surprise.

Implicit in the need for speed is the requirement to travel light and leverage technology for mobility and firepower. Of the former, LTC Eugene McFeely, referencing the counterinsurgency manual, U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24, asserts that U.S. forces in Afghanistan “must lighten their combat loads and enforce a habit of speed and mobility to gain maneuver parity with the lightly equipped insurgent.”<sup>8</sup> Jeffcoat articulates the requirement for “high relative speed to swiftly reach the objective despite the actions of the adversary,” which, he tellingly adds, “invariably translates to a dependency on aircraft.”<sup>9</sup>

Agility, similarly, implies the ability to respond faster than the enemy once engaged. More than heavy conventional forces, SOF can “operate and maneuver in the face of enemy action.”<sup>10</sup> Finally, SOF achieve stealth, or the ability to remain undetected by the enemy, until the moment of decisive engagement, through the effective application of signature management, optimized by SOF's small footprint and extensive training as well as through dedicated, effective intelligence and “intensive and comprehensive study of their targets.”<sup>11</sup>

Thus, speed, agility, and stealth are critical enablers for SOF in countering the asymmetric advantages of experienced, elusive insurgent fighters with extensive early warning networks and local terrain knowledge who seek to deny such decisive engagement.

### **Cultural awareness, maturity, and interoperability**

Counterinsurgency, together with unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense (FID), counterterrorism, and stability operations, comprise irregular warfare (IW), a SOF core competency, the successful prosecution of which requires what squadron leader Jeffcoat refers to as “assimilation.”<sup>12</sup> He further explains: “Without a high degree of cultural awareness, it is unlikely SF will be able to gain the required level of trust and cooperation from sympathetic local elements...”<sup>13</sup> ADM Olson emphasizes the lineage of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in uniquely positioning SOF to succeed in IW:

Since the Army officially established its Special Warfare Center in 1956 for the purpose of training its servicemembers in counterinsurgency operations, unconventional warfare and psychological operations, the officers and noncommissioned officers assigned to these specialty areas are drawing on five decades of experience in developing the doctrine for and conducting insurgent and counterinsurgent warfare.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to this institutional experience base, cultural awareness is cultivated through training, regional specialization, and habitual international partnerships, which focus on international military capacity-building in the traditional SOF mission of FID. “On a typical day,” notes ADM Olson, “the operational forces of the U.S. Special Operations Command can be found in 60 to 70 countries, primarily conducting foreign internal defense and civil affairs operations.”<sup>15</sup>

Cultural awareness and the maturity imparted by the greater age and experience level of the individual special operator (the average age of an Army special forces Soldier is nearly 32 years old as compared with 19 years old for the average Marine, for instance)<sup>16</sup> combine to enhance effective mission execution in the complex, nuanced counterinsurgency environment. Air Force Maj. Gen. Charles Dunlap underscores the value of maturity in counterinsurgency, asserting that counterinsurgency “is not just manpower-intensive; it requires a particular kind of manpower that is difficult to recruit, train, and maintain.”<sup>17</sup>

He further notes that while the U.S. Army has continued to meet its recruiting goals despite the strain of a conflict entering its eighth year, it has done so in part by increasing waivers granted for troops without high school diplomas as well as “moral waivers” for troops with juvenile or criminal records, noting: “While such recruits may make competent general-purpose forces, they are not the prized counterinsurgency professionals described in FM 3-24.”<sup>18</sup> With all respect to GEN Krulak’s “strategic corporal,” perhaps the “strategic sergeant first class” of a special forces Operational Detachment Alpha or the “strategic chief petty officer” of a Navy SEAL [sea, air, land] team is a better match for the complex challenge of counterinsurgency.<sup>19</sup>

Additionally, SOF exhibit a uniquely high level of interoperability in both the joint and combined force environment. The “jointness” of SOF derives in part from the fact that SOF “depends on a range of specialized military capabilities and assets to achieve their mission.”<sup>20</sup> This, in turn, has led to the recognition that “interoperability comes by interoperating regularly, routinely, and often,” with the result that “SOF personnel jointly conduct virtually all training above the individual skill level.”<sup>21</sup>

Prime examples of habitual training relationships exist between Army SF, Navy SEALs, and Air Force special tactics squadron personnel and key aviation enablers in the Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment and the Air Force’s 1st Special Operations Wing. Additionally,

regular fire support exercises such as Jaded Thunder and Known Battle fold in conventional aviation and fire support assets from all the services in realistic SOF-centric training scenarios. The end result is a mature, experienced, culturally aware, and interoperable force that is uniquely equipped to perform successfully in a complex operating environment.

### **Hyper-competence and independence**

SOF, regardless of service or specialty, are the product of highly selective training and accession processes, often selected from among the most successful ranks of existing conventional forces. Service in SOF units is voluntary, and selection is a continuous process. It has been said that the only task more difficult than earning a place in special operations is retaining that place. This institutional self-selection, coupled with exceptionally rigorous training standards, combines to produce an environment of hyper-competence, or what Jeffcoat calls “purposefulness,” which he defines as the “strong and unrelenting desire to achieve the objective.”<sup>22</sup> Colin Gray regards the assumption of superior tactical competence among SOF as being “so obvious that it requires no particular emphasis.”<sup>23</sup>

Another hallmark of SOF related to a high degree of tactical competence is independence. Jogerst asserts that special operators are perhaps uniquely equipped to successfully achieve the ideal of decentralized or network-distributed mission execution:

The lesson from Afghanistan is that, with clear mission orders and appropriate technology, each tactical element can become a command, control, and execution node, greatly shortening the OODA [observe, orient, decide, act] loop while still allowing the passing of information on tactical actions and results to higher levels for operational and strategic analysis.<sup>24</sup>

Combining their high degree of tactical competence, network-distributed command and control, and practiced interoperability with airpower, “special forces teams with embedded Air Force air-control elements provide a tactical force with a broad range of skills and the maturity to execute mission orders without detailed oversight.”<sup>25</sup>

In short, SOF possess a repertoire of capabilities and attributes that impart them with unique strategic utility. “That utility reposes most essentially in two qualities, economy of force and expansion of strategic choice,” asserts Colin Gray, adding: “In the most general of terms, special operations forces offer the prospect of a favorably disproportionate return on military investment.”<sup>26</sup> As of this writing, the United States is entering its ninth year of conflict in Afghanistan amid waning domestic support, increasing economic strain, and increasingly persistent questions about Afghan governmental legitimacy. Presented with a continuum of less-than-palatable strategic options between abandonment of U.S. regional objectives and a massive counterinsurgency effort requiring burgeoning conventional force levels and nearly open-ended force commitments, “economy of force” and “expansion of strategic choice” enabled by “favorably disproportionate return on military investment” would seem to represent the sine qua non for success.

### **Decisive Characteristics of Air Support to Special Operations**

Recognition of the utility of airpower to the successful prosecution of irregular warfare dates nearly to the origins of combat airpower itself. An Air Force-sponsored study by

RAND Corporation published in 1964 examining the role of air support in the conduct of counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare included case studies ranging from allied unconventional warfare operations against Japanese forces on Luzon and in support of Chindit partisans in Burma to British and French counterinsurgency operations in Malaya and Algeria, respectively.<sup>27</sup> Most notably, this early RAND study identified the unique challenges posed by the use of airpower in an IW environment:

In the counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare cases where close air support was available, the potential targets were generally small groups of the enemy in areas that also contained friendly civilians, thus constraining close support air attacks to avoid killing, injuring, or alienating civilians.<sup>28</sup>

With the problem thusly framed, it is useful to examine three key characteristics of airpower which, coupled with advances in technology and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP), have both increased the efficacy of airpower in support of SOF and served to mitigate the inherent challenges posed by the application of airpower in an IW environment.

### **Precision**

Perhaps no aspect of modern airpower has received more attention or been the subject of more prolific discussion and publication than the precision of modern air-delivered weapons. Recognition of the revolution of precision in the application of modern airpower has come (if grudgingly) from even the most unlikely sources. In 2008, Human Rights Watch senior military analyst Marc Garlasco admitted that “airstrikes probably are the most discriminating weapon that exists.”<sup>29</sup>

Most of the relevant discussion of airpower’s precision has centered around the development and proliferation of modern precision-guided munitions (PGMs). Arguably, beginning with the first combat usage of Paveway I laser-guided bombs (LGBs) against the “Dragon’s Jaw” bridge in North Vietnam in 1972, the PGM revolution has continued unabated, finding its most recent expression in the use of Global Positioning System (GPS)-aided and Inertial Navigation System (INS)-guided weapons, such as the joint direct attack munition (JDAM). Furthermore, the JDAM’s specified delivery accuracy in the very low double-digit number of meters (given appropriate target coordinate accuracy), while lagging the single-digit meter accuracy of a modern Paveway II or Paveway III LGB, can nevertheless be achieved in any weather condition and with no requirement for the delivery platform to optically acquire the target.

Besides delivery accuracy, recent efforts to tailor warhead effects for increased target discrimination have led to the development of low-collateral-damage warheads such as the BLU-126, which has been employed in LGB configuration (as the GBU-51) as well as in a JDAM variant (GBU-38v3/4). Even the creative use of fuse-functioning delays on PGMs with conventional high-explosive warheads and PGM guidance kits on inert warheads have been employed to mitigate weapon effects to personnel and structures surrounding legitimate targets.

In the case of PGMs, weapon delivery accuracy and warhead discrimination are factors that, in addition to facilitating efficient target destruction, mitigate the risk of fratricide and collateral damage posed by air-delivered weapons. Both are largely characteristics of the weapons themselves (although aircraft integration and delivery profile are also contributing factors). As such, both contribute to mission success only if the weapon in question is delivered against the correct target. Equally important, though less often discussed, are concurrent developments in

technology and TTP that facilitate target location, marking, correlation, and confirmation to ensure the correct target is attacked.

While advances in weapons technology have increased the likelihood of desired effects on the target and the mitigation of undesired effects on personnel and structures in proximity to the target, advancements in situational awareness of delivery aircrews, facilitated by both technology and TTP, have had similar impact by improving the likelihood of destroying the correct target. On the technological side of the equation, the proliferation of advanced, high-resolution infrared/electro-optical sensors on aircraft have increased the level of image resolution available to aircrews, facilitating better target discrimination, even from tactically significant stand-off ranges.

Concurrently, the proliferation of “coordinate-seeking” weapons such as JDAMs removes the requirement for aircrews to visually acquire the target at all (though it can be effectively argued that the result merely shifts the mechanism of target assurance from visual means to coordinate generation accuracy). Increasing availability and usage of laser spot trackers on board strike aircraft to confirm target location in conjunction with both ground-based and airborne laser target designators used by joint terminal attack controllers (JTACs) and forward air controllers (airborne) have significantly enhanced the speed and accuracy of target acquisition and confirmation in addition to their traditional role in guiding laser-guided PGMs.

Perhaps even more significant has been the proliferation of laser target markers (LTMs). Increasingly integral to advanced aircraft targeting pods and almost ubiquitous among ground-based JTACs owing to their impressive power-to-size ratios (a one-watt LTM, visible from over five nautical miles slant range under nominal conditions, is about the size of a “C” cell flashlight), LTMs are employed in a similar role to cue aircrews equipped with night-vision devices. Concurrently, employment of small laptop computer and even personal data assistant-hosted, imagery-based precision coordinate generation software such as Precision Strike Suite (for) Special Operations Forces and Precision Fires Image Generator have brought similar benefit to the employment of GPS/INS targeted weapons.

The net result of these advances in technology and the TTP that support their effective employment has been an exponential increase in the target discrimination and weapon effectiveness of air-delivered weapons. Coupled with the skill of SOF JTACs — such as Air Force combat controller teams and tactical air control parties — and facilitated by the level of interoperability previously outlined, the inherent precision of modern airpower makes a significant contribution to overcoming the daunting challenges facing SOF in a counterinsurgency environment. First, the precision of modern airpower enables the delivery of timely and accurate overwhelming firepower in support of light, agile forces that, though highly skilled, lack significant organic firepower. Second, precision enables effective and efficient engagement of targets in close proximity to friendly forces and noncombatants while minimizing the risks of fratricide and collateral damage.

### **Persistence**

The second revolution of modern airpower is the revolution of persistence. With advanced expeditionary basing (including sea basing), modern aerial refueling capability, and advancements in aircraft endurance, airpower today is capable of a more profound operational footprint on the operational environment than at any time in its history. Nowhere has the persistence revolution been more apparent than in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance

(ISR) aircraft, of both the manned and unmanned varieties. Further, there is perhaps no more poignant example of the impact of persistent ISR than in support of SOF engaged in counterterrorism. In an impressive monograph summarizing the historical development of the manhunting methodology of counternetwork operations employed by counterterrorism forces, George Crawford of the Joint Special Operations University notes “persistence pays” in the application of the find-fix-finish-exploit-analyze (F3EA) targeting cycle employed by counterterrorism forces.<sup>30</sup> The proliferation of airborne ISR assets in Iraq and Afghanistan has enabled an unprecedented level of “pattern of life” intelligence collection against high-value individual targets. In fact, ISR in both theaters is quantified in terms of numbers of 24-hour “orbits” of both imagery intelligence and signals intelligence capability, affording the opportunity for a true “unblinking eye” on multiple targets simultaneously. Such capability is of course subject to priority of asset allocation, as demand continues to exceed supply of these vital assets.

