



ARROYO CENTER

Toward Operational Art in Special Warfare

Appendixes

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Published by the RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif.

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Preface

This report demonstrates the need for a strategic and operational approach to securing U.S. interests called *special warfare*. The United States requires new approaches for exerting influence, filling the missing middle between the limitations of distant-strike options presented by armed unmanned aerial systems and Tomahawk missiles and the costly, indefinite commitment of conventional forces.

Special warfare is an Army Special Operations Forces doctrinal term meaning the “execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment.” It includes “special operations forces conducting combinations of unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, and/or counterinsurgency through and with indigenous forces or personnel.”¹

The report has four aims: (1) to adapt conventional operational art to the unique characteristics of special warfare, (2) to identify the strategic advantages and risks associated with special warfare, (3) to explore how special warfare campaigns could be used to address challenges identified in strategic guidance, and (4) to provide guidance to military and civilian leaders and planners in designing and executing these campaigns.

This report, the second in a two-volume series, includes seven appendixes offering additional context to supplement the discussions presented in *Toward Operational Art in Special Warfare* (available at www.rand.org/t/RR779). Appendix A provides a brief overview of the evolution of operational art. Appendix B summarizes the literature on developing consensus among groups or individuals with disparate goals and approaches and explains how this could be used in special warfare planning. Appendix C reviews the resources and authorities for special warfare. Appendix D provides additional details on our data set of special warfare campaigns conducted by the United States since World War II. Appendix E presents notional special warfare campaigns that could be used to train special warfare campaign planners and assist the U.S. Department of Defense in identifying capability requirements for special warfare campaigns. Appendix F explores in greater depth the special operations activity “preparation of the environment.” Finally, Appendix G offers a detailed discussion of the recommendations presented in Chapter Six of the companion report.

This research was sponsored by LTG Charles T. Cleveland, then commanding general of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and conducted within the RAND Arroyo Cen-

¹ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *Special Operations*, Army Doctrine Publication 3-05, Washington, D.C., August 2012, p. 9.

ter's Strategy, Doctrine, and Resources Program. RAND Arroyo Center, part of the RAND Corporation, is a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the United States Army.

The Project Unique Identification Code (PUIC) for the project that produced this document is RAN136470.

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Acknowledgments

We thank LTG Charles T. Cleveland, then commanding general of U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), for sponsoring this project and for his guidance. COL Timothy Fitzgerald and Paul Tompkins at USASOC and MAJ Andrew Basquez at U.S. Army Special Forces Command provided invaluable guidance and subject-matter expertise. Jim Lane and Matt Erlacher at USASOC provided excellent support and assistance to this research.

This report greatly benefited from the thoughtful insights of MG Christopher K. Haas, LTC (ret.) Mark Grdovic, COL (ret.) Joe Celeski, COL Pat Mahaney, LTC Thomas Matelski, LTC Derek Jones, LTC Michael Kenny, Sean Ryan, and many more than can be listed here. Thanks to MAJ Ryan Agee and CWO Maurice Duclos for allowing us to build on their unconventional warfare data set. This report also greatly benefited from the insights of our RAND colleagues Arturo Muñoz, Mark Sparkman, James Quinlivan, Seth Jones, and Charles Ries.

We are grateful to the director of RAND Arroyo Center's Strategy and Resources Program, Terrence Kelly, for his valuable feedback and encouragement, as well as to Jon Welch for his work developing our special warfare data set, Matt Boyer for facilitating many of our engagements with the special operations community, and Cassandra Tate for her excellent administrative support.

Finally, thanks to the reviewers of this report: COL (ret.) Dave Maxwell, Thomas McNaugher, and Douglas Ollivant. Their suggestions and insights greatly improved the quality of this work.

Abbreviations

A2AD	anti-access/area denial
AFO	advance force operations
APEX	Adaptive Planning and Execution system
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDNE	Combined Information Data Network Exchange
COA	course of action
CONOP	concept of operations
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
DoS	U.S. Department of State
FID	foreign internal defense
FM	field manual
FY	fiscal year
GCC	geographic combatant command
GFMAP	Global Force Management Allocation Plan
GFMB	Global Force Management Board
HUMINT	human intelligence
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IDP	internally displaced person
IMET	International Military Education and Training program
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JP	joint publication
JSOTF	joint special operations task force
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines

MFP	major force program
MOA	memorandum of agreement
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OCO	overseas contingency operations
OPE	operational preparation of the environment
PE	preparation of the environment
POM	program objective memorandum
SFA	security force assistance
SOF	special operations forces
SOTF	special operations task force
TSOC	theater special operations command
UN	United Nations
USASOC	U.S. Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command
WMD	weapons of mass destruction

The Evolution of Operational Art and Insights for Special Warfare

As discussed in Chapter Three in the companion report, the evolution of operational art has been driven by several key factors. First, grand strategy may demand new operational concepts to counter new threats to a state's national security interests.¹ Second, a change in capabilities may affect how generals design campaigns to make effective use of tactical engagements and achieve strategic objectives.² Third, enemy adaptation—either matching operational innovation in symmetrical terms or choosing an asymmetric response to negate its advantages—requires the Army to be a learning organization that practices continuous innovation rather than stagnating comfortably, resting on past successes.

From Alexander to Frederick, the art of war consisted of two levels: Strategy brought armies to the point of accepting battle, and tactics determined how those battles were fought. Winning decisive battles at Marathon, Syracuse, Gaugamela, Carthage, Hastings, Orleans, Blenheim, and Leuthen was sufficient to win the war, or at least to extract a concession and gain a temporary armistice in the enduring pursuit of power.

It was not until the Napoleonic wars that the operational level of war began to emerge as the “gray area” between strategy and tactics. Napoleon brought about a revolution in military affairs by harnessing the power of nationalism and the modern state to extend war in the physical and human domains. Instead of conscripted or mercenary soldiers who fought because they feared being disciplined more than they feared the enemy, Napoleon enlisted Frenchmen who also fought for their country. Consequently, he raised larger armies and suffered less from desertion. Freed from the logistical tether of short supply lines to fixed bases, Napoleon's marshals conducted distributed, corps-level operational maneuver over larger areas. By selecting leaders based on a merit-based system, the corps moved independently yet still concentrated at the decisive time and place to win battles.

Insights for special warfare

Nationalism, religion, and culture continue to extend war in the human domain by sustaining insurgencies and affecting how the population views the United States and its partners. Information is thus an element of “combat power,” not just to synchronize fire and maneuver but also to persuade the people to offer active support to partners.

¹ James McDonough, “The Operational Art: Quo Vadis?” in Richard Hooker, Jr., ed., *Maneuver Warfare Anthology*, Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1993, p. 106.

² See Michael Krause and Cody Phillips, *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, Ft. McNair, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2005, and MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray, eds., *The Dynamics of Military Revolution 1300–2050*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

After several catastrophic defeats, the allies implemented the reforms necessary to match Napoleon. Consequently, wars no longer ended with a single “decisive battle,” though generals were slow to realize this point. The Russians lost at Borodino and Moscow but kept fighting to drive the French out of their country with help from “General Winter.” Passing the *culminating point* of the offensive, Napoleon lost an army in Russia in 1812, raised another army in Germany only to lose again at Leipzig in 1813, and raised yet another army to defend France in 1814. Thus the allies were forced to design sequential campaigns to defeat the French operational and strategic *centers of gravity*—the French army and Paris—to achieve their *end state conditions* that would restore the balance of power in Europe. These campaigns were based on geographic *lines of operation* that connected the force to the enemy through a series of *decisive points* that offered an opportunity to engage the enemy on favorable terms.

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Geographic lines of operation and decisive points may still apply in unconventional warfare. For example, the Northern Alliance with support from Task Force Dagger followed the direct approach from Mazar-e-Sharif through the Salang Tunnel to defeat the Taliban and seize Kabul. But, more frequently, *functional lines of effort* through *transition points* are an indirect approach focusing on governance, basic services, and the development of security forces and other national institutions.

However, when lines of effort focus entirely on friendly functions and ignore the enemy operational center of gravity, operational art will fail to achieve its strategic objectives. Special warfare remains a duel, one that chooses an unconventional “knife” instead of a conventional “broad-sword,” but it still requires one to defeat, neutralize, or erode the enemy’s strength to achieve success in a coordinated political-military process.

Operational art evolved with the Industrial Revolution during the American Civil War and the Prussian wars against Austria and France from 1866 to 1871. Telegraphs enabled Ulysses S. Grant and Helmuth von Moltke to coordinate the movement of their field armies in multiple theaters of operations. Railroads enabled forces to move rapidly from one theater to another, extending their *operational reach*. Technology and mass production improved the lethality of rifles and cannon, strengthening the defense as the stronger form of war. Nationalism and ideas like freedom, states’ rights, and preserving the union of U.S. and German states fueled the intensity of the wars beyond recent precedent. The origins of the U.S. and German operational art are found in their approaches to solving these problems.

General Winfield Scott’s original “Anaconda” strategy consisted of a series of campaigns designed to isolate, divide and strangle the Confederacy.³ First, a naval blockade of all ports

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Extending operational reach, U.S. Transportation Command enables the joint force to conduct operational maneuver from strategic distances and simultaneous deployment-employment. Furthermore, special operations forces (SOF) are well suited to operating in austere environments with minimal logistics requirements, while still maintaining “reachback” to national command, intelligence, logistics, and precision engagement. These capabilities can be exploited to respond promptly and initiate special warfare campaigns or punitive raids in response to a terrorist attack on the homeland.

³ Russell Weigley, *A Great Civil War*, Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 58.

would interdict shipping to cripple the Southern economy and deny external support from other countries. Second, taking control of the Mississippi River would divide the South, restrict commerce, and cut off reinforcements from the west. After spending two futile years chasing the illusory “decisive battle” with its false promise of immediate strategic success, Lincoln and Grant executed a more aggressive version of Scott’s operational design. After Vicksburg, Grant directed simultaneous offensives in the eastern and western theaters of war to apply concentric pressure and overwhelm the southern operational centers of gravity in Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia. Grant ordered Meade to pursue Lee’s army from Gettysburg through the wilderness to Richmond. He also ordered Sherman to seize Atlanta and demonstrate a willingness to impose unacceptable costs for continuing to resist. Grant’s “American way of war”—the strategy of annihilation—defeated the enemy forces and thereby preserved the Union.⁴

Insights for special warfare

As shown in Figure A.1, General Petraeus chose to name his operational design in Iraq “Anaconda,” which implies that he sought to apply concentric pressure along multiple lines of effort to isolate, divide, and defeat the enemy center of gravity—the alliances between Al Qaeda in Iraq, the Sunni insurgency, and other militant groups. To be sure, the functional lines of effort included strengthening and working with partners. But, ultimately, the joint civil-military campaign plan succeeded in reducing violence because it was successfully oriented on the enemy’s center of gravity.