In the more indirect role, SOF can use persistent ISR in a force protection role — securing the “flanks” and acting as a virtual cavalry screen on a 360-degree battlefield consisting of small teams widely dispersed to geographically remote locations conducting rural counterinsurgency operations. In this role, airborne ISR assets can be used for early warning and overwatch, cueing friendly forces to enemy activity and later supporting battle hand-over and target designation to strike aircraft as needed, or even performing limited lethal strikes from the (armed) ISR aircraft themselves.

Skeptical of the feasibility of achieving the required force level for a broad, doctrinal counterinsurgency campaign consistent with the 20 to 1,000 troop-to-insurgent ratio prescribed by FM 3-24,<sup>31</sup> COL Dunlap suggests that the persistence of modern airpower combined with a small SOF footprint on the ground serves as a necessary economy of force measure in counterinsurgency: “The United States has to develop technology capable of substituting for ‘boots-on-the-ground’ in order to provide future decision makers with broader options. Pragmatism drives this approach, not any deficiency in the valor or dedication of US ground forces.<sup>32</sup> COL Dunlap joins fellow strategist Phillip Meilinger in suggesting that such a SOF and airpower-centric approach to counterinsurgency “is imperative...to completely recast America’s approach to COIN [counterinsurgency] in an effort to achieve ‘politically desirable results with the least cost in blood and treasure.’”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the smaller footprint of SOF enabled by the persistence of supporting airpower may actually remove a significant source of fuel from an insurgency. Dunlap further supports this observation, contending that “the notion that American COIN or nation-building efforts can be executed by infusing the host state with large numbers of US troops is fundamentally flawed. In fact, the deeply entrenched view of US troops as an occupation force is now the main rallying point for anti-American feelings....”<sup>34</sup>

It is also important to note that persistent modern airpower can be employed clandestinely and covertly in a permissive COIN environment.<sup>35</sup> While some of the more obvious examples are clandestine intelligence collection and overwatch of an infiltrating assault force on a clandestine direct-action mission, clandestine and covert applications of airpower include a persistent on-call “finish” capability for lethal, time-sensitive targeting of fleeting high-value targets as well. Such covert applications may even occur in areas denied to U.S. ground forces, as in the case of the increasingly publicized and controversial Predator unmanned aerial vehicle lethal strikes in Pakistan’s federally administered tribal areas. Further, persistent airborne ISR and strike capability provide a risk-mitigating — and even potentially deniable — means of support to SOF engaged in covert, denied area operations, should the emergence of an especially lucrative target set justify the diplomatic and political risk of such missions.<sup>36</sup>

Conversely, the persistence of modern airpower affords significant strategic benefits when overtly employed, as well. COL Dunlap asserts that the overt use of persistent ISR has significant psychological impact on the enemy, arguing “airpower can now inflict on insurgents the same kind of disconcerting sense of vulnerability that the enemy sought to impose upon US troops via improvised explosive devices,” perhaps the most iconic embodiments of asymmetry employed in the Iraqi and Afghan insurgencies.<sup>37</sup>

But the persistence revolution is not limited to ISR: airpower provides the availability of persistent lethal effects as well. In one of numerous similar accounts, *The New York Times* captures the sense of helplessness of an Afghan insurgent resultant from his encounters with airpower: “We pray to Allah that we have American soldiers to kill...[but]...these bombs from the sky we cannot fight.”<sup>38</sup> In particular, the recent employment of long-range bombers as general support on-call CAS assets provides a previously unknown level of persistent firepower to counterinsurgent forces. The author’s own anecdotal experience as a SOF fire support officer in Afghanistan demonstrated that a single, centrally located B-1 bomber orbit, occupied nearly around the clock, repeatedly proved capable of responding to coalition forces engaged in troops-in-contact situations throughout Regional Command East, or nearly the eastern half of Afghanistan, in 20 minutes or less, providing a dizzying array of all-weather firepower in various warhead and fuse configurations. Combined with regular air tasking order “lines” of direct and general support CAS fighter sorties, the persistence of coalition airpower approaches that of conventional artillery, but with the added firepower and precision of modern air-delivered PGMs.

### **Reach**

The expansive reach of modern airpower constitutes a third revolution in its effectiveness as a strategic enabler. As a powerful mitigator of the perennial twin tyrannies of distance and terrain, the global reach of airpower is perhaps most poignantly demonstrated in the synergy of the SOF-airpower relationship. In this regard, it is airpower’s contributions to SOF’s mobility and access to precision fires that are most notable.

Mobility is more than a mere logistical enabler for SOF. Rather, it defines, in combination with the aforementioned SOF attributes of speed, agility, and stealth, what could more properly be considered a core competency. The mobility afforded to SOF by fixed and rotary-wing aircraft — both organic and inorganic — together with their fire support analogs discussed below, convert the potential liabilities of “lightness” and small footprint into decisive asymmetric advantages.

In addition to maximizing agility and stealth on the ground, the small size and light nature of SOF permit the decisive air movement of entire SOF tactical formations throughout the operational environment. Additionally, they render practical the existence of a separate organic air arm of specialized SOF-specific aircraft whose arsenal includes Air Force MC-130 Combat Talon, AC-130H/U Spectre/Spooky, and CV-22 Osprey aircraft of the Air Force Special Operations Command as well as the MH-47 Chinook, MH-60K/L Blackhawk and Direct Action Penetrator, and MH-6/AH-6 “Little Bird” transport and attack variants of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. These organic air assets enjoy a level of interoperability developed through the aforementioned habitual training and operating relationship with their SOF “customers.” This level of interoperability enhances the effectiveness of all joint operations and facilitates a level of specialized capabilities unique to SOF, including specialized insertion techniques such as fast-rope helicopter assault and military free-fall parachute operations (both the high altitude low opening and high altitude high opening varieties), which uniquely position SOF to maximize the mobility potential of airpower.

With a long history of irregular warfare conducted from the forbidding geographical sanctuary of the Hindu-Kush Mountains that dominate eastern and southern Afghanistan, Afghan insurgents have grown both accustomed to and reliant upon unilateral access to this terrain as an asymmetric advantage over traditionally road-bound and heavily mechanized adversaries. Whether by means of now conventional vertical envelopment by heliborne assault (first demonstrated effectively in combat in the Ia Drang Valley in 1965), fast-rope insertion to mountainous objectives without suitable landing zones (LZs), or one of the specialized variations of military free-fall insertion, SOF supported by organic air mobility and effective multisource ISR represent a means to significantly neutralize the key insurgent advantage of terrain in Afghanistan.

Using suitably tailored SOF elements and radar-equipped aircraft in terrain following flight profiles (even in adverse weather), standoff ISR for threat and detection avoidance, and offset LZs to minimize auditory and visual signature of the assault force, for example, the preservation of SOF's characteristic stealth can be compounded by the speed and access afforded by air mobility to secure the critical advantage of tactical surprise.

In addition to the increased access provided by air mobility, the small footprint and organic aviation of SOF help to neutralize another asymmetric insurgent advantage: the improvised explosive device. Far less dependent upon road-bound vehicular transport for logistic support than their conventional counterparts, SOF are inherently less susceptible to what has proven statistically to be the deadliest of insurgent tactics first in Iraq and, more recently, in Afghanistan.

In addition to the advantages that mobility has brought to bear against the challenging terrain in Afghanistan, SOF have benefitted from technological advances in PGMs, which have extended the reach of effective fire support as well. The advent of INS/GPS weapons, such as JDAM and GBU-39 small diameter bomb with programmable attack azimuth and impact-angle capabilities independent of delivery platform and profile, has virtually eliminated the existence of defilade from a fire support perspective. Thermobaric warheads, now employed in weapons ranging from hand grenades to Hellfire missiles, and advanced "penetrator" warheads, such as the BLU-109 and BLU-116, have combined with the proliferation of targeting quality coordinate generation technologies (some of which are of the tactical hand-held variety and available to SOF-embedded Air Force combat control teams) to effectively solve even the most challenging targeting problems such as caves, bunkers, and "box" canyons posed by Afghanistan's forbidding terrain.

In addition to extending the reach of SOF combat power with respect to terrain, airpower, in terms of both mobility and fire support, has recently demonstrated an impressive mastery over imposing distances. In one of the most demonstrative examples of the former, the opening stages of OEF featured historically significant helicopter assaults by SOF based aboard the aircraft carrier USS Kittyhawk in the Indian Ocean over unprecedented distances against high-value targets in Afghanistan. Similarly, the transcontinental bombing missions of Air Force B-2 Spirit bombers from Whiteman Air Force Base in central Missouri to strike targets in Afghanistan has become a strategically emblematic demonstration of the global reach of lethal airpower. Moreover, the apparently straightforward nature of such missions belies an equally impressive mastery of logistic and aerial refueling capability.

Such examples, combined with carrier-based aircraft as effectively demonstrated by the aforementioned USS Kittyhawk example, effectively underscore a diminishing dependence upon access to regional basing, which is not trivial. As Australian David Jeffcoat notes:

The preponderance of US unique capabilities...such as large numbers of heavy bombers, carrier-based aircraft, and extensive air-to-air refuelling [sic] capability, demonstrate the ability to deliver levels of concentration of force, payload, and reach to such an isolated area that is beyond the capabilities of any other air force.<sup>39</sup>

In short, the global reach of airpower provides the ability to deliver significant tactically tailored SOF combat power at the decisive place and time, preserving tactical surprise, and increasingly independent of the tyranny of distance and terrain.

### Conclusion

The manifest operational benefits of modern airpower's key characteristics of precision, persistence, and reach have combined with the unique characteristics of SOF to impart a strategically significant synergistic effect. The speed and mobility afforded by the reach of airpower is abetted by the "lightness" and small footprint of SOF, while its persistence and precision concurrently compensate for the lack of organic mass and firepower engendered by these same characteristics. In other words, airpower, most particularly in the context of its uniquely synergistic relationship with SOF, constitutes perhaps the single most effective asymmetric U.S. advantage in the operational environment of irregular warfare.

Though many reasons for the effectiveness of this combination are articulated above, the asymmetric nature of the airpower-SOF combination with respect to counterinsurgency in particular is equally worthy of emphasis. Fortified by this belief, the author risks the potentially banal observation that the nature of the counterinsurgency fight is almost by definition a permissive one with respect to airpower. While counterinsurgency presents innumerable difficult political and military challenges on the ground, insurgents by their very nature typically lack the "high-end" anti-access capabilities (such as an air force or integrated air defense system) that constitute a credible counter to modern airpower.

And while it is both necessary and proper to acknowledge the potential for the deleterious strategic effect of collateral damage incurred through the (often improper) use of airpower to the successful conduct of counterinsurgency (exhaustively documented elsewhere), the author's primary contention is that the maturity, interoperability, and tactical competence of SOF, combined with ongoing technological and procedural innovations, effectively mitigates such risk to a degree well below the level of nullifying the constructive contribution of the SOF-airpower team in the calculus of strategic effects.

Finally, it is worth noting that technological and procedural advances that contribute to the combat effectiveness of airpower (e.g., the precision revolution) often equally serve to mitigate the risk of collateral damage caused by airpower, contributing to the likelihood that future prospects for the strategic calculus will continue to improve.

Entering a second decade of war, the United States is faced with the probability of a future characterized by persistent conflict. Unable to challenge U.S. conventional military strength, adversaries such as al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan will continue to seek the asymmetry

of irregular warfare and will further seek to open new fronts in a global landscape filled with failed or failing states, rogue states, and ungoverned spaces within states. The global demands of U.S. interests on the military in the “Long War” offer the distinct possibility of exceeding the means available, particularly amid the likelihood of shrinking defense budgets resultant from continued economic strain. Further compounding the problem, potential adversaries will likely be emboldened by the perception of U.S. military overextension.

Such an environment will require difficult choices for U.S. policymakers — choices that will require a potentially painful prioritization of efforts in determining which interests are to be resourced and which interests must conversely be deferred or addressed by other means. Necessarily, this environment will require the extraction of maximum strategic efficiency from the means available. In this regard, the SOF-airpower team provides a uniquely high level of strategic return on investment across the spectrum of irregular warfare, which remains unrivaled within the military element of national power.

Note: This paper was submitted by the author in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree, U.S. Army War College, Class of 2010.

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## **OEF-Philippines: Thinking COIN, Practicing FID**

**LTC Brian Petit**

Reprinted with permission from the January–February 2010 issue of *Special Warfare*.

Counterinsurgency is the formative mission of today's military. The dominant missions of the past seven years Iraq and Afghanistan — have inexorably shaped a new force. Our leaders, equipment, tactics, logistics, and doctrine all bear the traumatic discoveries learned from the Iraq and Afghanistan counterinsurgency campaigns. Reasonably, the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts will continue as the primary shaping experience for U.S. forces in counterinsurgency (COIN) and for the practice and theory of stability operations. Given the dominant hold of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan (OEF-A) on our military culture, what then, does Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) contribute to the expanding aperture of U.S. military counterinsurgency study?

OEF-P is more relevant to the broader COIN conversation now than ever before. The OEF-P operating environment is characterized by strict — yet prudent — constraints executed by a strikingly small U.S. Task Force. Similar constraints are now in place in Iraq and Afghanistan. Legal prohibitions, strict operational directives, host-nation caveats, and reduced U.S. forces are all constraints that force a revision of operational thinking, a reconsideration of tactics, and increasingly disciplined force application. The existing and forthcoming constraints in Iraq are similar in nature to the constraints imposed upon U.S. forces deployed to Southern Philippines since 2001. Under such constraints, U.S. Special Operations Forces in the Philippines apply an operational approach and tactical methodology that has applicability to current and future U.S. counterinsurgency and stability endeavors. The U.S. involvement in the Philippines (2001–2009) can be examined as a preview of the way U.S. counterinsurgency and stability strategies and tactics might look in other theaters as governments stabilize and security responsibility shifts primarily to the host nation. This article presents three tactical vignettes illustrative of the way U.S. forces in the Southern Philippines operate effectively within confined parameters.

### **OEF-P Background**

Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) has quietly entered its eighth year. OEF-P bears little resemblance to OIF or OEF-A; the contrasts are stark, the comparisons few. Initiated in 2001, OEF-P targeted al-Qaeda affiliates nested in insurgent interior lines in the southern Philippines, bordering Malaysia and Indonesia. The principal targets, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), demonstrated both the skill and the will to plan and execute effective acts of terror. These acts ranged from kidnapping for ransom (the kidnapping of missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham in 2001) to sophisticated and highly lethal terror attacks (the Bali bombing in 2002). OEF-P was planned and began execution within weeks after the U.S. unconventional warfare campaign in Afghanistan began in October 2001. The mission earned the “OEF” moniker based on the national objective to contain, and ultimately defeat, Al Qaeda's Asia-Pacific affiliates based in the Southern Philippines.

However, OEF-P, unlike OIF and OEF-A, was not a cold start. OEF-P drew on the historical engagement that the U.S. forces shared with the Government of the Philippines, or GRP. The mission was planned in conjunction with, and enabled by, a willing and cooperative sovereign nation. That cooperation, however, came with caveats. The U.S. and Philippine Forces operate under specific restrictions levied by both the Government of the Philippines and the U.S.

Pacific Command. In short, U.S. forces would be prohibited from direct combat roles or direct engagements with enemy forces. While this key restriction neutralized the efficacy of U.S. joint-force operational power and reach, it also generated a campaign design and operational culture that centers on Philippines forces and institutions. Dubbed the “indirect approach,” U.S. force application in the Philippines continues to adhere to the FID and COIN principles adopted at the inception of OEF-P.

### **The Philippine Struggle**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines are in a lethal and sustained struggle against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or MILF. The MILF is an Islamic based separatist group with an organized military arm estimated at between 6,000 to 8,000 strong. The MILF is a splinter group of the Moro National Liberation Front, or MNLF. The MNLF entered into a peace agreement with the GRP in 1996. The MILF, dissatisfied with the terms and implementation of the 1996 agreement, shifted emphasis to an Islamic vs. ethnic focus, and took up the mantle of armed struggle for an independent or expanded autonomous region for the southern Philippines Moros. The MILF continue to seek an expanded autonomous region in the southern Philippines.

The GRP, contending with both MNLF and MILF agendas, brokered the 1996 peace agreement with the MNLF and agreed in 2003 to a cease-fire with the MILF. This tenuous peace prevented large-scale warfare but allowed undergoverned regions to wittingly and unwittingly host transnational actors like Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayaaf.

The southern Philippines COIN environment is familiar to OIF or OEF-A practitioners: regionally focused insurgent organizations that collaborate with transnational, ideologically driven and lethally capable, violent extremists.

### **Indirect Approach**

OEF-P is unique in that it was conceptualized and implemented by a small nucleus of Special Operations Forces. Special Operations Command Pacific, and the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) implemented the “indirect approach” methodology, applying U.S. capacity strictly “through or with” the Armed Forces of the Philippines against the enemy and for the population. The indirect approach is both a philosophy and a method that is inculcated into all practitioners. The heart of the strategy is based on building relationships, reinforcing legitimate institutions, building security-force capabilities, sharing intelligence and information, developing focused civil-military programs, and aggressively promoting local acts of good governance. The indirect approach requires the discreet application of U.S. influence and assistance. Leaders continually calibrate the political implications of their actions, and quickly implement adjustments at the local level. The U.S. mission is led by the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines.

OEF-P focuses on the Sulu Archipelago, a vast island chain that stretches from the southern Philippines to Malaysia. The enemy is ASG, JI, and violent Islamic ideologues whose actions are often more criminal than religious. These operatives and affiliates nest within supportive or neutral populations, complicating the Philippine mission to identify, capture and incarcerate them. Currently, the mission focuses on three lines of operation: (1) gathering and sharing information, (2) building capacity and (3) Targeted Civil Military Operations.

OEF-P is essentially a branch plan, developed from an existing foundation of mutual cooperation and defense, theater-security cooperation, and U.S.-Philippine military relations. OEF-P was

uniquely designed to accomplish U.S. and Philippine counterterrorism objectives immediately following 9/11, thus cultivating a new dimension in U.S.-Philippine relationships. The U.S. and Philippine governments shared the view that the terror groups had to be reduced. However, exactly how the U.S. would apply its capabilities against terrorist groups, given the political considerations, was unclear at the inception.

### **Think COIN, Practice FID**

Contrary to popular perception, the U.S. mission in the Southern Philippines is not COIN. COIN is the mission of the GRP. The U.S. mission is FID in support of the GRP COIN campaign. This distinction is critical for two reasons: (1) The GRP, not the U.S., is directly responsible for combating insurgents, terrorists and lawless elements; (2) the U.S. role is to support a sovereign nation in both building the capacity of its armed and civil-security forces, and applying that capacity against violent extremists operating in undergoverned regions. This distinction requires U.S. SOF personnel to “think COIN but practice FID.” This mindset is part of the institutional and operational culture of U.S. Special Forces, and it is a critical mindset for both SOF and conventional forces operating in increasingly constrained environments.

Tactically, the indirect approach requires clear-eyed recognition that U.S. capacity will be applied through — and not around — the host nation. This paradigm seems simple, but it runs counter to U.S. military “candoism” and requires a long-term view and immense operational patience. The indirect approach does not satisfy appetites for quick, measurable results. By building capacity with host nation security forces and simultaneously applying population-focused, civil-military programs, the indirect approach rarely produces singularly spectacular results in tactical engagements. Measures of effectiveness are often best assessed over time and anecdotally.

The following tactical vignettes illustrate the way certain operational methods are applied within the existing existing policy constraints.

#### *Tactical Vignette #1: OEF-P Medical Seminar (MEDSEM)*

The medical seminar, or MEDSEM, is an innovative medical operation that builds upon the concept of the traditional medical civic-action program, or MEDCAP. The MEDSEM enhances the MEDCAP by adding education, promoting self-reliance and improving sustainability of medical interventions. The MEDSEM promotes local governmental interoperability by requiring collaboration between local medical providers, governmental leaders, host nation forces and U.S. SOF.

A MEDCAP is typically a single-day event that provides medical or dental care and can vary in size from a few hundred patients to a few thousand. It is a medical operation used by commanders to engage a given population or geographical area in order to gain initial access to or maintain a relationship with that population. In order to be successful and effective, the event must avoid undermining the local medical infrastructure. Local medical officials should be involved in all facets of planning and should be pushed to the forefront during execution. Medical interventions should be safe and effective in order to enhance public health and to avoid adverse events or negative informational outcomes. Finally, and most importantly, the event must positively engage the specified population and stimulate continued interaction in the future.

The MEDCAP can be an effective tool if employed correctly. However, a MEDCAP is typically hampered by limited planning time that leads to inadequate involvement of local medical

providers. U.S. Forces are then viewed as executors which undermines confidence in the local medical infrastructure. The MEDCAP culminates in a short, one-day event with limited or nonexistent follow-up interactions. Any ground gained during the MEDCAP is often temporal—at times adverse—and future relationship building is inhibited. The majority of patients attending central Mindanao MEDCAPs were women with children requiring over-the-counter treatments or education alone. Less than 5 percent of patients required prescription medication (usually antibiotics), yet these medicines were abundant and comprised the bulk of MEDCAP costs.

The MEDSEM was created to address the shortcomings of the MEDCAP within central Mindanao. It is a civic action program as well, but it was named differently in order to avoid confusion with the traditional MEDCAP. The MEDSEM is a five day event and required up to one month of planning and coordination between the Armed Forces of the Philippines, or AFP, the local governmental unit, or LGU, the municipal health office, or MHO, the Philippine National Police, or PNP, and U.S. Forces. These meetings promoted interoperability between the groups through information exchange and collaborative planning. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) were invited to participate in planning and execution, as well. That supported the AFP-MILF cease fire by providing a common venue for meetings and discussion.

The MEDSEM consists of three days of classroom instruction and two days of medical-care programs. For one MEDSEM in the summer of 2008, invitations were sent out to 15 *barangays* (villages), inviting three volunteers from each village to participate in the MEDSEM. Often, the villages were previously inaccessible to the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Medical experience was not a requirement. Students were taught basic women's and children's healthcare, with an emphasis on preventive health measures. The LGU provided the classroom, the MHO created and taught all lectures, and the villages donated money to pay for student transportation. Security was provided by the AFP and PNP during the classroom phase. They were joined by MILF and MNLF security during the medical-care programs. Everyone involved in these events contributed to their success. The AFP, LGU, PNP, and MHO remained in the forefront throughout all phases.

The only class taught by a U.S. doctor or medic was “MEDCAP preparation.” Local providers were taught how to set up and run a medical program from start to finish. The last class was followed by a formal graduation ceremony in which students received graduation certificates and photos. All students were then responsible for conducting the medical program in their village on one of the last two days. That was their final exam. Medical care teams consisted of local doctors and nurses. Prior to the medical team's arrival, the students registered and seated between 200 and 400 patients. The students then delivered one of the recently learned preventive-health lectures to their neighbors. Students then identified 30 to 50 patients to be seen by physicians, while local providers, under the supervision of MHO nurses, delivered individual education and dispensed over-the-counter medications. Follow-up engagements were scheduled for 90 to 180 days following the MEDSEM.

To date, four MEDSEMs have been conducted within central Mindanao. Measures of effectiveness include:

- Local officials and providers take responsibility and are credited by the population for the events.
- A medical “auxiliary” is built for future engagements and medical surveillance.

- Relationships were forged between students, village leaders, health care providers, insurgent/ resistance groups and security forces.

The MEDSEM engaged 10 times as many patients as the traditional MEDCAP, at a fraction of the cost. Only a few prescription medicines were included in the MEDSEM supply pallet which decreased costs. The MEDSEM effectively engaged the specified populations through the host nation medical infrastructure and delivered sustainable and safe medical care to thousands of patients.

### *Vignette #2: Rule of Law*

The mission of the southern Philippines rule-of-law engagement is threefold: (1) to build essential capacity in the Philippine security forces in the southern Philippines, (2) to criminalize terrorism, and (3) to support the GRP in extending the rule-of-law to this area of their country. The rule-of-law exists when: the state monopolizes the use of force in the resolution of disputes; individuals have meaningful access to an effective and impartial legal system; basic human rights are protected by the state; and individuals rely on the existence of legal institutions and the content of the law in the conduct of their daily lives.

The strategic objective is to create a hostile environment for international terrorist elements in the southern Philippines by building the population's respect for the rule of law and the state organizations responsible for its enforcement. The operational objective is enabling the PNP to enforce the rule-of-law, thereby minimizing the role of the Philippine military in law enforcement. Strengthening the criminal-justice system will reduce extra-judicial killings and restore confidence in the government's security abilities. The tactical method is to provide the PNP professional-development training, integrating technology into evidence analysis and exploitation, and working within the Philippine criminal justice system to obtain arrest warrants and active prosecution of terrorist elements within the southern Philippines. Each tactical method is discussed below.

*PNP professional development training.* The southern PNP lack the necessary training to adequately provide security to their respective municipalities. To address the fundamental requirements of policing, JSOTF-P, through the U.S. Department of Justice, supports two courses of instruction for the PNP.

The first course is the Basic Police Operations Course, or BPOC. This course is designed to provide basic police training that introduces the knowledge, skills and abilities of international policing standards. It also strives to introduce and improve the PNP's knowledge of police ethics, human rights and community policing.

The second course is the Basic Criminal Investigations Course. This course builds on the BPOC human rights instruction and includes the following: lessons on proper evidence collection at sensitive sites containing evidence of arson or explosives; methods of identifying the origin of an explosion or fire; and the discovery of evidence that can be used to identify suspects, physical evidence, trace evidence, fingerprint evidence, tool mark evidence, and firearm evidence.

PNP graduates from these courses are applying the investigative procedures necessary to ensure that evidence is properly collected, preserved and processed. These skills ensure accurate attribution to the person, place, and event (e.g., pocket litter, cell phones, IED component);

preserves the chain of custody for the evidence collected; and allows the evidence to be fully exploited in court.