The German form of operational art reflected Grant’s strategy of annihilation, but with a twist. Lincoln wanted a quick victory because he feared the erosion of popular support in a protracted war. Germany thought it *needed* a quick victory because it was surrounded

Insights for special warfare

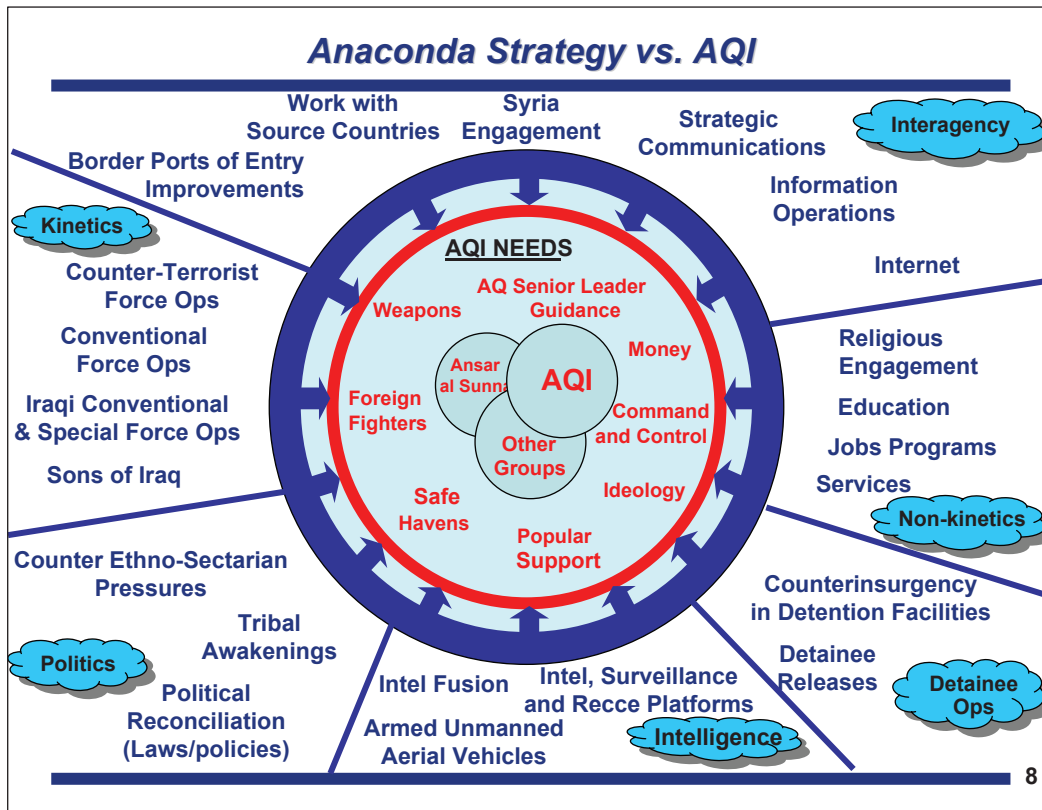
U.S. policymakers prefer quick victories even in special warfare, probably because the media were quick to claim that Afghanistan was a “quagmire” when the Taliban was not defeated by October 2001.^a Integrating SOF and precision close air support eventually tipped the military balance in U.S. partners’ favor and enabled them to conduct an offensive. But Mao’s operational art proves that attrition and exhaustion can be effective alternatives to annihilation and “rapid decisive operations” when the insurgents remain weaker than the government’s forces.^b In the first phase, characterized by vulnerability, the guerrilla force earns the people’s support, builds its strength, and harasses the enemy by attacking vulnerable targets. In the second phase, characterized by parity, the guerrilla force launches larger attacks against enemy forces and institutions. In the third phase, characterized by superiority, the guerrilla force conducts mobile warfare to defeat the enemy, seize key cities, repel the invader or overthrow the government, and assume control of the country. Variants of this approach were successfully used by Mao to defeat the Japanese and Kuomintang, by Giap to defeat South Vietnam and the United States, and by the Afghan mujahedeen to drive the Soviets from Afghanistan. In a modern application, the United States could decline to intervene directly in Syria but still support and advise the Syrian opposition to employ Mao’s guerrilla warfare to exhaust the Assad regime, Iran, and Hezbollah.

^a R. W. Apple, Jr., “A Military Quagmire Remembered: Afghanistan as Vietnam,” *New York Times*, October 30, 2001.

^b See Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Samuel B. Griffith, trans., New York: Praeger, 1961.

⁴ See chapter 3, “A Strategy of Annihilation: U.S. Grant and the Union,” in Russell Weigley, *The American Way of War*, New York: Macmillan, 1973, pp. 128–152.

Figure A.1
Anaconda Operational Design in Iraq



SOURCE: David H. Petraeus, "Multi-National Forces–Iraq: Charts to Accompany the Testimony of GEN David H. Petraeus," PowerPoint slides, April 8–9, 2008, slide 8.

NOTE: AQI = al Qaeda in Iraq.

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by hostile European powers that threatened a war of attrition on multiple fronts that would eventually overwhelm its resources. In the campaigns leading to the battles of Koniggratz and Sedan, Moltke’s general staff perfected the science of rapid mobilization, strategic deployment by railroad, and operational maneuver to concentrate on the decisive point before the enemy was fully prepared to fight.⁵ Moltke’s preferred form of maneuver was a double envelopment, or *Kesselschlacht* (“cauldron battle”), which would encircle the enemy army to prevent its retreat.

German operational art failed in World War I for both strategic and tactical reasons. Moltke (the “Elder”) understood Clausewitz’ dictum that war was a continuation of policy by other means and designed campaigns to achieve established policy objectives. However, when the Kaiser asked Moltke (“the Younger”) for a plan to defend against Russian mobilization in 1914, the German army’s chief of staff declared that it was impossible. Moltke subordinated

⁵ See Daniel Hughes, *Moltke on the Art of War*, Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1993; Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff*, New York: Praeger, 1962; Gordon Craig, *The Battle of Koniggratz: Prussia’s Victory over Austria*, New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1964; and Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War*, New York: Macmillan, 1962.

policy to war by insisting that Germany execute the Schlieffen plan and attack France first.⁶ Tactically, the development of the machine gun, indirect artillery, trenches, and barbed wire strengthened the defense. By the end of the war, the Germans had decentralized execution at the small-unit level with *Stosstrupktaktik* (infiltration tactics) and *Auftragstaktik* (“mission tactics”).⁷ They could penetrate initial defenses, but the lack of mobile reserves meant that the Germans could not exploit to operational depth because the Allies could move reserves faster by railroad to reinforce a defense in depth than the Germans could move on foot.

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U.S. foreign policy and defense strategy should drive operational concepts, not the other way around. Just because the United States has the operational capability to conduct special warfare, counterinsurgency, and stability operations, this does not mean it should if the strategic benefits are not worth the costs. Depending on the strategic context, special warfare may be a cost-effective option that falls between sanctions and strikes (which may be inconclusive) and conventional invasion and occupation (which incur significant costs and still may not succeed). For example, after a major terrorist attack on the homeland, policymakers may elect to use special warfare to impose unacceptable costs on a state sponsor of terrorism to deter future attacks while avoiding the need to conduct security, stability, transition, and reconstruction operations and deliberately accepting an unstable postconflict environment that is less directly threatening to U.S. interests.

Mission command is a natural complement to special warfare but must be adapted for U.S. forces to work with and through partners. Mission command enlists the intellectual cooperation of subordinate leaders to accomplish the mission, making it preferable to alternative methods of command by direction (leveraging information technology) or detailed plans that would be more appropriate for direct action.

The Germans were the first to implement the mechanization revolution in military affairs to advance operational art through maneuver warfare.⁸ All the pieces of the puzzle were present in 1918, but the Germans were the first to integrate the appropriate doctrine, technology, organization, and command systems to gain an operational advantage from 1939 to 1941. The Germans recognized that tanks offered the mobile, protected firepower that would enable them to reach a sufficient operational depth and restore a *Bewegungskrieg* (“war of movement”). They concentrated armor in panzer divisions, corps, and armies to encircle and annihilate large concentrations of enemy forces quickly. The effective use of radio communications, supported by forward leadership, mission command, and small-unit tactics, allowed the Germans to operate inside the enemy’s decision cycle. The principle of *Geschwindigkeit ist Sicherheit* (“speed is security”) means operating at a faster tempo before the enemy can “observe, orient, decide and act” produces fewer casualties than a deliberate, methodical battle.⁹ This form of *blitzkrieg*

⁶ Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986.

⁷ Bruce I. Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914–1918*, New York: Praeger, 1989.

⁸ See Williamson Murray and Allen Millet, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, and James Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg: Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform*, Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1992.

⁹ See William Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985, and Richard Simkin, *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare*, London: Brassey’s Defence Publishers, 1985.

(“lightning warfare”) enabled the Germans to disrupt and dislocate the enemy, thereby undermining its moral strength and will to fight. Blitzkrieg achieved success in Poland and France but failed in Russia. Why? The Germans lacked the strength and operational reach to destroy successive Russian operational centers of gravity, and its “race war” against the Slavs ensured that the Russian strategic center of gravity (that is, popular support) remained strong.

Like they did against Napoleon, the Russians refused to surrender after initial defeats. Rather, they raised new armies, perfected a superior form of “deep operations theory,” and mobilized the entire state to conduct a form of total warfare.¹⁰

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“Operational reach” in special warfare goes beyond the physical domain and geographic depth. It must necessarily extend into the human domain and affect popular support for the war. History has a sense of irony in that the Russian attitude toward the Afghans mirrored the Nazi attitude toward the Slavs, with comparable results—initial tactical success but inevitable strategic failure. The Russians provoked a religious war, causing disparate tribes and ethnic groups to endure great hardship and work toward a common goal of driving out the infidel to defend their faith.

During World War II, the United States developed a joint form of operational art that combined maneuver (including from the sea), firepower, and airpower to defeat the German and Japanese forces. But after 1945, the nuclear revolution led a number of evolutions. The strategy of annihilation was no longer rational when both sides had a survivable second-strike nuclear capability that resulted in mutual assured destruction.¹¹ This resulted in a paradox: On one hand, conventional and nuclear war between superpowers was unlikely (stability), but great power crises and limited wars with proxy states became more likely (instability). This led President Kennedy to adopt a strategy of flexible response, including conventional and special forces, combined with the risk of deliberate or general nuclear escalation. To support this strategy, U.S. operational art expanded to include both conventional and irregular warfare.¹²

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Nuclear weapons and U.S. conventional superiority will likely continue to deter war between great powers, but irregular and hybrid forms of operational art will be in demand. In particular, the “convergence” of rogue states, nuclear proliferation, regional and internal instability, and possible ties to transnational terrorist and criminal networks will continue to present a likely threat to U.S. vital interests in Asia (i.e., North Korea) and the Middle East (i.e., Iran, Syria, Yemen).

¹⁰ See David M. Glantz, *Soviet Military Operational Art: In Pursuit of Deep Battle*, New York: Frank Cass Publishing, 1991, and James J. Schneider, *The Structure of Strategic Revolution: Total War and the Roots of the Soviet Warfare State*, Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1994.

¹¹ See Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957; Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959; Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966; and Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989.

¹² Irregular warfare obviously existed prior to this. It is older than conventional warfare and was practiced by some American revolutionaries (Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*, New York: Liverlight Publishing Corporation, 2013). Under Kennedy, it was institutionalized in a military that had not given it much prominence.