*Integrating technology into evidentiary procedures.* Historically, a significant portion of the evidence collected in the southern Philippines has not been processed or exploited. The rule-of-law team assists with capabilities such as (1) the ability to extract and store DNA from living or dead persons, (2) analysis of electronic data, and (3) document and media analysis. Dramatic improvements in evidence processing and exploitation are a critical step toward sound evidentiary procedures and ultimately, prosecution. This initiative is Philippine-centric. Operations and relevant data support Philippine information requirements and civil authorities.

*Arrest warrants and criminal prosecution of terrorist elements.* Terror groups and lawless violent extremists continue to commit acts without a genuine threat of prosecution within the southern Philippines. This is largely the result of the substantial number of vacant judge positions and prosecutors. To that end, the rule-of-law engagement coordinated with a regional trial court to obtain jurisdiction for criminal prosecution of terrorist elements located in Basilan and on Jolo island. That enabled a trial prosecutor from the regional trial court to secure a murder conviction in Basilan. Prosecutors are currently preparing additional extremist-related cases from Jolo Island.

The rule-of-law engagement supports the expansion of the police role in bringing effective law enforcement to the southern Philippines. An effective police force is arguably the key missing component in defeating violent extremists operating in undergoverned spaces in the southern Philippines. The program is modest: fewer than 25 U.S. personnel are directly aligned against this effort, with many more in general support roles. The aim is to balance the Philippine COIN strategy with effective law-enforcement institutions and mechanisms.

### *Tactical Vignette #3: Advising Philippine Combat Operations on Pangutaran Island*

Special Forces teams live, eat, train, and work with their Philippine security-force counterparts, and they have since 2001. In the Philippines, the only bases and outposts are Philippine. All U.S. forces are integrated with military and police units in tactical outposts at the invitation of the Philippine Armed Forces Commanders. All arrangements — living, working, billeting, operational — are subject to the consent of Philippine commanders, from the Philippine chief of staff down to tactical Philippine infantry battalion commanders.

This environment requires mature, studied and respectful U.S. forces that bring the right competencies. The OEF-P environment does not suffer well undisciplined behaviors, ill advised engagements or well-meaning but heavy-handed American “candoism.” The core advisory team is the twelve-man Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-A). SFOD-As train for this type of environment and are prepared linguistically, culturally and doctrinally to operate in these environments. In the Philippines, SFOD-As are generally split in half and augmented with Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, Joint Service enablers and logistics personnel, totaling about 8 to 12 U.S. personnel per outpost. Operationally, these are called “Liaison Control Elements” (LCE). Naval Special Warfare SEAL platoons also split and form LCEs embedded with Philippine Marine units. LCEs generally operate at the Philippine Battalion, Brigade, and Division level.

Pangutaran Island is a municipality belonging to the Province of Sulu, Republic of the Philippines. It is located approximately 45 kilometers off the northwest shore off the main

provincial island of Sulu. Because it was not believed to be a safe haven for lawless elements, there had not been a persistent Philippine Security Forces presence on the island. During the summer of 2008, Joint Task Force Comet, a 2-star Philippine task force comprised mainly of Philippine Marines, and its U.S. counterpart, Task Force Sulu, were making great strides in reducing Abu Sayyef Group (ASG) influence and reducing its access to populations on the provincial capital island of Sulu. What is described below is how ASG elements attempted to acquire safe haven on Pangutaran Island and, along with its Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) brethren, sought to reposition itself beyond the reach of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Marine forces.

The importance of Pangutaran Island is apparent when one visits the island. The people are relatively prosperous in spite of the poverty felt among its neighboring island municipalities. This is because of the abundance of natural resources found on the island and in its surrounding seas. More importantly however, Pangutaran Island enjoys a robust trading relationship among Indonesian sea traders and other small-scale yet lucrative sea-based enterprises. The island's relative prosperity was also due to the lack of Abu Sayyef Group presence on the island that habitually prey upon local populations to acquire resources necessary to carry out their violent activities.

In the summer of 2008, the ASG were under severe pressure. The ASG had been effectively isolated from both popular support and access to resources. Intelligence had indicated that both the ASG and JI organizations, on Jolo Island, found it increasingly difficult to gather the basic necessities for sustainment, such as food and water. Its leadership was known to complain about the lack of available food within its archipelagic camps. Yet ASG and JI are nothing if not resilient — a new base of operations or new supply routes had to be found that was out of reach of Philippine government forces.

Pangutaran Island fit the ASG's and JI's needs. Initially, the connectivity to Indonesia, the birthplace of JI, was extremely tempting to both the ASG and JI, primarily as a safe haven. Secondly, there were no AFP military forces on the island. There was a small PNP garrison on the island, but this small force would be no match in a struggle with ASG/JI elements for control of the island. Although ASG/JI elements were living hard times on Sulu and Basilan, they nonetheless retained significant capability to conduct violent acts of terror — particularly against the ill-equipped and ill-trained forces of the PNP.

The Pangutaran inhabitants knew about the activities of Philippine and U.S. military forces on the main island of Sulu and how those activities were improving the lives of many Sulu residents. JTF Comet and TF Sulu had been building schools, roads, water distribution networks and other civil infrastructure projects on Sulu in a successful attempt to build the legitimacy of the Philippine government forces. As the legitimacy of the military forces increased, the freedom of movement of ASG/JI elements consequently decreased. Moreover, significant amounts of intelligence on ASG/JI whereabouts flowed from the population to AFP military forces as a result of these activities. In addition to civil projects, AFP Marine forces relentlessly pursued ASG/JI elements deep in their jungle redoubts. The inhabitants on Pangutaran had been hearing about these activities and, even before ASG/JI elements would attempt to seek refuge on their island, they made contact with Joint Task Force Comet to see what assistance they could receive to better their island infrastructure.

As a result of increased pressure from JTF Comet, ASG/JI sought to establish themselves on Pangutaran Island. The ASG moved a small force to Pangutaran Island to gain control through

their normal methods: fear, intimidation, violence and extortion. The inhabitants of the island, knowing that JTF Comet was pursuing ASG/JI wherever they might be, contacted the Sulu-based AFP. Because of the distance from its Sulu-based forces, TF Sulu would assist the AFP with communications and control of the AFP forces as JTF Comet deployed elements to Pangutaran to assist the inhabitants. Additionally, TF Sulu had SFOD-As already conducting advise and assist activities with the AFP Brigade's organic battalions. During this mission, TF Sulu would deploy an SFOD-A to Pangutaran Island in support of the Philippine Brigade's mission to expel ASG/JI elements from the island.

The Philippine Marine Brigade assigned AFP Marine Battalion Landing Team (MBLT) to conduct the mission to expel the emerging presence of ASG and JI elements from Pangutaran. The MBLT, supported by its partnered SFOD-A, planned the mission. Although U.S. forces are restricted from participating directly in combat operations within the Philippines, the SFOD-A would be co-located with the MBLT commander during the execution of the mission to advise and assist where required. It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe fully the details of the mission. In short, the MBLT did come into contact with ASG/JI elements. During the encounter, AFP forces received minor casualties, but the cost of the effort was worth the expense: the Marines earned a tactical victory and demonstrated to the populace an appropriate and timely use of force and follow through. Co-locating the SFOD-A with the MBLT commander was instrumental to the success of the mission — discreet, offset, advisory and technical assistance proved invaluable during the multi-phased mission.

*Outcome.* The ASG was unable to escape the reaches of JTF Comet by attempting to reposition itself to Pangutaran Island. Indeed, even before their attempt was made, the fate of this endeavor was sealed. The activities being conducted by JTF Comet and TF Sulu on the main island of Sulu were known to the inhabitants, and the people of Pangutaran sought close ties with JTF Comet and TF Sulu. The population knew that JTF Comet was interested not only in destroying ASG/JI elements but also in providing needed infrastructure and development assistance to the people of the Sulu Archipelago. Because of this, the inhabitants reached out to JTF Comet forces even before ASG/JI made their presence known on Pangutaran. As a result of this cooperation to expel the terrorists, JTF Comet established a small AFP Marine outpost on Pangutaran Island to prevent a see-saw battle for control of the island. Almost a token force, this presence was enough to dispel any notion of ASG/JI terrorists that the island was their's for the taking. The small outpost of Marines work closely with the island's well-run yet underequipped PNP station to ensure security for the inhabitants. TF Sulu and JTF Comet continue to visit the island routinely and have conducted a series of medical clinics and infrastructure development projects as a way of both thanking the inhabitants of the island for their support and increasing the perception of persistent presence to any lawless elements wishing to prey upon the civilian population. The combined efforts of U.S. and Philippine military forces, along with those of the PNP and civilian municipal government on Pangutaran, truly made this effort a notable tactical success and a worthy case study for COIN and FID practitioners.

### **Counterinsurgency or FID**

All three vignettes represent the studied application of COIN strategies applied by, with and through host-nation forces that were genuinely in the lead. The OEF-P policies shape behaviors and outcomes that are textbook FID doctrinal solutions in a complex COIN environment.

In 2009, we are a COIN-conversant military, hard-wired to the gravitational pull of our OIF and OEF-A experiences. Our self-critique of COIN is the mark of an adaptive institution and is

bearing results in campaign objectives and individual behaviors. However, understanding COIN doctrine and application is not good enough for U.S. general purpose or special-operations forces. While the focus on and understanding of COIN is paramount to U.S. success, it is in many ways a foundational step required to successfully conduct our actual mission: FID in support of COIN.

Though FID is doctrinally a SOF Title X responsibility, FID accurately describes the mission of major U.S. joint task forces in both OEF-P, OIF and OEF-A as well as other regional engagements. As we progress from COIN-centric thought to FID-centric behavior, OEF-P offers some lessons for applying U.S. capacity within significant operational constraints. No matter the theater, “thinking COIN, practicing FID” is the proper state of mind for operational planners, tactical forces and ground practitioners.



## Effective Use of FID Expands SF Influence

CPT Stephen C. Flanagan

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During the past six years of combat rotations to Iraq, United States Army Special Forces have refined their lines of operation, or LOOs, to meet the ever-evolving challenges presented on the battlefield of counterinsurgency, or COIN.

The LOOs directed by combined joint special-operations task forces, or CJSOTFs, in Iraq and Afghanistan have varied greatly over time and have included: targeting enemy networks, conducting tribal engagements, conducting information and psychological operations, conducting combined lethal operations and developing networks of influence. However, one LOO that has remained the constant emphasis for the 10th SF Group in shaping the battlefield in Operation Iraqi Freedom is the conduct of foreign internal defense, or FID.

Joint Publication 1-02 defines FID as “participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by an-other government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency.” The 10th SF Group has prioritized FID, emphasizing military training and combat-advising, to improve the capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces, or ISF, and ultimately to protect Iraqi society from insurgency. During OIF V and VI, SF Operational Detachment-Alpha 0324 learned that effective FID not only led to improved employment of ISF but also enabled the ODA to develop strong networks of influence and effectively accomplish the desired effects along their assigned LOOs.

Based in Kirkuk during OIF V, ODA 0324 spent the first half of its deployment conducting FID training with 84 Kurdish soldiers of the 4th Iraqi Army Intelligence-Surveillance-Reconnaissance (ISR) Company. In July 2007, the ODA conducted training in the military decision-making process, or MDMP, reassessing how to more effectively shape the operational environment. The ODA found that multiple friendly elements redundantly focused on insurgents in the Kirkuk City area, collected intelligence from the same sources and partnered with the same Iraqi elements.

Meanwhile, the detachment’s intelligence preparation of the battlefield indicated that the greatest threat had shifted to an area out-side of Kirkuk City: Diyala Province was teeming with violence between al-Qaeda in Iraq, or AQI, and Jaysh al Mehdi, or JAM.<sup>1</sup> Intelligence indicated the Hamrin Mountains, running along the Salah ad Din/Kirkuk provincial boundary, provided an unimpeded supply route into Diyala for AQI.<sup>2</sup> The key AQI node at the northern end of that supply line was the Zaab Triangle, formed by the towns of Bayji, Hawijah and Sharqat, with Zaab Village at its center.

There were virtually no coalition forces, or CF, and few ISF forces in the triangle because it was on the seam between three CF brigades and four provinces: Ninewah, Kirkuk, Irbil and Salah ad-Din. AQI firmly controlled most of the Zaab Triangle. The Hamrin Mountains essentially formed an AQI “supply snake” into Diyala Province, with the Zaab Triangle at its head. The ODA’s MDMP concluded that the best way to attack the snake was to cut off its head.

In August 2007, therefore, ODA 0324 constructed a combat outpost in the heart of the Zaab Triangle, co-located with the largely AQI-corrupted 18th Strategic Infrastructure Battalion,

or SIB. The ODA established close ties with the commander of the 18th SIB, mitigated his corruption, and initiated intensive FID training with his best platoons. The ODA advised NCOs from the 4th Iraqi Army ISR Company who were training platoons of the 18th SIB Scout and Quick Reaction Force, or QRF. This was a noteworthy accomplishment, persuading the Shiite Kurdish soldiers of the 4th IA to train with and later conduct missions alongside the Sunni soldiers of the 18th SIB. The FID training promoted a healthy competition between the Iraqi units to be the best ISF direct-action force in the area, demonstrating a vast expansion of the ODA's influence.

The QRF platoon leader soon introduced the ODA commander to a retired major general of the Iraqi police. The general commanded the loyalties of the dominant tribe in the area. The timing of the meeting was crucial. AQI had recently killed a tribal member because it believed he had cooperated with U.S. forces. AQI had established the Islamic State of Iraq, or ISI, implementing strict, radical Sunni Sharia law, and it maintained dominance in the general area.

AQI regularly distributed ISI newsletters full of propaganda against the government of Iraq, or GOI, and the U.S. government, and it corrupted local leaders of the ISF and government. AQI conducted grisly executions for minor infractions of the Sharia law, including beheadings in the center of towns. Through those coercive tactics, AQI gained the ability to collect local taxes and command control of the area. However, with the execution of the tribesman and the arrival of ODA 0324 to the area, that was all about to change.

The ODA developed a close relationship with the general and the area tribal leaders, who previously had been wary of CF, ISF and the GOI. The ODA fostered the development of a tribal *sahawa*, or "awakening," against AQI, in the form of a network of concerned local citizens. The *sahawa* organization slowly began providing the ODA with atmospheric and intelligence. With that intelligence, the ODA began combat-advising its counterparts in the 4th IA, ISR and 18th SIB to conduct direct action raid against AQI facilitators and weapon caches.

As the ODA and FID partners degraded AQI control of the area, the *sahawa* grew in its strength, willingness and ability to provide intelligence. Local ISF also began cooperating more with the ODA and even asserting itself to enforce the GOI rule of law. The regional police chief began coming to *sahawa* meetings and cooperating fully with the ODA. The commander of the 18th SIB also grew less corrupt and began to employ his line companies in ODA advised clearing operation against AQI.

On Sept. 17, 2007, the ODA and the 18th SIB Scout Platoon were enroute to recover a cache when the combined force was caught in a two sided ambush in a tight alley in the AQI stronghold of Hugna. All the FID training paid off — the SIB Scouts responded professionally.

The combined element returned fire, pushed beyond the kill zone and quickly began clearing back through that portion of the village. The ODA synchronized maneuver of the combined assault force, the Humvee based support by fire elements, close air support from the 2-6 Cavalry, and a company-sized QRF provided by the 18th SIB and the 5-82 Field Artillery Battalion.

The action resulted in no friendly casualties, 14 detained AQI operatives, and one enemy killed. The dead man, Baha Turki Abd Shabib, had been on the ODA's high value target, or HVT, list. He was the AQI leader of the Hugna area and had been linked to the deaths of more than 60 innocent Iraqis, including the notorious beheading of an Iraqi soldier. Shabib had been

responsible for manufacturing IEDs and directing numerous IED attacks against CF and ISF.<sup>3</sup> The operation was an ISF victory and resulted in the degradation of AQI in the Hugna area.

Also in September 2007, the ODA received a tip from a sahawa contact about a regional AQI leader in Old Zaab Village. The ODA and the 18th SIB QRF Platoon conducted a daylight time sensitive raid and arrested Sattam Hamid Khalif, the area AQI leader, former Baath Party leader and 3-25 BCT HVT, who had been the primary target of nearly a dozen CF led raids since 2003.<sup>4</sup> The celebration in the streets over his capture lasted for the next several days.

Sattam's capture was a huge psychological blow to area AQI. In just three months, the ODA had trained the formerly stagnant 18th SIB and advised them as they performed 32 successful direct action operations, captured or killed 43 AQI operatives, and recovered seven caches. The operation demoralized the AQI in the Zaab Triangle and asserted the ODA advised ISF as the authority of the area.

In a third activity in September 2007, the ODA arranged a Sons of Iraq: or SOI, contract between the sahawa and the 5-82 Field Artillery Battalion to assist the ISF in securing the IED laden road of the northern Zaab Triangle. This SOI contract proved so successful that the 5-82 FA expanded the concept to other groups across its sector of the southern Ninewah Province.

In October, the ODA encouraged the 1-87 Infantry Battalion, in Hawijah, to work closely with the Zaab ISF and to initiate a SOI program for the sahawa in order to secure the road of the central Zaab Triangle. From the beginning, the ODA influenced the Kirkuk provincial government to cosign the SOI contract to ensure the sahawa's loyalty to the GOI. Seeing the value of the SOI program, the 1-87 commander employed it across his entire battalion battle space. The effect was rapid and remarkable. Camp McHenry, the 1-87 headquarters in Hawijah, had received daily indirect fire for the previous year; but by November 2007, the attacks had ceased.<sup>5</sup>

The 1-10 Infantry BCT followed suit and employed the SOI program across its entire sector. The new alliance was the single largest volunteer mobilization since the war began.<sup>6</sup> The expansion of SF's influence and the long term shaping of the operational environment was made possible by the foundation of FID training. The ODA's ability to neutralize a previous AQI stronghold and promote the primacy of the ISF was no aberration. Detachments from the 10th SF Group accomplished similar results across all of northern Iraq during OIF V.

ODA 0324 had a similar experience in gaining influence through FID during OIF VI in the holy city of Najaf, the capital of the Shia world. The previous ODA in Najaf focused on conducting leader engagements and collecting atmospherics and had conducted only four SF advised ISF operations during the previous year. The provincial governor and the provincial director of police had a standing agreement with JAM in Najaf that JAM would not be targeted if it refrained from conducting attacks there. Therefore, JAM and JAM Special groups, or JAM SG,<sup>7</sup> had freedom of movement in Najaf while they facilitated and planned attacks in other provinces. So while JAM SG conducted attacks against CF convoys in adjacent provinces, in Najaf, the ISF elements, the police and the IA's 30th Brigade, 8th Division, were stagnant. On the surface, Najaf appeared calm; in reality, it resembled a turbulent JAM SG beehive.

Soon after its arrival in May 2008, ODA 0324 implemented an intensive FID training program with the burgeoning An Najaf SWAT, or ANSWAT, and special forces platoons within the 30th IA BDE. The ODA revamped the ANSWAT qualification course program of instruction,

or POI, into a five week course that began with a challenging selection phase, followed by an operator training phase. The ODA helped the ANSWAT commander select NCOs to run future qualification courses and sustainment training for the unit. The ODA taught the ANSWAT NCO how to lead training and then supervised them as they trained the unit. By September 2008, Najaf had a 110 man SWAT company that was fit, motivated, tactically sound and sustainable.

Brigadier General Majid, commander of the 30th IA, witnessed the development of the ANSWAT and grew receptive to the ODA's suggestions. He accepted the ODA's recommendation to unite the three special forces platoons in his brigade into one unit, the 30th IA Brigade Special Forces Company. The ODA conducted an assessment of the IA special forces soldiers and developed a training POI. The soldiers had been trained by SF in the past, and the ODA determined that they needed to refresh their skills in combat marksmanship and small unit tactics, or SUT. Once that was complete, the ODA leveraged its new influence with Majid to supply the special forces company with flashlights for their weapons and trained them extensively on nighttime marksmanship and SUT. Those night skills proved critical during subsequent operations.

The training and skills development of both Iraqi units led to a healthy competition to be the best in Najaf. Each unit wanted more training and combat advising from the ODA to improve their skills and reputation, which expanded the ODA's influence significantly. Soon the commander of the Najaf police's Thu Al Fuqar Battalion approached the ODA to request training for his "special platoon." This was significant because he, the provincial director of police and the lieutenant governor had served in Badr Corps<sup>8</sup> together for decades and now formed the true power trio in Najaf.

Although the governor held the governorship,<sup>9</sup> those three actually possessed more power in the province because of their standing within Badr Corps and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq.<sup>10</sup> In recent years, the secretive Thu Al Fuqar had gained a reputation as a rogue but effective unit that operated on behalf of the Badr Corps. The ODA capitalized on the opportunity to gain better access and influence with these actual leaders of Najaf, trained the police battalion's special platoon, and later combat advised its operations to effectively neutralize a JAM SG IED cell in northern Najaf.

The FID program expanded the ODA's influence in intelligence collection as well. Cooperation with the ISF unit's intelligence sections helped the ODA develop more reliable targets. The expansion of the ODA's influence with provincial leaders also led to relationships whereby key governmental leaders often shared valuable intelligence with the ODA. Ultimately, the FID program enabled the ODA to develop dependable intelligence and served to influence the provincial governor and ISF leaders to begin approving SF advised direct action operations to arrest mid and high level members of JAM SG seeking refuge in Najaf.

The Hay al Rathma neighborhood, in the Sadr City of Najaf, was long considered a JAM SG controlled area, off limits to ISF and CF. On Oct. 23, 2008, the ODA gained intelligence and approval to conduct a series of raids against three targets in Hay al Rahtma. The ODA combat advised the 30th IA Brigade SF Company in the successful arrest of the Multi National Corps Iraq's number three HVT, Ali Hamza Hadad; the ODA's HVT, Sayid Jihad Musawi; and the Multi National Division Central's HVT, Nasir the Fat. Those raids ended Hay al Rahtma's status as a JAM SG safe zone.

From October 2008 to January 2009, ODA 0324 continued to combat advise the ANSWAT, the 30th IA Brigade SF Company and Thu Al Fuqar during 23 raids across the AnNajaf province

with 21 of them (91 percent) resulting in the arrest of the primary target. In all, 38 warranted JAM SG insurgents were put behind bars. The terrorists included an unprecedented nine HVTs of the MNC I, MND C and Task Force 17. Intelligence feedback indicated that not only was Najaf no longer a safe haven for JAM-SG but also that terrorists who once found sanctuary in Najaf were fleeing the province to seek refuge elsewhere.

The ODA's FID program not only led to degradation of JAM-SG but also enabled the ODA to expand its influence into the rural tribal areas of the province. The commander of the 5th Department of Border Enforcement, or DBE, approached the ODA to request training for his Cobra Force. The ODA provided some training and developed a relationship that would facilitate intelligence-gathering and access to area sheiks.

The sheiks were totally disenchanted with the GOI, especially the Badr-led provincial government and police. In November 2008, the ODA learned that several sheiks were so angry with the provincial government that they were making plans to conduct a provincial coup with 300,000 armed tribesmen. Through FID training and integrating Civil Affairs projects funded by Najaf's provincial reconstruction teams, the ODA was able to gain great influence over the 5th DBE and the tribes and eventually convinced the sheiks to conduct a "democratic revolution" instead of an armed one.

For the first time, these tribes began to acknowledge the new GOI and became involved in the democratic process. The sheiks began organizing conventions and political rallies. During the 2009 provincial election, they won six seats in the Najaf provincial parliament and helped elect the new Najaf governor, Adnan Zurfi, of the Beni Hassan tribe.<sup>11</sup>

ODA 0324's ability to build confident and competent ISF, to persuade previously distrustful Shia and Sunni tribes to support the GOI, and to influence provincial and ISF leaders to support effective direct-action operations that ended AQI and JAM-SG sanctuaries was all made possible by the ODA's robust FID programs.

The detachment's ability to gain influence and shape the operational environment through FID during OIF V and VI was no anomaly. The 10th SF Group ODAs had similar accomplishments in dozens of outstations across Iraq. During OIF V and VI, the 10th SF Group-led CJSOTF-AP conducted 4,644 FID training events, an average of 15 events per day, with a unit of only brigade strength. Direct extensions of the 10th Group's FID priority, CJSOTF elements brokered 3,011 tribal engagements and conducted 1,783 direct-action operations, resulting in the capture of 1,138 primary targets and 1,743 persons of interest. FID, as exemplified by ODA 0324 and all 10th SF Group elements in OIF V and VI, directly expands SF influence, and it will remain paramount to successful COIN campaigns in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

### Notes

1. Jaysh al-Mehdl is an Iraqi paramilitary force created in June 2003 by the radical Iraqi Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. JAM was responsible for most of the insurgent violence in southern Iraq from 2004 to 2007.

2. Kirkuk Province is also known as At Ta'mim Province to westerners.

3. The Hugna ambush story is reported at <[http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com\\_content &task=view&id=14106&Itemid=128](http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14106&Itemid=128)>.

4. The ODA paid out the standing \$10,000 reward for the information that led to Saltam Hamid Khalif's capture.

5. Information about the effects of the Hawijah SOI program come from <[http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=18614&Itemid=128](http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18614&Itemid=128)>.
6. The *USA Today* report on the SOI mobilization: <[http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2007-11-28-iraq-wednesday\\_N.htm?csp=34](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2007-11-28-iraq-wednesday_N.htm?csp=34)>.
7. Jaysh al-Mehdl-Special Groups are the cell-based Shia insurgent organizations operating within Iraq, backed by Iran. These groups have some connections with Jaysh al-Mehdl and are largely funded, trained and armed by the Iranian Quds Force.
8. The Badr Corps (also known as Badr Brigade or Badr Organization) was based in Iran for two decades during the rule of Saddam Hussein. It consisted of thousands of Iraqi exiles, refugees and defectors who fought alongside Iran in the Iran-Iraq War. Returning to Iraq following the 2003 coalition invasion, the group became the armed wing of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq.
9. Although the Najaf governor was a member of ISCI, he was a moderate who was new to the party. ISCI leadership expected him to follow the guidance of the lieutenant governor.
10. The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq is an Iraqi political party currently led by Abdul Aziz al-Hakim. Its support comes from the country's Shia Muslim community and the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was previously known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution In Iraq and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council.
11. The tribes won six seats on the An Najaf Provincial Council under the political party names of "Loyalty to Najaf" and "Najaf Unity": <<http://www.niqash.org/content.php?contentTypeID=75&id=2395&lang=0>>.