Misunderstanding the nature of the revolutionary struggle in Vietnam, the United States decided to intervene, initially with advisers but subsequently with conventional combat forces when South Vietnam remained at risk. Unfortunately,

The Army's attitude on Vietnam was one of general disinterest in applying counterinsurgency principles. . . . Priority was given to the destruction of guerrilla forces through large-scale operations. . . . As time passed, the Army's reliance on technological solutions would increase in an attempt to make up for its strategic shortcomings.¹³

Giap countered with an effective form of Mao's revolutionary warfare that employed both conventional infantry regiments and irregular guerrillas. Giap's operational art was an indirect approach that struck directly at the U.S. strategic center of gravity. His aim was to cause casualties and continue the struggle until the U.S. popular and political will to fight was exhausted. During the Tet Offensive, Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford asked the Joint Chiefs a critical question that exposed the lack of operational art in the U.S. approach to the conflict: "Well, then, can anyone give me an idea when we could bring the war to a conclusion? What is our plan for a military victory in Vietnam?"¹⁴ Secretary Clifford discovered that there was no campaign plan or operational art; instead, Army forces executed a strategy of tactics based largely on conventional maneuver and firepower that failed to achieve strategic objectives in revolutionary war. That said, there were attempts to learn and apply counterinsurgency principles, captured in the 1962 version of Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*, and in FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*.¹⁵ There were also successes with "Vietnamization" late in the war, but South Vietnam was too weak to survive without U.S. advisers, airpower, and financial resources.

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The United States faced a decision point in Afghanistan in 2002 that was similar to the one it faced in Vietnam in 1964: whether to introduce more conventional forces to conduct counterinsurgency and stability operations or to continue with special forces advising partners in foreign internal defense (FID). In both cases, policymakers set maximalist objectives: to prevent the "communist threat" from overwhelming South Vietnam and to "prevent the return" of al Qaeda to Afghanistan, along with its Taliban allies. Policymakers chose escalation to minimize the political risk of failure by "surging" conventional forces to reverse North Vietnamese and Taliban momentum. Policymakers discovered later that the long-term costs were not worth the transitory benefits when the enemy refused to surrender, especially when policy constraints limited the ability to defeat enemy operational centers of gravity in safe havens in North Vietnam and Pakistan in the respective conflicts. In both cases, policymakers eventually elected to transition responsibility for security to the host nation and withdraw combat forces. In retrospect, it would have been a more rational use of military power to set more modest objectives, accept risk, and retain an operational approach based on a special warfare campaign. In Vietnam, this may have meant accepting the fall of South Vietnam while defending Thailand, a more competent partner. In Afghanistan, this may have meant accepting de facto partition with Taliban-controlled areas but supporting the Northern Alliance and friendly Pashtun tribes to prevent the Taliban from seizing power and preserving bases to conduct counterterrorism operations and contest safe havens.

¹³ Andrew Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, p. 56.

¹⁴ Krepinevich, 1986, p. 245.

¹⁵ John Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002, p. 126.

After Vietnam, the Army refocused its conventional forces on the mission to deter war in Europe and Korea. To prevent the Soviets from achieving a rapid *fait accompli* in Europe, and to reduce the reliance on a first-use nuclear strike resulting from a conventional imbalance, the United States developed a new form of operational art called AirLand Battle, which was defined in the 1982 and 1986 versions of FM 100-5, *Operations*. While its origins were rooted in maneuver-warfare theory, its goals were more ambitious with respect to deep battle. Faced with the threat of second echelons that could penetrate a defense, the Air Force and Army sought to combine strategic air attack, air interdiction, close air support, deep attacks by helicopters, and deep fires by long-range artillery to disrupt and degrade Soviet forces in depth. Simultaneously exploiting the offensive capability offered by M1-series Abrams tanks and M2-series Bradley fighting vehicles, Army forces would seize the initiative by counterattacking through envelopment or turning movements to disrupt, dislocate, and destroy large enemy formations.

Following the decisive debut of AirLand Battle against Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War, the Joint Staff issued *Joint Vision 2010* to guide the next step in joint warfighting. The “information revolution in military affairs” was oversold with respect to “lifting the fog of war” and providing “perfect near-real-time situational awareness,” at least at the tactical level of land warfare in complex terrain. But the idea of leveraging information superiority to conduct dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics, and full-dimensional protection at the operational level was sound, as success in the early phases of Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrated.¹⁶ Subsequent evolutions in joint doctrine sought to expand joint integration through tactical teams with shared situational awareness and access to joint intelligence and fires.

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SOF will still have a role in this “classical” form of operational art against conventional adversaries by conducting special reconnaissance and direct action. But the real application of the “information RMA” is to enable small detachments operating with partners in unconventional warfare and FID. A small footprint offers large returns that may tip the balance in the coalition’s favor by giving partners the advantages of joint intelligence, communications, fires, transportation, and logistics.

After the Cold War, the United States adopted a grand strategy of comprehensive engagement to deter regional aggression, promote democracy, and protect human rights. Strategy thus placed new demands on operational art to address new ways to achieve strategic objectives across the full spectrum of operations. The last chapter of the 1993 version of FM 100-5 included the following principles of “operations other than war”: objective, unity of effort, legitimacy, perseverance, restraint, and security.¹⁷ Building on its experience in the Balkans and Kosovo, the Army’s 2001 version of FM 3-0, *Operations*, was revolutionary in its description of the simultaneous nature of full-spectrum operations:

Commanders combine and sequence offensive, defensive, stability and support operations to accomplish the mission. . . . Throughout the campaign, [they] occur simultaneously. As the mission changes from promoting peace to deterring war and from resolving conflict to

¹⁶ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010*, Washington, D.C., 1996.

¹⁷ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 100-5, Washington, D.C., June 1993.

war itself, the combinations and transitions between these operations require skillful assessment and planning. . . . Commanders allocate different proportions of their force to each type of operation during different phases of a mission.¹⁸

Thus, the Army went to war after 9/11 with suitable capstone doctrine that described a realistic framework for operational art in complex conflicts. It represented a significant step toward a unified conceptual framework of operational art broad enough to encompass the full range of military operations but specific enough to offer useful ideas. Unfortunately, it was not used as the basis for developing and approving campaign plans at U.S. Central Command and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

Insights for special warfare

First, all land conflicts have involved some combination of offensive, defensive, stability, support, and special operations in varying proportions over time according to the changing nature of the mission and enemy context. Therefore, SOF commanders and planners should think about how to integrate special warfare within a larger campaign construct at the combatant command level—specifically, whether special warfare should be the decisive or shaping effort. Second, when advising partners in unconventional and FID, SOF should consider how partners may arrange effective combinations of offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations over time.

While the United States was engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Israelis discovered that Hezbollah had developed a new form of operational art. Or, perhaps more accurately, Hezbollah had combined elements of different art forms in a hybrid model and benefited from the skillful media exploitation of Israeli mistakes. At the strategic level, Hezbollah was a state within a state that made defense policy and offered basic services to gain and maintain Shi'a support. At the operational level, Hezbollah had both irregular guerrillas and a form of conventional militia. At the tactical level, it defended complex terrain in depth, with obstacles covered by fire, including antitank missiles and mortars. Yet, its form of operational art relied on the effective use of information operations to appeal to Muslims while simultaneously degrading Israeli popular support.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had embraced a complicated form of systemic operational design, a type of general system theory akin to the U.S. version of effects-based operations that most Israeli officers did not understand. In fact, according to Milan Vego,

The empirical evidence of successful application of systemic operational design outside Israel simply does not exist. In the Lebanon conflict, [systemic operational design] was a major, although not the only, factor in the Israel Defense Forces' distinct failure to achieve victory over a much weaker opponent. This was the reason the IDF subsequently abandoned [the approach] and returned to a well-proven traditional operational planning process.²⁰

¹⁸ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 3-0, Washington, D.C., June 2001.

¹⁹ See Andrew Exum, *Hizballah at War: A Military Assessment*, Policy Focus No. 63, Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, December 2006.

²⁰ Milan N. Vego, "A Case Against Systemic Operational Design," *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 53, 2nd Quarter 2009, p. 75. See also David E. Johnson, Michael Spirtas, and Ghassan Schbley, *Rediscovering the Full Range of Military Operations*, unpublished RAND research, 2009.

Insights for special warfare

The Army adopted a variant of systemic operational design in U.S. Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5-500, *Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design*, published in January 2008. The Army Capabilities Integration Center introduced it as "a cognitive model intended for use by commanders charged with designing, planning and executing military campaigns."^a As it is a form of intelligence preparation of the environment (PE), it is useful to understand complex systems and how they might be targeted. But just as the Israelis discovered, as a form of operational art, design methodology fails to provide a sufficient conceptual framework to recognize what is decisive and to design campaign plans to achieve strategic objectives. It should be considered as complement to, but not a substitute for, operational art.

^a U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design*, Pamphlet 525-5-500, 2008.

Collaborative Planning for Unified Action

In this appendix, we present a summary of the literature on developing consensus among groups or individuals with disparate goals and approaches and examine how these concepts could be used in special warfare planning. We note that some of these constructs are quite different from how conventional campaigns are planned.

Today's complex and uncertain security environment requires campaign plans to be flexible and adapt as operations unfold. Special warfare efforts benefit from greater joint and inter-agency support when key partners are involved in the planning process. This implies a need for understanding how to network and collaborate with relevant stakeholders in support of special warfare campaigns. This outreach will have to be tempered by operational security concerns, particularly in the case of compartmentalized clandestine activities, but even then, engagement with other elements of the U.S. government will be especially important.¹

In addition to the cited research, the collaborative approach described here was informed by the experience of a member of the RAND research team in standing up a joint interagency task force in Iraq, managing U.S. Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM's) interagency task force, and designing operational-level SOF staff organizations in Afghanistan, as well as professional experience in collaborative planning in theater special operations command (TSOC) and embassy environments.

As discussed in Chapter Four of the companion report, special warfare planning at the operational level requires the integration of diverse stakeholder equities to achieve unity of effort. To help address these challenges, we outline several features of successful multistakeholder initiatives:

- purpose: a specific issue, challenge, opportunity, or possibility that concerns all participants and provides the reason for convening
- people: network of multiple state and nonstate actors, including representatives from government, business, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and civil society
- place: a space where participants meet in person (and, as needed, virtually) to collaborate
- process: a system of shared inquiry, learning, problem-solving, and (potentially) decision-making in new ways that addresses stakeholder concerns.²

¹ Interview by the research team, February 14, 2013.

² Matthew Markopoulos, *Collaboration and Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue: A Review of the Literature*, version 1.1, Gland, Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Forest Conservation Programme, March 2012, p. 3.

Purpose

The purpose is twofold: the overall aim of a special warfare endeavor and the intentions of individuals participating in the special warfare initiative. Given the diversity of the U.S. government agencies that may be involved in the campaign, not all may have the same objectives or priorities. Stakeholder perspectives influence the way they view problems, opportunities, and other participants. Understanding these stakeholder perspectives and developing an explicit common purpose can help focus the design of a special warfare endeavor and attract the right mix of stakeholders.

One way to understand different stakeholder perspectives is by gaining an appreciation for what they care about. The sense of urgency and perceived importance of shared concerns will play a decisive role in whether or not stakeholders come to the table. The “build it and they will come” notion works if planners create a special warfare campaign that attracts a high level of interest among stakeholders and is designed to address their key issues.

Some groups may see the special warfare initiative in terms of gaining or losing power. Others may see it as a way of increasing or decreasing stability and order. Clear outcomes and results will be more significant to some of the participants. Much of the art and science of special warfare operational planning has to do with the skillful meshing of these multiple perspectives.