## Afghanistan: The Importance of Political Maneuver in Counterinsurgency Operations

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### Summary

Any commander operating in a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment is besieged by the constant need to make numerous and varied decisions critical to the successful execution of a COIN campaign. While all military and political campaigns are challenging due to the “fog of war”, COIN campaigns can prove particularly difficult for military personnel due to a military culture that does not understand how to politically maneuver in semi to non-permissive environments.<sup>1</sup> This paper demonstrates the need for military organizations to gain a better understanding of their operational environment before executing political maneuver in a full spectrum COIN campaign.

Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha 7311 did not originally intend to conduct a full spectrum counterinsurgency (COIN) operation; instead it originally chose to expand Ghazni’s Foreign Internal Defense (FID) efforts as part of a larger joint COIN campaign. The Detachment inherited the Afghan National Police Special Response Team (ANP SRT); a small yet well trained platoon of 19 ethnic Hazarans. While seeking to expand the ANP SRT’s size and capabilities, the Detachment planned to simultaneously execute surgical strike operations against high ranking and mid level Taliban commanders as a means of validating the ANP SRT’s capabilities. An emphasis on Foreign Internal Defense combined with Direct Action was a typical Detachment strategy during 2008 that has gradually shifted to FID and population security with the advent of Village Stability Operations (VSO).<sup>2</sup>

The Detachment’s elation over the successful capture of Taliban commander Mullah Faizoni in late July would transition to frustration over its inability to capture/kill Taliban Intelligence Chief Sher Agha. To reacquire the target, the Detachment conducted limited engagement of Espandi Village in order to generate additional atmospherics. It assessed that a larger COIN operation should be left to the conventional forces and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) as the battle space owner was the final approving authority for all kinetic operations. Yet, when its limited engagement produced no results, the Detachment realized that in order to obtain long term effects as codified by the SOF imperatives, it needed to conduct a *combined political maneuver*.<sup>3</sup>

The objectives of the *combined political maneuver* were as follows:

- Understanding of the Operational Environment in order to correctly steer the *combined political maneuver*
- Unity of Effort between the coalition on FOB (Forward Operating Base) Ghazni
- Unity of Effort between the coalition and the GIROA
- GIROA creates systems for resolving public grievances

- Politically force the hand of the ANA to conduct COIN by establishing a joint ANA/ ANP (Afghan National Army / Afghan National Police) combat outpost in Espandi Village
- Politically force the Tajik Mafia to stop supporting the Taliban
- Espandi Village serves as an example of how to properly conduct COIN at the tactical and operational level

Espandi was the instrument of the Detachment's *combined political maneuver*. While the village was seemingly of minor tactical and operational importance, it served as a point of contention and concentration; coaxing all of the entities into resolving a seemingly simple problem that exposed the complexities of conducting COIN in Afghanistan. Sadly, Afghanistan's endemic corruption and anemic social, political, and economic institutions created a systematic security problem. Coalition forces' and GIRoA's difficulty in implementing a unified strategy have only exacerbated the problem as commanders and governors rotate in and out; this reality underscores the need for *combined political maneuver* that ultimately seeks to capture the support of the population. Predictably, most external and internal actors selfishly labor to maximize their personal agendas instead of taking the smallest of steps towards securing and rebuilding a new Afghanistan.

### Introduction

*Police action will therefore be actual operational warfare. It will be methodically pursued until the enemy organization has been entirely annihilated. It will not end until we have organized the population and created an efficient intelligence service to enable it to defend itself.*

— Roger Trinquier

*It's all about the Benjamins.*

— Puff Daddy

“Know your turf....Neglect this knowledge, and it will kill you.”<sup>4</sup> David Kilcullen's first tenet of counterinsurgency operations (COIN) emphasizes the need to *understand the operational environment* before embarking on long-term COIN. This is vitally important in a complex environment such as Afghanistan where it is critical that coalition forces understand the economic, political, religious, and cultural history of their environment, not just the traditional geographic and enemy disposition. Moreover, this knowledge is essential for coalition forces who seek to conduct effective *political maneuver*. With the decision to surge 37,000 coalition soldiers in Afghanistan, this paper argues that despite a sound strategy, coalition efforts may still fail due to an absence of *combined political maneuver* at the tactical and operational level. This paper will analyze the COIN experience of Special Operations Detachment Alpha (SFODA) 7311 in Ghazni Province from July–December 2008 in order to explain the complexities of Afghanistan's environment and benefits of employing the above COIN principles.<sup>5</sup>

This paper supports this argument by first discussing the development of how the Detachment unveiled Ghazni Province's operational environment. It will then transition to a discussion of the essential elements of *combined political maneuver* and how they were applied to the

environment. Finally, after discussing the detailed politics of Ghazni Province, it will conclude by offering some over-arching themes and lessons gleaned from the experience.

### **From Capture / Kill to Negotiation**

“Cleared HOT!” said the Detachment commander to the JTAC as the CH-47 Chinook attempted to land in the brown-out. The JTAC cleared the AH-64 Apaches in for a gun run that neutralized Mullah Faizoni, the top Taliban commander in Ghazni Province, Afghanistan. A month of planning, targeting, and training finally paid off. Mullah Faizoni eluded 19 different coalition kinetic strikes but on 20 July, 2008 he was captured. This high risk mission resulted in the temporary disruption of Taliban command and control during the middle of a very difficult summer for coalition forces. The Taliban’s decision to attack critical lines of communication resulted in the coalition reallocating significant CAS/ISR and other security assets in order to keep the supply lines open.<sup>6</sup> The Taliban held the initiative by using tactics similar to those used by Lawrence of Arabia used against the Turks in 1917.<sup>7</sup>

In an effort to regain the initiative, SFODA 7311 attempted to execute surgical strikes against top Taliban commanders throughout the summer of 2008. While initially successful, the tempo began to slow as the Taliban increased their operational security measures. Sher Agha, a top Taliban intelligence operative and former Taliban Minister of Education was elusive, refusing to establish a predictable pattern.

After a month of no results, the Detachment’s leadership decided to change tactics by beginning a full spectrum COIN operation centered on Sher Agha’s hometown, the Tajik village of Espandi. Espandi Village was visible from 3km South of FOB Ghazni’s ramparts.<sup>8</sup> Despite its relative proximity, the population was complicit due to intimidation tactics, and the village provided a staging area for indirect fire attacks, suicide bombings, and the transportation of weapons into northern Wardak Province. Through engagement of the population, the Detachment sought to regain atmospheric on Sher Agha and his insurgent network.<sup>9</sup> What was originally a simple objective would morph to expose a complex and interconnected environment that demonstrates why COIN is holistic and a “thinking man’s game”, thus requiring an *understanding the operational environment and combined political maneuver*.

Operation Green Chimera, a *targeted cordon and search*, kicked off on 30 August, 2008.<sup>10</sup> It involved a combined force of over 200 soldiers and enablers from the Afghan National Police Special Response Team (ANP SRT), Afghan National Army (ANA), elements from the 101st Air Assault Division, Polish Army and a Tactical Human Intelligence Team (THT). These varied units worked together in order to temporarily Clear Espandi.<sup>11</sup> The cordon and search disrupted Sher Agha’s network and produced some additional atmospheric but without specific intelligence Sher Agha was not captured. In a classic Maoist tactic, atmospheric would later indicate that he fled to Pakistan in order to wait out the Detachment’s aggressive tactics.<sup>12</sup> The detachment did not expect to capture Sher Agha, instead the main effort of the operation was to conduct a Key Leader Engagement.<sup>13</sup> The Espandi elders and the Detachment met in the local school, where the Detachment gave a strong pitch to the elders. Espandi had a choice; it could aid in Sher Agha’s demise by reporting his movements and in exchange the Detachment would reward Espandi with civil affairs projects and agricultural aid from the Texas National Guard’s Agricultural Development Team.<sup>14</sup> If not, the Detachment would make life difficult for Espandi, conducting frequent cordon and searches. This was a very forceful pitch and more of a gambit placed to determine the elders’ true power in the village than a serious approach to facilitating the capture of Sher Agha.

The elders responded that they did not have any means with which to notify the Detachment. The Detachment responded by placing a free cell phone on one of the desks. One of the elders reached out to take the phone but was immediately rebuked by another, “Idiot! Don’t take the phone, the Taliban will cut our heads off!” The elders were nervous and it soon became evident that there was a Taliban minder in the group. Espandi was a typical semi-permissive village for the villagers while being non-permissive for coalition forces.

Additional discussions went on but it was quickly realized that an honest dialogue was impossible without the elders feeling secure. Still as a measure of good faith, the Detachment gave the village a small humanitarian assistance package, primarily consisting of food stuffs. They were quickly absorbed by the desperate villagers. Later that evening, after coalition forces departed, the Detachment learned that the Taliban returned, collected the HA and burned it in a warning to the villagers.<sup>15</sup> This response from the Taliban labeled Espandi as a Taliban controlled village and set the tone for future operations.

While the Clear was moderately successful, the Hold portion was not feasible due to a lack of forces willing to remain in Espandi. The Detachment attempted to maintain the initiative by conducting random joint combat patrols with the ANP SRT, Texas National Guard, and Polish forces.<sup>16</sup> Each of these patrols aided in the Detachment gaining situational awareness of Espandi’s geographical and human terrain as it began to build a picture of the operational environment.

In addition to increasing its presence, the Detachment followed David Galula’s example of winning the support of the population through its new leaders by encouraging a formal dialogue between the Espandi elders and Ghazni’s Governor Usman Usmani.<sup>17</sup> Instead of the Detachment engaging the elders unilaterally, it convinced the governor to intercede and execute his role as a government leader.<sup>18</sup> His natural talents as a political animal were invaluable as he attempted to pin the elders down to make a choice: either choose the side of the new government or those of the Taliban. The elders naturally countered that the government or coalition had to first ensure<sup>19</sup> security.

US conventional forces were spread across three provinces and ISAF forces were restricted by national caveats in conducting extended operations outside of their base. The Detachment looked to available Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). The ANP were dubious of committing forces as they were already stretched thin and so the eternal problem of who conducts the Hold of a Cleared area manifested itself. The ANA had the necessary forces, but were completely against conducting COIN as it would interfere with their ongoing smuggling operations between Ghazni City and Kabul.<sup>20</sup> ANA participation was heavily dependent on developing a close relationship with the ANA battalion commander; yet his deferment of Special Forces sponsored training denied the Detachment its use of Foreign Internal Defense as a means to increase rapport. The governor’s and coalition’s powerlessness to gain ANA support for village combat outposts elevated the problem of non-involvement to a national level. Governor Usmani addressed this issue with the Ministry of Defense, which in turn denied the ANA from manning any type of village combat outposts in Ghazni Province. The lack of Afghan National Security Forces’ (ANSF) support was more than just a local military problem; it exposed the ANA’s reluctance to commit itself to protecting the rural population.

Facing multiple obstacles, the Detachment reevaluated the situation. The coalition’s and GIROA’s efforts were going nowhere. Despite the elimination of Mullah Haroon by Other Coalition Forces on 12 October, the Espandi villagers boycotted a large combined forces Medical Civic Assistance

Program (MEDCAP) on 15 October and Humanitarian aid from the Texas ADT out of fear of Taliban retributions.<sup>21</sup> This example confirms how difficult it can be to separate the population from the insurgents, as Roger Trinquier states:<sup>22</sup>

The goal of *modern warfare* is control of the populace, and terrorism is a particularly appropriate weapon, since it aims directly at the inhabitant. In the street, at work, at home, the citizen lives continually under the threat of violent death. In the presence of this permanent danger surrounding him, he has the depressing feeling of being an isolated and defenseless target. The fact that public authority and the police are no longer capable of ensuring his security adds to his distress. He loses confidence in the state whose inherent mission it is to guarantee his safety. He is more and more drawn to the side of the terrorists, who alone are able to protect him.

A proposal to the Espandi elders by the Detachment to aid in establishing an Arbakai security force was rejected by the elders, claiming they did not have enough men or weapons to defend the village.<sup>23</sup> The proposal itself was a bluff as President Karzai was adamant against the renewal of local defense initiatives that might create a threat to his power base.<sup>24</sup> A final proposal of establishing an ANSF combat outpost in the village was similarly rejected due to cultural concerns.<sup>25</sup> Why was Espandi so resistant to any type of assistance? What did the Detachment not understand about the operational environment, Special Forces' first imperative, that was causing its full spectrum operation to fail and how could it improve its *combined political maneuver*?