For example, an individual or group that primarily values achievement generally respects the status of other stakeholders and often behaves in a competitive manner. Such individuals and groups generally view collaborative planning from the viewpoint that meritocracy should be the dominant force at play. When it comes to driving results or producing outcomes, achievement-oriented people can be counted on during a special warfare planning process. Table B.1 outlines this example, along with other key operating principles at work within individuals and groups. This framework can help those involved with the special warfare enterprise in working with the variety of different perspectives among stakeholders.

Understanding why stakeholders want to participate in a planning working group can help focus the planning and give a sense of the potential level of commitment of stakehold-

Table B.1
Stakeholder Characteristics and Collaboration Efforts

Stakeholder Orientation	Stakeholder Value/Motivation	Stakeholder View of Collaboration	Planning Considerations	Advantages for the Planning Process
Power-oriented/rebellious	Power/survival	Survival of the fittest	Spontaneity, risk, impulsive behavior	Brainstorm, take bold steps
Traditional/authoritarian	Order/security	Positional power	Stability, tradition, clear rules	Set ground rules and agendas
Competitive/achievement-oriented	Success/independence	Meritocracy	Status, goals, results, competition	Turn ideas into action, generate outcomes
Egalitarian/pluralistic	Social networks/affiliation	Organizations of equals for mutual benefits	Tolerance/consensus-building	Build and sustain relationships
Integrative	Process/systemic flow	Interdependence of complex systems	Integration and alignment of systems	Manage complexity and create synthesis

ers. Participant perspectives shape the parameters of the initiative. The diversity of stakeholder mindsets helps designers understand how participants view the world, the special warfare challenge, and cooperation in general. This analysis can identify possible points of friction and help facilitators find ways to bridge differences. A clear articulation of stakeholder purpose and orientation helps scope the general direction of the special warfare effort. Operational-level planners should be on the lookout for participants who are genuinely committed to the issue at hand and, ideally, value collaboration as a meaningful way to address their challenge. With this vision in hand, the planner can then consider the people, place, process, and practices best suited to generating beneficial outcomes for all parties concerned.

People

The lead special warfare planning group includes the sponsors who provide a vision and the convening authority, along with resources that bring together a diverse group without a common chain of command. Stakeholders form an inclusive group of those participating in addressing the special warfare challenge. It may be good practice to provide facilitators to support the operational design process so that stakeholders can listen to and learn from each other. Narrative developers capture the narrative of the special warfare process and assessors from the management team evaluate outcomes. These roles should be addressed but should not be taken as a requirement for contractor support. The size, structure, and roles of these different elements vary depending on the nature of the collaborative effort, the complexity of the special warfare issue, the needs (and size) of stakeholder groups, and available resources.

The success of a multistakeholder collaborative project “will depend above all on the people . . . [as they] will have the greatest influence on the content and consequences of the process and will also be most influenced by it.”³ Inviting people with suitable skills, values, experiences, and perspectives that best fit the special warfare challenge will produce relevant benefits. This applies to the core team that is managing the campaign plan, the participants in the stakeholder group, the facilitators who guide the collaborative process, and the narrative developers who capture the narrative. Operational-level planners want a diverse and inclusive range of stakeholders who mirror the complex system in which they operate.

Facilitators

In addition to the lead planning team, facilitators play an integral role in a special warfare operational design endeavor. They provide three key functions:

- process guide
- neutral party
- process educator.⁴

³ Adam Kahane, *Working Together to Change the Future: Transformative Scenario Planning*, San Francisco, Calif.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2012, p. 33.

⁴ David Strauss, *How to Make Collaboration Work: Powerful Ways to Build Consensus, Solve Problems, and Make Decisions*, San Francisco, Calif.: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002, p. 117.

A skilled facilitator works closely with stakeholders to guide the planning process. He or she co-creates the steps with the participants to systemically address their challenges. Facilitators help frame the discussion, set the ground rules, and support the dialogue. They pay attention to the needs of the group, recommending breaks and transitions accordingly. Blending time constraints, desired outcomes, and emerging developments, facilitators manage the delicate balance of people, process, and results. Facilitators enable the stakeholders with a flexible structure that supports dialogue throughout the phases of planning.

In a special warfare planning situation, facilitators will likely come from one of the stakeholder organizations, but acting as a neutral party supports the facilitator's ability to guide a process and enable breakthroughs. Facilitators should not provide substantive input to the process and should be careful not to take anyone's side. Instead, they need to focus on the process and help patiently guide it in support of the purpose of the special warfare planning enterprise. They also intervene on behalf of any participant, regardless of group, if verbal attacks ensue. Facilitators gain the confidence of stakeholders by actively including all perspectives in the room, not favoring any particular group, and keeping their personal opinions out of the discussion.

Facilitators can earn legitimacy by sharing their knowledge and educating stakeholders on process-related issues. For example, reinforcing the agreed-upon rules for conflict resolution may not be enough in some instances. If skills are missing in the room, the facilitator may need to coach participants on how to resolve a conflict. In other situations, a group may not have an agreed-upon way to solve a problem or have the know-how to generate future scenarios. The facilitator can train the group in these areas and employ exercises to familiarize stakeholders with new ways to tackle challenges. Experienced facilitators also model positive behavior, thus showing stakeholders by example how to manage the special warfare planning process.

Facilitators play a vital role in the enterprise. Their expertise and embodiment of collaborative behavior support a variety of functions that may be required over the course of a special warfare initiative. Designers and facilitators work closely together throughout the process to align stakeholder interests, needs, and capabilities in support of the overarching objectives of the operational design.

Stakeholders

Critical to the planning and coordination of a special warfare campaign is the identification of stakeholders. Kahane recommends that participants be

- insightful, influential, and committed
- people with a stake in the (success of) the future of the system and have a range of positions and connections (from business, government, and civil society)
- respected leaders of their own organizations, sectors, or communities
- curious, systemic thinkers who are willing and able to reflect and speak freely and openly
- energetic and action-oriented (not just spectators or followers) and able take the insights from the project and act on them in their own spheres of influence
- from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives (sectoral, ideological, professional, geographic, and so on, stretching beyond the usual participants in such activities, including those with different or dissenting views).⁵

⁵ Kahane, p. 33.

While special warfare campaign planners will likely have to work with those sent to represent their organizations, they should emphasize that collaborative forums are geared toward participants who want to roll up their sleeves and do the tough work necessary to make a difference. Lessons from a comprehensive assessment of more than 200 wide-ranging cases of collaboration demonstrate that “individuals involved in successful collaborative processes were entrepreneurial. They established relationships, secured resources and institutional support, marketed their effort, and pushed for effective implementation.”⁶ Entrepreneurially oriented stakeholders should be invited, since they tend to be innovative and willing to take risks, learn, and adapt.

Collaboration is not a “spectator sport.” Just showing up to a special warfare planning event to listen, take notes, and report back to one’s parent organization is not enough. Ideal participants are those who want to contribute to the effort, share knowledge, broaden their experiences, and apply their learning to the problem or opportunity at hand.

If it is possible to influence who represents stakeholders, it is useful to note that representatives deep within an organization or community who are focused on maintaining the status quo may not be the best initial choice if their parent organizations have not yet committed to “unified action.” Rohr argues that “practical truth is more likely found at the bottom and the edges than at the top or the center of most groups, institutions, and cultures.”⁷ People who are comfortable operating at the edge of their respective groups make superb participants in a collaborative effort. These organizational border-crossers have the ability and motivation to look within and outside their formal groups and find resources that support their institutional goals. They can also translate new ideas and possibilities that stakeholders from other groups are voicing in a way that may be less threatening to their colleagues charged with protecting status quo. They are loyal to their organizations and, at the same time, want to see their respective organizations grow and adapt in support of the special warfare planning process. Stakeholders who know the needs and concerns of their respective organizations, are aware of their surrounding environment, and want to explore alternatives are excellent candidates for a special warfare campaign initiative.

Another aspect to consider is attracting participants who have power, relationships, knowledge, and the ability to collaborate.⁸ Participants with power can make decisions for their organizations and help implement new initiatives with the resources they manage. Stakeholders with strong relationships and social networks can help generate momentum and connect people with needs to those with resources. Contributors with moral authority and expertise in law or ethics can assist with managing grievances and inequalities that arise. A special warfare planning endeavor will benefit from stakeholders who are knowledgeable of the issues at hand, as well as those who have influence or resources that can facilitate positive outcomes.

As planners identify stakeholders, roles and responsibilities become important. Identifying the representatives who have decisionmaking authority in their groups, for example, is key for facilitators and conveners. Some participants may provide critical ideas and input but lack

⁶ Steven L. Yaffee and Julia M. Wollendenck, “Making Collaboration Work,” *Conservation Biology in Practice*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2000, pp. 23–24.

⁷ This is one of the eight core principles of Richard Rohr’s Center for Action and Contemplation, as described on his website (see Center for Action and Contemplation, “Mission and Vision,” web page, undated).

⁸ Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* annual report delivered at the 11th Convention of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Atlanta, Ga., August 16, 1967.

the ability to carry them out. Some may be present for the whole process while others come and go. Knowing who speaks with authority and under what parameters stakeholders are participating will assist facilitators as the special warfare campaign process unfolds. In any event, planners should seek a stakeholder constituency with influence, passion, and competence to be involved in the process up front.

Stakeholders form the core of the special warfare campaign enterprise. They mirror the complex system in which they interact and face challenges of mutual interest. Given the issue at hand and diversity of participants, stakeholder groups exhibit varying levels of will and capacity. Some contributing organizations share values that align closely with the special warfare challenge. Other groups have access to relevant resources (e.g., expertise, financial support, political influence) to help make a positive contribution to the special warfare challenge. Border crossers exhibit varying degrees of participation and decisionmaking authority, depending on the values of their organizations and the relative importance of the issues to their group. Planners and facilitators make the most of their talents to attract an inclusive group of diverse stakeholders who are committed to discovering mutual concerns and new possibilities.

Narrative Developers

Another key player in the special warfare planning enterprise is the person (or people) who will document the process. Hemmati recommends that “rapporteurs (or persons responsible for reporting on the group’s activities) need to be assigned beforehand and agreed upon by the group, as the documentation process itself.”⁹ While the participating organization may issue its own “orders” (which could be military orders, contracts, or other vehicles), it is useful to document a common understanding of what is to be done for use by all stakeholders. Taking notes will help capture the content of the forums and provide a historical artifact to build upon in future engagements. One can use the term *narrative developer* because most special warfare scenarios deal with difficult challenges and generate many interesting anecdotes and engaging encounters. Graphic artists are well suited to portraying the flow of the meetings, and writers can also capture the vivid details of the unfolding process. Having writers and artists participate as invited stakeholders in the ongoing dialogue may be an organic way to co-create the special warfare narrative. At the very minimum, note-takers should be a formal part of the process to record and share the proceedings.

Place

Where special warfare planning occurs influences the outcomes. While individual organizations will do their own planning in places appropriate for their roles (e.g., a secure compartmented information facility, a contract office, a mud hut), there is also a need for all stakeholders to meet in a place that furthers collective planning. Participants need a safe space where they share their unique perspectives and work out differences. A comfortable and relaxed environment invites participants to open up and generate creative solutions to the challenges they face. An inclusive place of belonging helps stakeholders relax and share their perspectives with one another. Logistical support and venue selection should promote openness, transparency,

⁹ Minu Hemmati, *Multistakeholder Processes for Governance and Sustainability*, London: Earthscan Publications, 2002, p. 239.

and the sharing of ideas. The wise use of space and seating arrangements can break down barriers and create new connections between diverse stakeholders. Creating the space for diverse people to connect, socialize, reflect, and learn from each other is fundamental in special warfare operational design.