After calling a suspension of tactical operations on 30 October, the Detachment began an exhaustive political and human terrain analysis, while training its ANP SRT to take lead in conducting patrols.<sup>26</sup> The Detachment also opened a back channel to Espandi's senior elder through an intermediary. Instead of continuing to meet face-face with the village elders, the Detachment communicated through the intermediary in order to determine how the elders truly felt about security and development projects. This method of communication took longer but was more effective due to eliminating the fear of retribution in their semi-permissive environment. It was the beginning of an intelligence network focused on communicating with the population, developing a parallel to that of the insurgents as proposed by Roger Trinquier.<sup>27</sup> This network worked specifically for the defense and concerns of the population. Trinquier emphasizes that these networks mirror every echelon of society, securing it through quality communication that facilitates the focusing of energy and resources. It compliments intelligence dedicated for kinetic operations, information operations, PSYOPs and is a key capability for executing *combined political maneuver*.

The break in operations signaled to the Tajik Taliban that the Detachment had retreated from the objective of securing Espandi. Ironically, this induced Sher Agha to return from Pakistan as he deemed Espandi to again be a secure Taliban stronghold. While conducting a patrol in Espandi on 14 November, the ANP SRT inadvertently reacquired Sher Agha. Atmospheric confirmed afterwards that the ANP SRT had been within 15 feet of him as they conducted a jirga with the village elders.<sup>28</sup> The local Taliban even mocked the ANP SRT's ignorance by inviting them to a party that evening. After debriefing members from the patrol, the Detachment planned and the ANP SRT executed an operation that captured Sher Agha during that evening's festivities. The successful operation would prove to be a watershed event and forced the Espandi elders to return to the negotiating table as they sponsored the detainee families' call for clemency on November 17. While the village elders wanted Sher Agha to be released, the Detachment used the opportunity to reassert the need for some type of security apparatus to be accepted by Espandi.

Repeated refusals and the nervous nature of Espandi's spokesman finally alluded to the true nature of the *operational environment*. Present was "Senator" Maulana Abur Rahman Sayaff, a key Tajik Leader and President Karzai's Special Federal Representative. Unofficially, he was the Tajik Mafia's figurehead and was there to preserve the status quo.

### **The Operational Environment and Political Maneuver**

Ghazni is a complex province due to its multi-ethnic makeup of Tajik, Pashtu, and Hazaran populations, which are in competition over reconstruction contracts, drugs, and chromite.<sup>29</sup> The current status quo consisted of a system of "grey" alliances led by the Tajik Mafia and was composed of ethnically diverse GIRoA officials that included former Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) members, local power brokers, and the local Taliban commanders in order to facilitate their legal and illegal business activities. When the Detachment pushed for several different security solutions for Espandi Village, Maulana Abdur Rahman stated that coalition forces should not be concerned with security in Espandi or any of the other "74" villages that he controlled. When asked which villages, the Senator responded by listing several villages under Taliban influence that were also staging areas for tactical attacks on coalition forces and logistical convoys.<sup>30</sup> It was evident that the Ghazni Tajiks had no intentions to bring "real" security to Ghazni Province or to the areas that they "controlled", instead the Detachment suspected that they wished to maintain a certain level of violence in order to continue their established status quo.<sup>31</sup>

Now that the Detachment understood the *operational environment* was dominated by the "grey", it needed to adjust its *combined political maneuver* in order to break the Tajik Mafia's dominance over its own people. First, the Detachment relooked at how it could force the ANA's hand in establishing a 25 man combat outpost in Espandi so that Espandi could serve as a small victory in a larger COIN campaign.<sup>32</sup> A solution lay with using Governor Usmani's desire to gain influence over the Tajiks. After convincing him that emplacing a checkpoint in Espandi was necessary, the Detachment used the governor's influence to obtain ANP backing and together pushed the new Hazaran ANA Brigade commander into participating. While the initiative seemed to be a tactical move, in reality it was a strategic maneuver as it painted the ANA into a political corner. The Detachment's indirect approach also forced the people of Espandi to make a choice. They could no longer sit on the fence as the presence of the checkpoint mandated they support either the Taliban or the GIRoA. It took over a month to establish the checkpoint.<sup>33</sup> 36 hours after its establishment, the ANA pulled out, receiving orders from the ANA 203rd Corps that they could not provide the required 10 men.<sup>34</sup> Three days after its establishment, the Taliban attacked the checkpoint. The coalition and GIRoA had regained the initiative not through a specific kinetic operation but by denying the Taliban access to the population. Despite the checkpoint being a tactically defensive position, its establishment served as an operationally offensive maneuver. The local Taliban had to attack the checkpoint or else they would suffer a loss of honor or nang by being denied a traditional safe haven. It allowed the Detachment to engage the Taliban discriminately through the ANSF while at the same time manipulate the Taliban's psychological need to save face.

### **Ghazni Politics**

Espandi being semi-secured, the next larger issue at stake was the influence of the Tajik Mafia. The Tajik Mafia or "Badmash" maintained significant power in Ghazni Province's security, political, and economic spheres of influence.<sup>35</sup> Despite being only 3% of Ghazni's population, the Tajiks managed to formulate a strong power base within Ghazni City, which allowed them

to control strategic lines of communications such as Highway 1 and routes leading east to Pakistan. By controlling these key corridors of transportation, the Ghazni Tajiks established an environment that favored their political and economic position. They built their wealth by winning Provincial Reconstruction Team contracts that are sometimes worth millions of dollars.<sup>36</sup> In order to keep the contracts flowing, the Ghazni Tajiks assumed that they must maintain a certain level of instability within Ghazni Province and thus support the local Taliban by paying them up to \$150,000/month or \$1.8 million/year.<sup>37</sup>

This is why the Detachment could not make any progress in Espandi. It was not just fighting the Taliban, but a corrupt system endemic throughout the province that was primarily concerned with maximizing profit margins. Coalition forces were inadvertently funding their own insurgency by awarding contracts to individuals who in turn had to pay a “tax” to the Taliban commanders. The practice was reported to occur widely throughout Afghanistan, with the “tax” percentages ranging from 10-40% for development projects and 10-25% for logistical convoys moving through Taliban controlled areas like Ghazni’s Andar and Qarabagh districts that border Highway 1.<sup>38</sup> In addition to an established and efficient kidnapping ring, these financial activities are creating roadblocks for future security measures.<sup>39</sup> Mao Tse-tung would define the Ghazni Taliban as a mixture of the fourth and seventh type of guerillas or foreign fighters mixed with local Taliban supported by thieves and bandits.<sup>40</sup>

The source of the Ghazni Tajik economic prosperity originated from the harvesting and sale of antiques from the Ghaznavid Empire.<sup>41</sup> Ghazni Tajik’s are “based” out of the Rowzah Village, which is located approximately 3km north of Ghazni City. Incidentally, between these two locations one can find the historical site of the Ghaznavid Capital. Ten years ago, Rowzah was an economically depressed village, but upon their entrance into the antique smuggling business they grew into one of the most prosperous villages. Like any competent investor, the Ghazni Tajiks have diversified their capital into several other businesses.

Politically, the Ghazni Tajiks have significant influence due to Maulana Abdur Rahman Sayyaf’s status as the President’s special representative. He is the ethnic Tajik check against Governor Usmani, a Pashtun Alokozai from Kandahar and “cousin” to President Karzai. President Karzai emplaced Governor Usmani in order to ensure his reelection.<sup>42</sup> Governor Usmani’s appointment is also a political gesture so as to placate the Alokozais who are the Pashtu warrior tribe in Kandahar. It is Usmani’s chance to display his political aptitude and talent for corruption. Governor Usmani hopes to gain a significant power base by manipulating the traditional power brokers, coalition forces, and the local population. It can be perceived that Governor Usmani and the local Tajik power brokers behave like two mafia gangs that are attempting to assert their power over Ghazni City due to its importance as a hub for commerce. The group that controls the trade routes, gains the ability to tax legal goods from the many logistical convoys that run up and down Highway 1. It also allows the dominant faction to control the illegal opium trade that runs from Kandahar to Tajikistan-Russia-Western Europe and the illegal chromite trade that moves into Pakistan.<sup>43</sup>

A local incident provides an example of how Governor Usmani and the Ghazni Tajiks are involved in an ongoing political power struggle. The Ghazni Tajiks from Rowzah Village wished to build a new mosque in order to expand their village to the South. While this is traditionally done to expand a village, the real reason for the construction of the mosque was to allow the illegal harvesting of antiques from this historical area. Governor Usmani either did not receive his cut of the antique smuggling profits or decided to make a power move by bulldozing the new mosque. The Rowzeh villagers in turn began to riot, burning tires on Highway 1, and disrupting

the flow of traffic. Governor Usmani asked Senator Maulana to speak to Raees Hachem, the senior Tajik elder, in order to quell the riot peacefully.<sup>44</sup> When he was unable to do so, he sent in the Ghazni City ANP to quell the riot by force. This was a political victory for Governor Usmani because it demonstrated his power over Senator Maulana and the Ghazni Tajiks. It also humbled the Ghazni Tajiks, although the extent of their loyalty and respect to Governor Usmani remains unknown.

Coalition forces in conjunction with senior GIRoA players have certain options they can use in order to confront or manipulate the Ghazni Tajiks into stopping their corruptive support of Taliban networks. One option is to confront the Tajiks with this information and threaten them into compliance by potentially denying all PRT contracts. Cutting off one of their largest funding streams would deny the Taliban some of their operational funds. A second option would be to publically broadcast the story through the media in order to publically humiliate the Tajiks into submission. A third option would have the GIRoA detain the senior Ghazni Tajik leaders in an effort to send a message that corruption will not be tolerated.

A hybrid of these three courses of action would be ideal: leaking a limited version of the story to the local media, detaining a lower level Tajik financier and maintaining pressure on the local Taliban would send a strong signal. Specific actions can be gradually elevated or downplayed in order to discontinue Ghazni Tajik financial support of Taliban operations while simultaneously pushing for reconciliation. Any of these options have to potential to be met with some type of counteraction from the targeted parties.

Coalition efforts to reduce the corruption of reconstruction resources could result in the Tajik population slide into insurgency as the Tajik Mafia convinces their people to join the Taliban or resist coalition efforts by withdrawing contractor support. The coalition can reduce these risks by tapping alternate contractors and executing a pre-planned I/O campaign highlighting Tajik Mafia transgressions. Assassination of public officials is a common insurgent tactic that the Taliban would tap in order to disrupt coalition planning. The security of key leaders would have to be hardened while local surgical strike operations would continue in order to disrupt the Taliban's chain of command.

Whatever type of action the coalition initiates, it would pincer the Tajik Mafia between the Taliban and the coalition. These initiatives are offensive in nature and do not attempt to lure "fence sitters" to the GIRoA by offering better incentives, hence they carry risks in that it pushes the coalition to become an active political player. While international forces attempt to hold a neutral stance in conflict resolution so as to first do "no harm", this perspective is pointless as their mere presence has upset the previous status quo. The international community's efforts to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan force it to first understand the operational environment, and then actively participate as a political player in conjunction with their partners so as to bring about the ultimate goal: stability and security.

### **Conclusion**

*Combined political maneuver* seeks to unify disparate coalition entities in creating an operational plan that turns self-interested power brokers into allies in a bid to separate insurgents from the population and connect the people to a legitimate government that can provide and sustain the four dimensions of counterinsurgency: security, governance, development, and information.<sup>45</sup> This long definition raises the questions of how do we accomplish these tasks and who executes them?

The GIRoA and coalition forces know what to do but often remain convoluted or show no motivation in how to accomplish these challenging tasks. Most parties agree that whatever course of action is taken, the effort must be unified under a joint plan, physically executed by GIRoA and ANSF with coalition forces acting as mentors and honest brokers. Certain GIRoA and ANSF players do not have a strong understanding of how to properly execute COIN along military lines but can excel politically due to their knowledge of the political landscape.

Coalition forces must advise and mentor their Afghan partners, compensating for their weaknesses, by designing an operational COIN plan tailored to their area. The coalition must make *political maneuver* their main effort with traditional tactical maneuver in support.

Special Forces Detachments are a key element in developing a coordinated operational COIN plan as they possess unique tools that allow them to transcend cultural boundaries and create unity of effort. Their support of larger conventional forces is maximized when they are allowed to conduct Foreign Internal Defense in support of indigenous forces while simultaneously utilizing their talents to uncover the operational environment. Their superior situational awareness can properly focus a joint GIRoA, ANSF and coalition effort in connecting to the population.



Figure 10-1

SFODA 7311's *combined political maneuver's* success can be measured by which objectives were accomplished by the end of the Detachment's deployment. The Detachment did increase its understanding of the operational environment as it learned the local players' economic

and political agendas were dominated by graft. Corruption continues to pervade all aspects of Afghan society due to a scarcity of resources and the belief that the international community will inevitably leave; causing a return to civil war at best or a Taliban government at worst. Progress was made in creating systems that unified FOB Ghazni and GIROA agendas, but competing operational and strategic visions outlived the original joint vision of securing one village against Taliban influence due to the lack of commitment to a joint plan. Governor Usmani and the ANP did witness and acknowledge the benefits of small scale enduring combat outposts, but due to a lack ANA support this initiative could not expand beyond Espandi. Finally, relieving Espandi from the yoke of the Tajik Mafia and Taliban showed promise as the Detachment was leaving. Governor Usmani signaled his desire to make this a reality due to his quest for greater political power.