Process

Just as careful consideration for the selection of participants and place are critical factors in successful operational design, the process that stakeholders use also requires thoughtful planning. The special warfare planning process should encourage stakeholders to listen to and respect each other, suspend judgment, and explore new possibilities as best they can. Although this approach may appear linear at first glance, the reader ought to view the planning working group process as a series of learning loops that evolve over time in support of the needs of the group. To enable sustainable change, collaborative dialogue needs to be an iterative process, not a one-off meeting or singular event. Stakeholder development steps might include the following:

- pre-working group planning and engagements
- working group development
- framing the challenge
- documenting the challenge and solution (e.g., visual, narrative)
- contingency planning
- pilot projects
- implementation
- post-working group planning
- sustaining momentum and continuity (e.g., active community of interest).

Prior to face-to-face meetings, planners conduct interviews to help them understand the issues and challenges that shape the purpose of the forum. They check out potential locations for the meetings. Conveners also begin to identify facilitators, narrative developers, and stakeholders.

After preparation is complete, then conveners move into the execution phase. They establish a safe container, and facilitators support a shared inquiry about the challenges that the participants collectively face. Stakeholders map their complex context to visualize their interdependent environment and shared concerns. Given the complexity of special warfare planning, the process cannot be rigid or strictly linear. Instead, it should offer a flexible pathway with space to accommodate whatever unfolds organically among stakeholders.

The stakeholder dialogue shifts as they move through a process of group development. As group dynamics mature, conversations about new possibilities may foster future scenario development. Searching for common ground can also lead participants to look for ways to actively apply their learning and improve their current situation. In either event, stakeholders develop pilot projects or prototype experiments based on superordinate goals that take into account the concerns of all the stakeholders to co-create a new future. Conversations that clarify roles and responsibilities for these collective action plans promote mutual respect and can pave the

way to building trust among stakeholders. As participants honor their commitments with their actions, they create new possibilities for their collective future.

The special warfare planning process creates a series of learning cycles in which practitioners consider new ideas and prototype possibilities. They periodically consider what is working well to maximize success. This methodology supports participants during rough spots as well as when a dialogue is producing positive results. An effective planning process provides a flexible structure that supports learning, builds relationships, manages conflict, and facilitates beneficial outcomes.

After face-to-face meetings, the special warfare enterprise assesses outcomes and shares the narrative. This operational design endeavor is an iterative process, not a stand-alone event, so all those involved in the process proactively seek ways to build continuity between events and build on successes to create momentum. Having a dedicated person (or people) to manage the community of stakeholders, share updates, and promote progress helps keep people connected and the collaborative spirit alive.

Resources and Authorities for Special Warfare

Understanding the authorities and resource processes that govern and enable special warfare will help commanders more effectively secure the capabilities and permissions necessary to successfully execute a special warfare campaign.

Although Title 10 of the U.S. Code and DoD Directive 5100.01 designate USSOCOM as a unified combatant command, it holds “department-like” responsibilities as a force provider for the geographic combatant commands (GCCs), including “organizing, training, equipping, and providing combat-ready personnel.”¹ The GCCs are responsible for special operations activities or missions within their geographic area, though the President or the Secretary of Defense may direct the commander of USSOCOM to exercise command of specific special operations missions.² In part because of statutory activities designated toward SOF, in the past decade, USSOCOM has been designated the lead combatant command for synchronizing “planning for global operations against terrorist networks.”³ The commander of USSOCOM is also the joint proponent for security force assistance, which entails the development of joint doctrine, training, and education, as well as assisting in the development of global joint-sourcing solutions to validate the security force assistance (SFA) requirements of GCC commanders.⁴ These responsibilities, coupled with an increased demand for SOF capabilities in the areas of unconventional warfare and FID, have led to SOF’s increased convergence with both general-purpose forces’ and interagency partners’ authorities and funding. This overlapping patchwork of authorities that govern SOF activities often requires SOF commanders to “cobble together a collection of authorities, each with unique stakeholders and approval and notification processes,” with “mismatched timelines and multiple points of potential management friction.”⁵ With a potential increase in demand for SOF and special warfare capabilities in the future, it is imperative that SOF, as well as conventional force commanders, pursue

¹ U.S. Special Operations Command, *Doctrine for Special Operations*, USSOCOM Publication 1, MacDill AFB, Fla., August 5, 2011, p. 11.

² 10 U.S.C. 167d, Command of Activity or Mission, para. (1).

³ Quoted in Eric T. Olson, “U.S. Special Operations: Context and Capabilities in Irregular Warfare,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 56, 1st Quarter 2010, p. 66. The DoD Unified Command Plan as a whole is classified, though the passages within it are not.

⁴ U.S. Department of Defense Instruction 5000.68, *Security Force Assistance*, October 27, 2010.

⁵ Michael Sheehan, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, *Future Authorities That May Be Necessary for Special Operations Forces to Adequately Conduct Counterterrorism, Unconventional Warfare, and Irregular Warfare Missions: Report to Congress in Compliance with the Reporting Requirement Contained in Sub-Section (d) of Section 1203 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2012 (P.L. 112-81)*, January 11, 2013, p. 8.

special warfare operational art with a working knowledge of these authorities and reporting requirements.

Requests for Forces and Force Management

Prior to the decision to execute, TSOCs will not typically have sufficient forces assigned to them to conduct a special warfare campaign. For planning purposes, planners will need to use the force management process to identify what forces they could plausibly employ, when they might receive them, and how to successfully request them. A GCC staff might spend three months developing an order for the TSOC to develop a special warfare plan, giving the TSOC itself an additional three months to plan. Assuming the plan is approved and the request for forces submitted, it may take an additional six to eight months for the Joint Staff to process the request and deploy the required forces. This results in roughly a year of planning before the force that will be executing the plan becomes involved. In the meantime, if the original plan was attached to a particular window of opportunity, both the plan and the request may be rendered moot. This timeline creates a moral hazard, incentivizing GCCs to employ assigned forces that are optimized for non-special warfare missions but that they can employ immediately. These dynamics highlight the requirement for planners to understand the force management process.

Under DoD Directive 5100.01, USSOCOM has the responsibility “as the SOF joint force provider responsible for identifying and recommending global joint sourcing solutions to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the Military Service Chiefs and other combatant commanders, from all SOF and capabilities, and supervising implementation of sourcing decisions.”⁶ Currently, USSOCOM has little authority over force requirements within GCCs, which complicates the USSOCOM commander’s ability to globally manage the force. GCCs submit requests for forces for SOF personnel, and USSOCOM, in turn, passes these requests to its components to provide forces (or occasionally requests relief from the tasking). The sharp increase in demand for SOF by 2004, however, led USSOCOM to hold conferences with a global focus to help manage its overall SOF deployments. After a first limited iteration in fiscal year (FY) 2007, General Bryan Brown released the first Global SOF Deployment Order in FY 2008 that covered all SOF deployments overseas for both operations and training, though GCCs still could formally request forces to meet their operational requirements.⁷

Overall DoD force management occurs through the Global Force Management Process, which is overseen by the Joint Staff through the Global Force Management Board (GFMB). The board meets quarterly and produces a final Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMAP) annually.⁸ The plan, contingent on approval by the Secretary of Defense, authorizes force allocations and the deployment of forces in support of the combatant commander’s

⁶ U.S. Department of Defense Directive 5100.01, *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components*, December 21, 2010, p. 23.

⁷ U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command History: 1987–2007*, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., 2007, p. 26.

⁸ Heather Peterson and Joe Hogler, *Understanding Country Planning: A Guide for Air Force Component Planners*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, TR-1186-AF, 2012.

rotational force requirements. As a joint force provider, USSOCOM is responsible for publishing the GFMAP Annex Schedule, which is the deployment order that directs USSOCOM to deploy forces at certain times.⁹

At its first annual meeting, usually in February, the GFMB reviews the National Security Strategy, the National Military Strategy, the Guidance for Employment of the Force, and the Chairman's Risk Assessment. According to this strategic guidance, the combatant commanders submit their rotational force requirements for the following fiscal year, which the board reviews around May. After review, the GFMB sends a prioritized list of the rotational force requirements to joint force providers, including USSOCOM, for recommendations and assessments based on their ability to source the requirements. These recommendations can include the following:

- Global sourcing, identification of the recommended force(s), and the Service and/or combatant command furnishing the force to the supported commander.
- Capability substitution recommendation(s) or action(s) taken.
- Mobilization action(s) required that allow the Service or supporting [combatant commander] to provide the requested forces.
- Report of risk associated with global sourcing options based on benchmarks designated by the [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] and the combatant commands or Services.
- Sustainability assessment.
- Force availability adjustments required to sustain an acceptable level of available capabilities and forces needed to satisfy validated combatant command requests for capabilities and forces.¹⁰

The joint force provider presents recommendations and assessments to the GFMB around August, and, after additional adjustments based on various input, the GFMB submits the final GFMAP for the Secretary of Defense's approval in November. For contingencies that require additional force requests, the Joint Staff can also assemble a GFMB outside the annual cycle for contingencies, though the roles and responsibilities remain the same despite condensed timelines.¹¹ To provide forces outlined in the GFMAP, the Special Operations Force Generation process helps align forces and service-provided capabilities into packages (special operations joint task forces) for crisis response, limited contingency operations, and major contingency operations.¹²

Although USSOCOM's primary responsibility during the GFMAP process is sourcing recommendations for meeting the combatant commander's force requirements, SOF still plays a role in assisting all phases of the GCC's deliberate planning and crisis action plans. And although the SOF role can take many forms, the TSOC commander is the principal instrument for GCC engagement, serving as a component commander and the principal theater special operations adviser. The TSOC commander can advise on the concept development,

⁹ Joint Forces Staff College, "Introduction to Global Force Management," course materials on the joint operation planning process, March 3, 2012, slide 12.

¹⁰ Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, U.S. Army War College, *Campaign Planning Handbook*, Carlisle, Pa., 2013, p. B-4.

¹¹ Peterson and Hogler, 2012. See also Joint Forces Staff College, 2012.

¹² U.S. Special Operations Command, 2011.

planning, support, and sustainment considerations for operations plans, theater campaign plans, subordinate campaign plans, and theater security cooperation plans. In terms of force planning, the TSOC commander also recommends initial SOF force lists and time-phased force and deployment data.¹³ Organizations to facilitate planning between the TSOC and the GCC can take any number and type of structures, including boards, centers, teams, and cells, though any organization must include critical coordination and liaison elements.¹⁴ SOF have also played key roles in interagency task forces and, recognizing the importance of interagency collaboration in many special warfare missions, have embedded representatives at such key organizations as the U.S. Department of State (DoS), the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

General DoD Funding

USSOCOM and its components have access to a wide variety of funding sources for FID and unconventional warfare. Generally, however, the defense program developed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense outlines the DoD resources programmed for each fiscal year. The plan includes six combat-related major force programs (MFPs) and five support-related MFPs.¹⁵ Funding for SOF operations typically entails a mix of MFP-2 and MFP-11 funding (defined below). For SOF, Title 10 established MFP-11, which stipulates that the budget request of USSOCOM shall include requests for funding for

1. Development and acquisition of *special operations—peculiar* equipment; and
2. Acquisition of other material, supplies, or services that are *peculiar to special operations* activities.¹⁶

Special operations acquisition, therefore, is limited to equipment, materiel, supplies, or services that provide capabilities unique to SOF operations. As SOF have limited organic logistics, medical, and other enabling support capacities, they must rely on the military services for service-common equipment, material, supplies, or services, which are funded through MFP-2 funding for conventional forces. According to Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations*,

Logistic support of SOF units is the responsibility of their parent Service, except where otherwise agreed or directed. Services support SOF units whether the SOF unit is assigned

¹³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Special Operations Targeting and Mission Planning*, Joint Publication 3-05.2, Washington, D.C., May 21, 2003, p. III-3.

¹⁴ Coordination elements include the special operations command-and-control element for the coordination of command and control and activities with conventional forces, the special operations liaison element to provide coordination with the joint force air component commander, and other SOF liaison officers.

¹⁵ An MFP is

an aggregation of program elements that reflects a force or support mission of DoD and contains the resources necessary to achieve an objective or plan. It reflects fiscal time-phasing of mission objectives to be accomplished and the means proposed for their accomplishment. (Defense Acquisition University, *Glossary of Defense Acquisition Acronyms and Terms*, 15th ed., December 2012)

¹⁶ 10 U.S.C. 167e, Authority of Combatant Commander, para. (4)(A)(I-II); emphasis added.

to the Service component, the TSOC, JFSOCC [joint force special operations component commander], or a JSOTF [joint special operations task force].¹⁷

To facilitate this support, the Atwood Memorandum of 1989 provided guidance to “serve as the basis for preparing POM [program objective memorandum]- and Budget-related Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) that are necessary to delineate responsibilities between [the USSOCOM commander] and the Military Departments.”¹⁸ Existing MOAs, however, have failed to eradicate disputes between SOF and the services, GCCs, and other service component commands over whether a certain support capability constitutes a “SOF-peculiar” or “service-common” capability.¹⁹ To address this, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2012 required each secretary of a military department to annually enter into an MOA with USSOCOM, either through an annex to an existing MOA or a completely separate MOA, that “identifies or establishes processes and associated milestones by which numbers and types of enabling capabilities of the general purpose forces . . . under the jurisdiction of such Secretary can be identified and dedicated to fulfill the training and operational requirements” for SOF under USSOCOM.²⁰ It is hoped that this annual process will help resolve any disputes brought about by ambiguities within respective MOAs between USSOCOM and the military services and enable more timely support for SOF.

Debates over Resources and Authorities

In an effort to establish a more global SOF network, USSOCOM has sought to enhance its control over its forces within GCCs. In particular, it has sought the authority to request forces, maintain operational control over USSOCOM-requested forces while in a GCC’s area of responsibility, and transfer SOF among GCCs by USSOCOM decision. A dramatic increase in personnel, budget, and responsibilities may have contributed to this desire to address its Title 10 activities from a cross-regional perspective. Since at least the spring and summer of 2012, Admiral William McRaven, the commander of USSOCOM, was reported to have met frequently with combatant commanders to negotiate for these additional authorities.²¹

Despite intense debate at the Pentagon, a decision memorandum designated USSOCOM as a “functional command with global responsibilities.”²² According to an *Inside the Pentagon* report, Admiral McRaven claimed in early May 2013 that former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta signed a directive “that put those theater operations commands under my combatant command” before he left office in February 2013, though the TSOCs still must report to the

¹⁷ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014, p. IV-5.

¹⁸ Deputy Secretary of Defense, “Guidance for Developing and Implementing Special Forces Program and Budget,” memorandum, December 1, 1989.

¹⁹ For an overview of these disputes, see Elvira Loreda, John E. Peters, Karlyn D. Stanley, Matthew E. Boyer, William Welser IV, and Thomas S. Szayna, *Authorities and Operations for Funding USSOCOM Operations*, unpublished RAND research, 2013.

²⁰ Public Law 112-81, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, December 31, 2011, Section 904(a).

²¹ Linda Robinson, “The Future of Special Operations: Beyond Kill and Capture,” *Foreign Affairs*, November–December 2012b.

²² Quoted in Robinson, 2012b.

GCCs.²³ In July 2013, news sources reported that Admiral McRaven sought to meet with the GCCs to establish holistic, rather than regional, SOF requirements for future planning. The USSOCOM spokesman, Ken McGraw, stated that this might have been the first time a review of this detail of GCC SOF requirements had been conducted.²⁴ It is not clear whether USSOCOM will gain the authority to move forces between GCCs on its own.²⁵ Despite this enhanced authority, Congress has also stalled USSOCOM's establishment of three new "regional special operations forces coordination centers" in Washington, Hawaii, and Colombia, citing the need for greater justification for why existing organizations and structures do not satisfy requirements.²⁶ The House Armed Services Intelligence, Emerging Threats, and Capabilities Subcommittee also requested, in its marked draft of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2014, a report detailing USSOCOM's organizational structure, oversight structures, funding authorities, and other roles and responsibilities.²⁷

Reactions to USSOCOM's quest for greater authority have been mixed. Opponents have cited a muddling of "America's principle of civilian control of the military" and stated that the sensitivity of many SOF deployments does indeed require layers of authority and necessary time for review.²⁸ In congressional testimony, experts asserted that it is imperative "to ensure that the GCC continues to see the TSOC as its arm and its primary mechanism for conducting SOF operations. If they were to see it as a SOCOM entity, they would be less likely to employ it in the field, and the net outcome would be worse."²⁹ Major General Christopher Haas, commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Forces Command at the time, declared that SOF should not "own battle space because of all the functions and activities and expertise that requires" and that SOF benefit greatly from logistics and expertise at the corps and division levels.³⁰ However, others have stated that USSOCOM may often have a wider perspective on cross-regional security threats than combatant commanders and that current threats require rapid response times that are not bogged down by GCCs' bureaucracies and protection of "rice bowls."³¹ Also, the "linking [of] TSOCs together as an integrated, global network

²³ Sebastian Sprenger, "Lawmaker Request Report on SOCOM, Its Forces, Civilian Oversight," *Inside the Pentagon*, May 23, 2013.

²⁴ Jordana Mishory, "SOCOM Finalizing Campaign Plan on How to Best Resource COCOMs," *Inside the Pentagon*, August 1, 2013c.

²⁵ U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*, May 2013, p. 7, stipulates a world in 2020 in which "USSOCOM provides each Geographic Combatant Commander a baseline SOF package for enduring engagement, even if USSOCOM must reallocate its other aligned SOF elements to a contingency operation."

²⁶ Jordana Mishory, "House Defense Provision Reveal Deep-Rooted Concerns Over SOCOM," *Inside the Pentagon*, June 13, 2013a.

²⁷ Mishory, 2013a.

²⁸ Former Joint Chief of Staff General Peter Pace, quoted in Sebastian Sprenger, "Proposal to Elevate SOCOM's Clout Among COCOMs Still Under Review," *Inside the Army*, April 16, 2012.

²⁹ Linda Robinson, "The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces," testimony at hearing before the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, July 11, 2012a.

³⁰ Jen Judson, "One-Star Argues Against Greater SOF Clout on the Battlefield," *Inside the Army*, November 5, 2012.

³¹ See, for example, retired Admiral Eric Olson's comments from an April 11, 2012, panel discussion as quoted in Sprenger, 2012.

to address trans-regional threats” will add a wider range of operations for which “SOF are uniquely suited.”³²

In their committee report on the FY 2014 defense spending bill, House appropriators expressed concern about the nonspecificity of USSOCOM’s budget materials. In FY 2006, DoD exempted USSOCOM from stringent budget reporting requirements, but in the tight fiscal environment, appropriators are becoming more concerned about oversight.³³ The House also wrote that several requests in the FY 2014 budget “would establish new precedents” for USSOCOM’s use of MFP-11 funds and that these funds “are now perceived as a mechanism to insulate SOCOM from service budget reductions or to create separate SOF programs that are the responsibility of the services.”³⁴ Soon, USSOCOM will also experience financial stress as overseas contingency operations (OCO) funds are transitioned to the base budget because many current expenditures are rooted in the OCO funding. Congress has concluded that DoD may not have established a plan to fully transition the funding “for enduring SOF requirements from the OCO to base budget in future years, potentially putting maintenance of SOF capabilities at risk.” Michael Sheehan, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, asserts that finding the resources for the transfer “remains particularly challenging.”³⁵

As noted in Chapter Four of the companion volume, commanders and staff should not wait on global or top-down directed authorities and resources to shape their campaign plans. Well-formulated campaign plans lay the groundwork for capability, resource, and authority requirements that can be met through the Adaptive Planning and Execution system (APEX) in-progress review, Global Force Management, or the POM process.

FID-Related Authorities

General Legislative and Funding Authority

A long-term focus of the special operations community, FID is designated as a special operations activity by Title 10 of the U.S. Code.³⁶ In addition, USSOCOM is DoD’s “lead proponent” for SFA, overseeing the development of joint doctrine, training, and education for this purpose. Under this designation, USSOCOM is also charged with developing the global joint sourcing solutions for recommendation to the GFMB for SFA requirements validated by combatant commanders.³⁷

By its nature, FID is an interagency, multinational effort that entails varying authority channels, depending on the activity. In DoD doctrine, FID has three components: U.S.

³² Jim Thomas and Chris Dougherty, *Beyond the Ramparts: The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2013, p. 83.

³³ Mishory, 2013a.

³⁴ U.S. House of Representatives, 113th Congress, *Department of Defense Appropriations Bill, 2014: Report of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives*, Report 113-113, July 17, 2013, p. 91.

³⁵ Jordana Mishory, “DOD Struggles with Transitioning SOCOM’s War Funding to Base Budget,” *Inside the Pentagon*, July 25, 2013b.

³⁶ 10 U.S.C. 167, Unified Combatant Command for Special Forces.

³⁷ U.S. Department of Defense Instruction 5000.68, 2010.

combat operations, direct support (not including combat operations), and indirect support.³⁸ U.S. combat operations and direct support mostly fall under Title 10 authorities, using funding intended for operations and maintenance, though some activities may fall under different legislated funding and oversight authorities.

Some resources and authorities for indirect support operations, such as security assistance and exchange programs, may fall under Title 22, the section of U.S. Code covering DoS and U.S. foreign relations. Since the enactment of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, DoS has been the lead government agency for foreign assistance, including security assistance.³⁹ Security assistance programs include foreign military sales, foreign military financing, and the International Military Education and Training program (IMET). These programs are typically authorized and funded by DoS and executed by DoD.

DoS establishes its priorities and resourcing decisions in its Mission Strategic and Resource Plan, supported by the Security Assistance Organizations at U.S. embassies. In parallel, the Security Assistance Organizations also submit requests through the foreign military financing/IMET budget tool managed by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. The combatant commands then prioritize these requests regionally and submit them to the Joint Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense for global prioritization. After the Mission Strategic Resource Plan and the finalized global priorities from the Office of the Secretary of Defense are submitted to DoS, the DoS Bureau of Political-Military Affairs reviews the requests through roundtable discussions and makes a final recommendation for the DoS budget, submitted as a component of the President's Budget to Congress each February. By working closely with the Security Assistance Organizations during the early months of deliberations (preferably by December of the previous year), SOF and other DoD components can increase the likelihood of obtaining enough resources for their respective security assistance priorities.⁴⁰ See Chapter Four of the companion volume for a review of general DoD funding authorities.