In retrospect, the Detachment should have jointly manned the outpost with the ANSF or chosen a village that did not necessitate direct coalition support. It was not as Dr. Kilcullen states, “an early victory” and the Detachment paid for it by expending an incredible amount of energy.<sup>46</sup> Eventual success would have had exponential political, organizational and military benefits but it required greater commitment from coalition partners.

Still, Espandi demonstrated that *combined political maneuver* guided by superior *understanding of the operational environment* could be the beginning of an effective COIN campaign, but tragically a lack of continuity limited or eliminated many of the gains. The unresolved issue of continuity will undermine coalition efforts in Afghanistan until operational COIN plans are mandated and approved at the strategic level. Only a sustained and cohesive implementation of COIN doctrine will yield victory in this long war.

**Special Note in reference to updated Special Forces Operations as of July 2009 – present:**

As of the publishing of this paper, Special Forces Detachments are executing these types of operations under the name of Village Stability Operations (VSO) with the desired end state of gaining that “small victory” along the way to spreading long term security. Yet, it must be emphasized that site selection must be critically evaluated before committing operational assets to securing a tactical piece of terrain. While a Detachment can easily secure a village with their Afghan partners, commanders must realize that such tactical tasks can rapidly reduce a Detachment’s ability to operationally affect its area of operations if it is isolated to one village. Regardless, such operations do set the example not just for our Afghan partners but also for our coalition partners. VSO is proving critical as it purges the Taliban from key villages, fosters local alliances and leaders among solidarity groups and attempts to connect or transform these alliances and leaders to a local, legitimate and functioning government.

*About the Detachment: ODA 7311 has deployed to Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedoms VIII, XII, XIV and is set to return for OEF XVI. It was my privilege to have served with them during OEF XII as their Detachment Commander. This article was written in their honor and is especially dedicated to SFC Bradley S. Bohle, SFC Shawn P. McCloskey, and SSG Joshua M. Mills who were KIA on 15 September 2009 while conducting combat operations in Nimruz Province, Afghanistan.*

## Notes

1. David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 71. *Political Maneuver* is defined by Dr. Kilcullen as an operational plan that seeks to separate the insurgents from the people by finding local allies amongst the power players, connecting the government to the population, and increasing local governance capacity in order to generate progress across the four principle dimensions of counterinsurgency (security, governance, development, and information).
2. Village Stability Operations (VSO): Tactical operations executed by SFODAs that seek to secure “early victories” and hence larger operational effects by protecting the population from Taliban influence. VSO is currently being conducted by SFODAs throughout Afghanistan and differs significantly from traditional Afghan operations in that Detachments maintain a permanent presence within a targeted village in order to generate long term effects.
3. Note: *Combined Political Maneuver* is a term defined by the author as conducting *Political Maneuver* under a unified and synchronized command. In other words, Unity of Effort + Political Maneuver = *Combined Political Maneuver*. *Political Maneuver* is a term defined by Dr. David Kilcullen and further defined above.
4. David Kilcullen, “Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency,” *Small Wars Journal*, Vol 1, No 1 (March 2006), p. 2.
5. Note: For the purposes of this paper the following resources will be defined as COIN doctrine: *The U.S. Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual* (Army Manual FM 3-24.2, *Tactics in Counterinsurgency*); *The Accidental Guerilla* by Dr. David Kilcullen; *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* by Dr. Seth Jones; *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* by LTC David Galula; and *On Guerilla Warfare* by Mao Tse-tung. SOF doctrine heavily influenced this paper, and the 12 SOF imperatives are found in Appendix 3.
6. Note: Close Air Support (CAS); Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR).
7. T.E. Lawrence, *In War and Peace* (Mechanicsburg, VA: Greenhill Books, 2005), p. 263. Lawrence was able to keep the Turks unbalanced and bogged down in security positions by unpredictably attacking the Turkish railway.
8. See Annex 1: Imagery; Appendix 1: Ghazni and Espandi Imagery.
9. Note: The term *atmospherics* refers to any type of intelligence that aids in targeting.
10. Definition from FM 3-24.2, paragraph 5-44: A *cordon and search* operation is conducted to seal off an area in order to search it for persons or things such as items, intelligence data, or answers to Primary Intelligence Requirements. It is also one of the techniques used in the “clear” phase of a clear-hold-build operation. In this case *targeted* differentiates the typical cordon and search in that only confirmed insurgent households were searched in order to minimize any negative effects on the neutral/pro-GIROA population.
11. Definition from FM 3-24.2, paragraph 3-110: *Clear* is a tactical mission task that requires the commander to remove all enemy forces and eliminate organized resistance in an assigned area. The force does this by destroying, capturing or forcing the withdrawal of insurgent combatants and leaders. This task is most effectively initiated by a clear-in-zone or cordon-and-search operation as well as patrolling, ambushes, and targeted raids.
12. Mao Tse-Tung, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2005), p. 46.
13. Definition from author: A Key Leader Engagement is a deliberately planned and focused meeting that seeks to achieve a desired effect. It is a non-lethal reconnaissance tool used to counter insurgent networks by identifying and targeting friendly social networks for future *political maneuver*.
14. Texas Agricultural Development Team (ADT): The mission of the ADT is to develop complete market chains that provide the Afghan people with increased economic opportunities. The ADT also seeks to increase agriculture knowledge and output by working with the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture to educate Afghan farmers and install micro power systems for remote areas. See the following article for additional information: <<http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2009/January/2009012309373dmslahrellek0.2457392.html>>.
15. Note from FM 3-24.2: The Detachment should have incorporated a stay behind element during its withdrawal as recommended in paragraph 5-86.
16. FM 3-24.2, paragraph 5-181: COIN Patrols.
17. David Galula. *Pacification in Algeria* (Arlington, VA: RAND Cooperation, 2006), 158.

18. FM 3-24.2, paragraph 7-44: Support to Governance. The coalition has a responsibility to act as the “honest broker” when dealing with governance. In Afghanistan this means that the coalition must push the GIROA to govern their people by presenting tribal, judicial, and security issues that they can resolve instead of pouring their energies into corruption. In this instance, the Detachment supported the development of local governance when it convinced Governor Usmani to address Espandi’s security concerns.
19. Note: Despite the increased day and night patrols, it was not enough to separate the population from the insurgents. This was evident when the Detachment broke up a Taliban meeting at the village mosque during the height of Ramadan. Hold forces were necessary for long term security and to allow other enablers to support economic and infrastructure development.
20. Note: Atmospherics confirmed that the local ANA Battalion Commander was utilizing the ANA’s resources to smuggle various goods from Ghazni to Kabul.
21. Note: Mullah Haroon was the top Taliban commander in Espandi after the departure of Sher Agha. During the month of September and October, he was the Detachment’s nemesis as the two traded non-kinetic blows for control of Espandi’s population. Mullah Haroon usually held the advantage over the Detachment as he was a resident of Espandi and held significant sway over the population through intimidation.
22. Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 1964), p. 15.
23. Mohammed Osman Tariq, “Tribal Security System (Arbakai) in Southeast Afghanistan,” (Crisis Research Center, Destin, LSE, Houghton Street, London, December 2008). This paper gives an in depth explanation of the Arbakai system. Arbakai are a traditional form of tribal security typically found in Eastern Afghanistan but the concept is widely known throughout Afghanistan. Tribes pick their most courageous fighters to guard their villages, using Afghan pashtunwali to ensure that they maintain security. Most Arbakai bands number anywhere from 40–100 men.
24. Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, “Arbakai Aim to Protect Their Villages in Afghanistan,” *NPR Web Site*, February 7, 2008, at: <<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18754057>>.
25. Note: The Espandi elders claimed that ANSF presence, especially that of the ANP, was not welcome due to the fear of ANP corruption. Even worse, the elders were concerned that the ANP would commit atrocities against their village as had happened in Deh Yak District, Ghazni Province. An ANP officer sexually harassed a young local girl when she went to collect water at the local well. In this case, sexual harassment is defined when an Afghan man “checks out” Afghan women at the well. It is well known that one of the few chances that rural Afghan men have to woo Afghan women outside of their extended family is when a women retrieves water from the well or river.
26. Note: The Detachment began to hand over regular tactical patrols to the ANP SRT in order for them to gain unilateral capabilities. In order to improve their chances of success, the Detachment gave them up-armored vehicles and secured A-10 Close Air Support in order to build confidence and bluff the Taliban into thinking that ANSF now had the same capabilities as US forces.
27. Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, p. 28.
28. Note: The ANP SRT did not know that they were that close to Sher Agha, as no one had a picture of the target and hence could not readily positively identify him.
29. Thomas Schweich, “Is Afghanistan a Narco-State,” *The New York Times* online, December 14, 2008, at: <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9404E5D7153FF934A15754C0A96E9C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=1>>; Richard Opiel, “Corruption Undercuts Hopes for Afghan Police,” *The New York Times* online, April 8, 2009, at: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/09/world/asia/09ghazni.html?pagewanted=all>>. Note: Sources report each truck of chromite is worth \$60,000.
30. Note: The villages included Zargar, Espandi, Qarabaghi, and Arzo. All of these villages are known staging areas and thoroughfares for Ghazni Taliban. Espandi and Arzo are particularly notorious for being staging points for attacks on MSR Ohio (Espandi) and MSR Florida (Arzo). See Annex 1: Imagery; Appendix 2: Ghazni District Imagery.
31. Note: It should be noted that several of the Tajik Elders are well respected by members of the Tajik population or by Ghazni City’s cross ethnic population. The Ghazni Tajiks are dedicated businessmen who are often involved in conflict resolution for the local people, especially among the “guilds” that are located in Ghazni City.
32. Note: The Espandi Checkpoint was designed to contain up to 25 personnel and be composed of a mixture of ANP and ANA, with the ANA having overriding authority due to the people’s trust in them. Joint patrols would have been the ideal, with the ANP taking lead on engaging the populace and the ANA providing heavy weapons support.

33. Note: The checkpoint came to fruition through the combined efforts of the Detachment, Governor Osmani, ANP/PMT, ANA, and PRT support.

34. Note: After the departure of the ANA from the combat outpost, the ANA Battalion Commander took a verbal beating at the next security meeting from Governor Osmani and COL Andrejzek, the Polish Battle Group Commander, for the checkpoint's impending failure due to a lack of ANA participation.

35. Note: Badmash is a derogatory name for Afghan Mafia organizations. The Ghazni Tajik Mafia is currently involved in legal and illegal business activities.

36. Note: Total "burn" rate for just road construction projects in districts controlled by the Taliban in January of 2008 was approximately \$50 million. A conservative 5% tax would equal \$5.0 million being funneled to the Ghazni Taliban.

37. Interview with Ghazni Governor Usman Usmani, November 2008. The \$150,000 (12 million Pakistani Rupees) figure was given to the detachment from Governor Usman Usmani, who is suspected to be in competition over political and economic power with the Ghazni Tajiks. Other sources have reported that the Ghazni Tajiks make payments to the local Taliban but did not state specific figures.

38. Tom Coghlan, "Taleban Tax: allied supply convoys pay their enemies for safe passage," *Times* online, December 12, 2008, at: <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/to1/news/world/asia/article5327683.ece>>.

39. BBC, "Taleban release S Korean hostages," *BBC* online, August 29, 2007, at: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6968179.stm>>.

40. Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 73–76. Mao defines the *fourth* type of guerilla organization as the merger between small regular detachments (conventional army, in this case professional foreign fighters) and local guerrilla units. The *seventh* type of guerilla organization is that formed from bands of bandits and brigands.

41. Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 314–315. The Ghaznavid or Yamini Dynasty existed from 977–1186 A.D. Yamin ad-Dawlah Mahmud was its famous emperor who built an empire that initiated one the great renaissances of the Early Islamic Period. In the process he looted several wealthy Indian Hindu temples. Post World War II excavations by the Germans and Italians uncovered thousands of objects of archeological value. The Tajiks continue to loot the site for profit on the archeological smuggling circuit.

42. Interview with Governor Usmani. Governor Usmani would personally tell the author and other coalition elements this fact; Afghanistan Analysts Network, *Polling Day Fraud in the Afghan Elections* (Kabul: Afghanistan Analysts Network Press, 2009), p. 3. Ghazni turned out to be one of the biggest violators of election fraud, stuffing ballots with votes for "King" Karzai.

43. Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (Arlington, VA: RAND Cooperation, 2008), p. 47–48. Dr. Jones explains how criminal groups and Taliban are merging their overlapping interests and highlights the drug trade with Tajikistan-Russia, not just the more commonly known drug trade with Iran. This situation is reminiscent of Colombia's FARC shifting gradually into a narco-insurgency.

44. Note: Raees Hachem, "the Godfather," cousin of Maulana Abdur Rahman, is known to be one of the most powerful men in Ghazni Province. He owns Qalandri Construction Company, a gravel company, and a transportation company. His son was a regular face on FOB Ghazni and coordinated the delivery of all gravel trucks for the Polish Battle Group and also held the snow plowing contract from the US Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). Some locals claim that the Ghazni Tajiks are simply hardworking people who have prospered by taking advantage of economic opportunities. While this was an admirable example in capitalistic entrepreneurship, their special relationship with the Ghazni Taliban was having negative effects on COIN operations.

45. Dr. David Kilcullen's definition of *political maneuver*. The author simply wishes to highlight unity of effort. See footnote 1.

46. Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency," p. 6.



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