Debates over Resources and Authorities

As Operation Enduring Freedom comes to a close, USSOCOM seeks to maintain the authorities it temporarily gained for FID on a more permanent basis. In a report to Congress, Michael Sheehan, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, stated that the uncertainty of the authorities' longevity prohibits the opportunity for enduring engagement with foreign actors if "we cannot predict if the SOF element will be authorized to

³⁸ According to Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, FID in U.S. combat operations "requires a Presidential decision and serves only as a temporary solution until [host-nation] forces are able to stabilize the situation and provide security for the populace." Direct operations not involving combat operations entail civil-military operations, military information support operations, logistic support, intelligence cooperation, and some forms of military training to host nation forces (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Foreign Internal Defense*, Joint Publication 3-22, Washington, D.C., July 12, 2010, pp. I-8, I-17).

³⁹ Specifically, it states,

Under the direction of the President, the Secretary of State shall be responsible for the continuous supervision and general direction of economic assistance, *military assistance, and military education and training programs, including but not limited to determining whether there shall be a military assistance (including civic action) or a military education and training program for a country* and the value thereof, to the end that such programs are effectively integrated both at home and abroad and the foreign policy of the United States is best served thereby. (22 U.S.C. 2382c, Responsibility for the Supervision and General Direction of Assistance Programs; emphasis added)

DoS also holds authorities under the Arms Export Control Act of 1976.

⁴⁰ For more detail on this process, see Peterson and Hogler, 2012.

engage after the sunset date of the relevant authority.⁴¹ He also stressed the need for authorities concerning multiyear procurement, minor military construction for partner forces, partnership with both military and nonmilitary foreign entities, and funding authorities for logistics, incremental costs, and civil affairs operations. In particular, Section 1206 Global Train and Equip funds are particularly cherished by DoD and SOF as efficient funds for counterterrorism activities with partner nations, despite concerns from Congress that the stipulations are being too narrowly interpreted.⁴²

Others, however, have generally viewed DoD's increased role in FID and other SFA activities with trepidation. A 2006 report to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United State Senate, while recognizing that inadequate funding for civilian agencies led to the DoD filling in needed gaps, "left unclear, blurred lines of authority between the State Department and the Defense Department could lead to interagency turf wars that undermine the effectiveness of the overall U.S. effort against terrorism."⁴³ Many believe that these increased authorities give DoD too much of a diplomatic role and weaken oversight for both DoS and Congress, resulting in potential human rights violations or undermining long-term country, regional, and international diplomatic strategy.⁴⁴

Furthermore, despite increased coordination mechanisms between SOF and their interagency partners, many institutional impediments remain. DoS does not have an equivalent of a GCC for its regions' major programs, as its regional bureaus focus primarily on policy guidance. Ambassadors to strategically significant countries typically have a direct relationship with the Secretary of State and the President and may neglect to coordinate regional strategy and programs with DoS assistant secretaries with regional responsibilities. Even the regional bureaus do not align geographically with the GCCs, adding further to the coordination complexity. Finally, for each country, Congress, using the President's budget request, determines funding for SFA. Despite having primary authority over the U.S. personnel and mandates within their respective countries, chiefs of mission cannot transfer allocated money from accounts or countries for specific contingencies.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Sheehan, 2013, p. 7.

⁴² See Phil W. Reynolds, "What Comes Next? An Argument for Irregular War in National Defense," *Military Review*, Vol. 92, No. 5, September–October 2012. See also Jordana Mishory, "DOD: Modifying Special Forces Training Authority Could Degrade Program," *Inside the Pentagon*, August 14, 2013d.

⁴³ U.S. Senate, 109th Congress, 2nd Session, *Embassies as Command Posts in the Anti-Terror Campaign: A Report to Members of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, December 15, 2006.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Task Force on Nontraditional Security Assistance, *Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance: Final Report of the Task Force on Nontraditional Security Assistance*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 2008, and Gordon Adams, William I. Bacchus, Stephen Chaplin, David Glaudemans, Eric Lief, Richard Nygard, J. J. Saulino, Stanley Silverman, and Yvonne Siu, *A Foreign Affairs Budget for the Future: Fixing the Crisis in Diplomatic Readiness*, Washington, D.C.: American Academy of Diplomacy and the Stimson Center, October 2008.

⁴⁵ For an excellent, in-depth overview of this topic, see Terrence K. Kelly, Jefferson P. Marquis, Cathryn Quantic Thurston, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, and Charlotte Lynch, *Security Cooperation Organizations in the Country Team: Options for Success*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, TR-734-A, 2010.

Unconventional Warfare–Related Authorities

Title 10, Section 167, of the U.S. Code designates unconventional warfare as a special operations activity. The term *unconventional warfare* has had numerous doctrinal definitions in the past few decades.⁴⁶ Perhaps due to the frequent fluctuations in its definition, unconventional warfare does not have clear legal parameters that govern its planning, execution, or resourcing. Although there is no funding authority specifically designed for these activities, their authorization would likely require presidential approval and an execution order issued through APEX, in which funding sources should be identified.

Relevant DoD funds include the following:

- Emergency Extraordinary Expense Funds may be provided for an emergency or extraordinary expense that is unanticipated or classified in nature.⁴⁷ The Secretary of Defense must notify the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services and Appropriations when the funds expended are greater than \$500,000 on certain timetables determined by the amount to be spent, unless the Secretary of Defense determines that compliance will compromise national security.⁴⁸
- Confidential Military Purpose Funds are “expended upon the approval of the Secretary of the cognizant Military Service and payment may be made on their certificate of necessity for confidential military purposes.”⁴⁹ These operations and maintenance expenses entail the same limitations as Emergency Extraordinary Expense Funds.

Legal authorities for unconventional warfare, entailing either Title 10 or Title 50 authorities or oversight requirements, are typically determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on whether the activity is covert or not. Formal legislation, in addition to clarifying congressional reports, comprises the body of legislation used to determine whether an unconventional warfare operation or campaign falls under Title 10 or Title 50 regulations.⁵⁰ Therefore, SOF and DoD commanders must be aware of important legal distinctions and consult closely with legal advisers to ensure that these activities are conducted under the proper authorizations and funding.

Covert- and Clandestine-Related Authorities

The President may authorize covert action when it is determined that “such an action is necessary to support identifiable foreign policy objectives of the United States and is important

⁴⁶ Mark Grdovic, “Developing a Common Understanding of Unconventional Warfare,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 57, 2nd Quarter 2010.

⁴⁷ 10 U.S.C. 127, Emergency and Extraordinary Expenses.

⁴⁸ In which case the Secretary immediately notifies the committee that the obligation or expenditure is necessary and then provides relevant information to the committee chair and ranking minority member.

⁴⁹ Public Law 112-10, Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, April 15, 2011.

⁵⁰ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*, Training Circular 18-01, January 28, 2011, p. 3-16.

to the national security of the United States.”⁵¹ An authorization of a covert action requires a presidential finding and “fully and currently” informing the congressional intelligence communities of the activity “as soon as possible after such approval (of the covert action) and before the initiation of the covert action.” In certain extraordinary circumstances, the President may limit reporting to a smaller group of congressional members for a certain period. Under the statute, *covert action* is defined as

An activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly, *but does not include*—

- (1) activities the primary purpose of which is to *acquire intelligence*, traditional counterintelligence activities, traditional activities to improve or maintain the operational security of United States Government programs, or administrative activities;
- (2) *traditional diplomatic or military activities or routine support to such activities*;
- (3) traditional law enforcement activities conducted by United States Government law enforcement agencies or routine support to such activities; or
- (4) activities to provide routine support to the overt activities (other than activities described in paragraph (1), (2), or (3)) of other United States Government agencies abroad.⁵²

When an operation entails only acquiring intelligence, traditional military activities, or routine support to traditional military activities, it is exempt from Title 50 authorities and oversight requirements, though it must still abide by the applicable Title 10 statutes. Typically, when the Military Intelligence Program or the National Intelligence Program funds activities, the unconventional warfare portion would consist primarily of intelligence activities and thus would not require a presidential finding. The statute neglects to define *traditional military activities* or *routine support*; thus, one must consult the relevant committee reports to determine the intent of these phrases. The definition of *traditional military authority* has been adjusted several times in relevant conference reports.⁵³ The current interpretation has several conditions that must be met, however:

1. Activities by military personnel must be under the direction and control of a United States military commander (whether or not U.S. sponsorship of such activities is apparent or will be acknowledged).
2. Activities must be preceding and related to hostilities that are anticipated to involve U.S. military forces (i.e., national command authorities have approved the activities or the operational planning for hostilities) or where hostilities involving U.S. military

⁵¹ 50 U.S.C. 3093a, Presidential Findings.

⁵² 50 U.S.C. 3093e, “Covert Action” Defined; emphasis added.

⁵³ For an in-depth discussion of this history, see Robert Chesney, “Military-Intelligence Convergence and the Law of the Title 10/Title 50 Debate,” *Journal of National Security Law and Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 539, July 2012.

forces are ongoing and the U.S. role in the overall operation is apparent or will be acknowledged publicly.⁵⁴

With regard to “routine support,” the Senate report accompanying the FY 1991 Intelligence Authorization Act asserts that “other-than-routine” activities are those “undertaken in another country which involve other than unilateral activities.” Examples given included

clandestine attempts to recruit or train foreign nationals with access to the target country to support U.S. forces in the event of a military operation; clandestine [efforts] to influence foreign nationals of the target country concerned to take certain actions in the event of a U.S. military operation; clandestine efforts to influence and effect [sic] public opinion in the country concerned where U.S. sponsorship of such efforts is concealed; and clandestine efforts to influence foreign officials in third countries to take certain actions without the knowledge or approval of their government in the event of a U.S. military operation.⁵⁵

Therefore, if the future U.S. military operation to be supported by the unconventional warfare activity is not yet *officially planned* by DoD, the activity would be a covert action and thus would require a presidential finding and report to the congressional intelligence committees.

DoD has encountered criticism in the past for using the phrase *operational preparation of the environment* (OPE) as a justification for certain operations and activities to remain under title authorities and reporting requirements. In his 2006 confirmation hearing, CIA director General Michael Hayden asserted,

An awful lot of [OPE] activities . . . are not, in terms of tradecraft or other aspects, recognizably different than collecting human intelligence for a foreign intelligence purpose. . . . But here, in this melee here, they look very much the same—different authorities, somewhat different purposes, mostly indistinguishable activities. My view is that, as the national HUMINT [human intelligence] manager, the Director of CIA should strap on the responsibility to make sure that this thing down here that walks and quacks and talks like human intelligence is conducted to the same standards as human intelligence without questioning the Secretary’s authority to do it or the legal authority under which that authority is drawn.⁵⁶

The House Intelligence Committee also chastised DoD, stating that the “overuse of this term has made the distinction [between traditional military activities and intelligence functions] all but meaningless,” as “DOD has shown a propensity to apply the OPE label where the slightest nexus of a theoretical, distant military operation might one day exist.” The committee further stipulated,

⁵⁴ U.S. House of Representatives, 102nd Congress, 1st Session, *Intelligence Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1991*, Report 102-166, July 25, 1991.

⁵⁵ U.S. Senate, 102nd Congress, 1st Session, Report 102-85, *Report to Accompany S. 1325, the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY 1991*, June 19, 1991.

⁵⁶ U.S. Senate, 109th Congress, 2nd Session, *Nomination of General Michael V. Hayden, USAF, to Be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency: Hearing Before the Select Committee on Intelligence*, Senate Hearing 109-808, May 18, 2006.

The determination as to whether an operation will be categorized as an intelligence activity is made on a case-by-case basis; there are no clear guidelines or principles for making consistent determinations. Clandestine military intelligence-gathering operations, even those legitimately recognized as OPE, carry the same diplomatic and national security risks as traditional intelligence-gathering activities. Consequently, these activities often escape the scrutiny of the intelligence committees... the Committee is hopeful that DOD will be more fulsome in its reporting. In the future, if DOD does not meet its obligations to inform the Committee of intelligence activities, the Committee will consider legislative action clarifying the Department's obligation to do so.⁵⁷

Regardless of whether the authorities for an unconventional warfare activity fall under Title 10 or Title 50, National Security Decision Directive 38 requires that any unconventional warfare activity, either conducted within or launched from a bordering country, must receive the concurrence of the respective chief(s) of mission, who will maintain control of the mandate of the U.S. personnel.

Funding may come from a variety of sources, including Military Intelligence Program funds, National Intelligence Program funds, Confidential Military Funding, intelligence contingency funds, operations and maintenance, Section 1206, or Section 1208.

Debates over Resources and Authorities

Especially after the CIA-led, SOF-executed raid that killed Osama bin Laden in May 2011, lawmakers and scholars have debated the increased overlap between military activities and intelligence activities, particularly in SOF activities. As discussed in the previous section, the authorities concerning "covert action" that may apply to unconventional warfare are far from well defined in actual legislation; instead, the meanings of key words and phrases have been discerned through various committee reports. Much of the debate, in the literature and between policymakers, focuses on two areas: (1) the interpretation of the law and its applicability to certain SOF and military activities and (2) whether the military *should* be engaged in such activities, regardless of the law's interpretation.

Many works provide detailed background on the history of the legislation and doctrine, along with interpretation of covert and intelligence authorities, and these sources recognize the ambiguities still inherent in today's context.⁵⁸ In fact, some authors and policymakers have suggested a "blending" of Title 10 and Title 50 into a new statute, Title 60, which would better specify conditions, oversight, and control of covert and clandestine military and intelligence activities.⁵⁹ Wall remarks that some of the confusion regarding the difference between

⁵⁷ U.S. House of Representatives, 111th Congress, 1st Session, *Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010*, Report 111-186, June 26, 2009, pp. 48–49.

⁵⁸ See Chesney, 2012; Andru E. Wall, "Demystifying the Title 10–Title 50 Debate: Distinguishing Military Operations, Intelligence Activities and Covert Action," *Harvard National Security Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1, September 2011; Jeff Mustin and Harvey Rishikof, "Projecting Force in the 21st Century—Legitimacy and the Rule of Law: Title 50, Title 10, Title 18, and Art. 75," *Rutgers Law Review*, Vol. 63, No. 4, 2011; and Michael McAndrew, "Wrangling in the Shadows: The Use of United States Special Forces in Covert Action in the War on Terror," *Boston College International and Comparative Law Review*, Vol. 29, No. 1, December 1, 2006.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Mustin and Rishikof, 2011, p. 1239. A major proponent of this was former Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair. For a counterargument, see Joseph B. Berger III, "Covert Action: Title 10, Title 50, and the Chain of Command," *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 67, 4th Quarter 2012. Robert Martinage of the Center for Strategic Budgetary Assessments advocates for SOF "leveraging the CIA's Title 50 foreign-intelligence authority for SOF operations through

the application of Title 10 and Title 50 derives from a conflation of authorities and rules of engagement. For example, CIA rules of engagement may be less stringent than military rules of engagement, but “rules of engagement are policy directives, not statutes, so their characterizations as a ‘Title 10’ or ‘Title 50’ issue is inaccurate and misleading.”⁶⁰ Others have pointed out that the statutory and DoD doctrinal definitions of *covert* and *clandestine* are not the same, which also may add to commanders’ confusion.⁶¹

Despite criticism from Congress that the military has created a parallel intelligence and covert action capability alongside the CIA in recent years, Lieutenant General (ret.) James Clapper, in his written responses to questions in advance of his nomination hearing for Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, stated that he did not believe that military personnel were conducting covert activities, as statutorily defined. Instead, he asserted, their activities were of a “clandestine” nature, a term not defined in legislation, that he explained as follows:

Clandestine activities . . . are those activities conducted in secret, but which are, in an intelligence context, passive in nature. For me, the crucial distinction lies in whether an activity is “passive” (which is the case with intelligence activities) or “active” (which is the case with covert action).⁶²

In clandestine activities, should the operation be compromised, the United States would be able to publicly acknowledge its role and thus afford Geneva Convention protections to personnel involved in the activities. The literature debates the seemingly contradictory aims of Title 50 authorities and the tenets of the laws of war, such as the respect of sovereignty and the distinction of military personnel.⁶³

Conclusion

The past decade has seen significant evolution of SOF capabilities, responsibilities, and authorities, especially in the realms of unconventional warfare and FID. With USSOCOM’s desire to maintain and enhance the authorities it has gained from this experience, these authorities may continue to fluctuate and morph. It is imperative for USSOCOM and its component commanders to maintain a thorough understanding of current funding, oversight, and execution authorities, because “without authorities, a team will not know its limits and could easily exceed them, or it might operate well below what is allowed and miss critical opportunities to interdict a problem.”⁶⁴

the flexible detailing of SOF personnel to the Agency” and more frequent exchanges between the two to learn each other’s tradecraft (Robert Martinage, *Special Operations Forces: Future Challenges and Opportunities*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic Budgetary Assessments, October 31, 2008).

⁶⁰ Wall, 2011, p. 93, fn. 18.

⁶¹ Richard C. Gross, “Different Worlds: Unacknowledged Special Operations and Covert Action,” Strategy Research Project, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, March 30, 2009.

⁶² “Advance Questions for Lieutenant General James Clapper USAF (Ret.), Nominee for the Position of Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence,” U.S. House of Representatives, March 27, 2007.

⁶³ See, for example, Chesney, 2012, pp. 615–625.

⁶⁴ Kevin Wells, “8 Years of Combat FID: A Retrospective on SF in Iraq,” *Special Warfare*, Vol. 25, No. 1, January–March 2012.

Universe of U.S. Special Warfare Operations

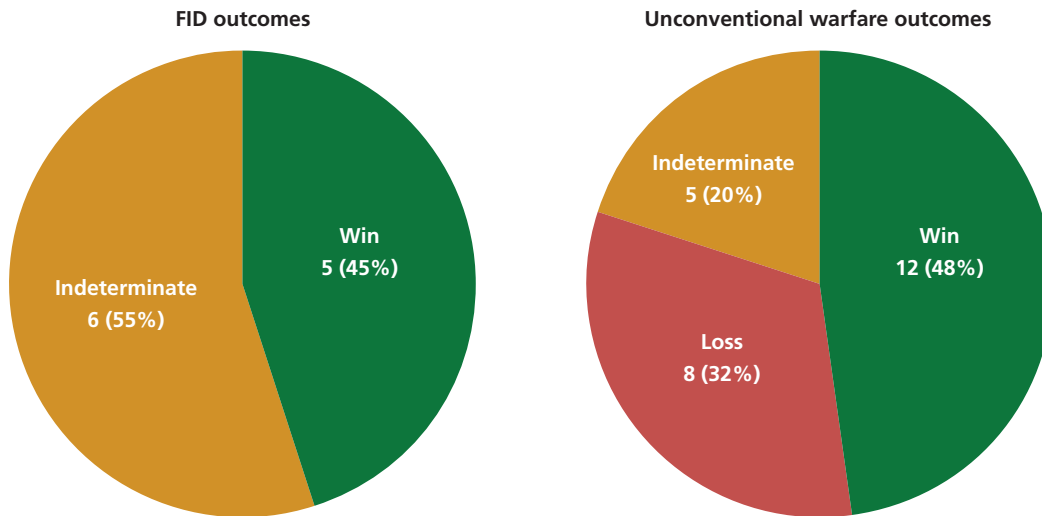
We developed a data set of special warfare operations undertaken by the United States since World War II. The purpose of this data set was to develop a source for initial descriptive statistics for characterizing special warfare campaigns.

The data set described here draws on Watts et al.'s 2012 research, published in *The Uses and Limits of Small-Scale Military Interventions*, and Agee and DuClos 2012 thesis, *Why UW: Factoring in the Decision Point for Unconventional Warfare*. The *Assessing Revolutionary and Insurgent Strategies* series was a particularly valuable resource for our coding efforts.¹ Cases were selected based on the definition of special warfare campaigns outlined in Chapter One of the companion report. This excluded unconventional warfare or FID operations that were supporting efforts within conventional campaigns (e.g., unconventional warfare operations in northern Iraq during the 2003 invasion and during the Korean war). The period selected excludes several famous World War II unconventional warfare operations, including the Jedburghs in France and General Volckmann's efforts in the Philippines. Furthermore, we excluded some of the "minimalist interventions" in Watts et al.'s data set, since the data set was scoped to include counterinsurgency operations in which U.S. forces supplied the main effort, so long as force-to-population ratio was low by doctrinal standards. For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that FID is not simply poorly resourced counterinsurgency but, rather, a distinct approach to stabilizing a partner nation.

Outcomes were assessed as "win," "loss," or "indeterminate" (see Figure D.1). Win or loss coding was based on whether the insurgency or regime the U.S. opposed was defeated. Cases were coded as indeterminate for one of three reasons: the conflict was ongoing, the conflict concluded in a negotiated settlement, or the conflict escalated into another form of war. This coding schema is focused on the operational rather than the strategic level. Additional work (e.g., to establish a richer set of variables) needs to be conducted on this subject to develop the empirical foundations for a deeper understanding of the operational and strategic dynamics of special warfare.

¹ Stephen Watts, Caroline Baxter, Molly Dunigan, and Christopher Rizzi, *The Uses and Limits of Small-Scale Military Interventions*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-1226-RC, 2012; Ryan C. Agee and Maurice K. DuClos, *Why UW: Factoring in the Decision Point for Unconventional Warfare*, thesis, Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2012; Paul J. Tompkins, Jr., and Chuck Crossett, eds., *Assessing Revolutionary and Insurgent Strategies: Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare, Volume II: 1962–2009*, Ft. Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Operations Command and Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory National Security Analysis Department, April 27, 2012; Paul J. Tompkins, Jr., ed., *Assessing Revolutionary and Insurgent Strategies: Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare, Volume I: 1933–1962*, rev. ed., Ft. Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Operations Command and Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory National Security Analysis Department, January 25, 2013.

Figure D.1
Special Warfare Outcomes Since World War II



RAND RR779z1-D.1

Our coding choices will likely stir useful debate regarding the scope of U.S. objectives in special warfare campaigns. Some of the indeterminate FID cases did not result in the decisive defeat of an insurgency but might still be considered a victory in a broader strategic sense, as in El Salvador, where the conflict ultimately concluded through diplomacy in a manner that preserved core U.S. interests. Other cases coded as indeterminate, such as South Vietnam (1950s–1962), might be understood as a loss if the United States felt it was forced to escalate from FID to U.S.-led counterinsurgency to avoid a loss. We chose a relatively strict set of criteria for wins and losses to ensure comparability across cases.

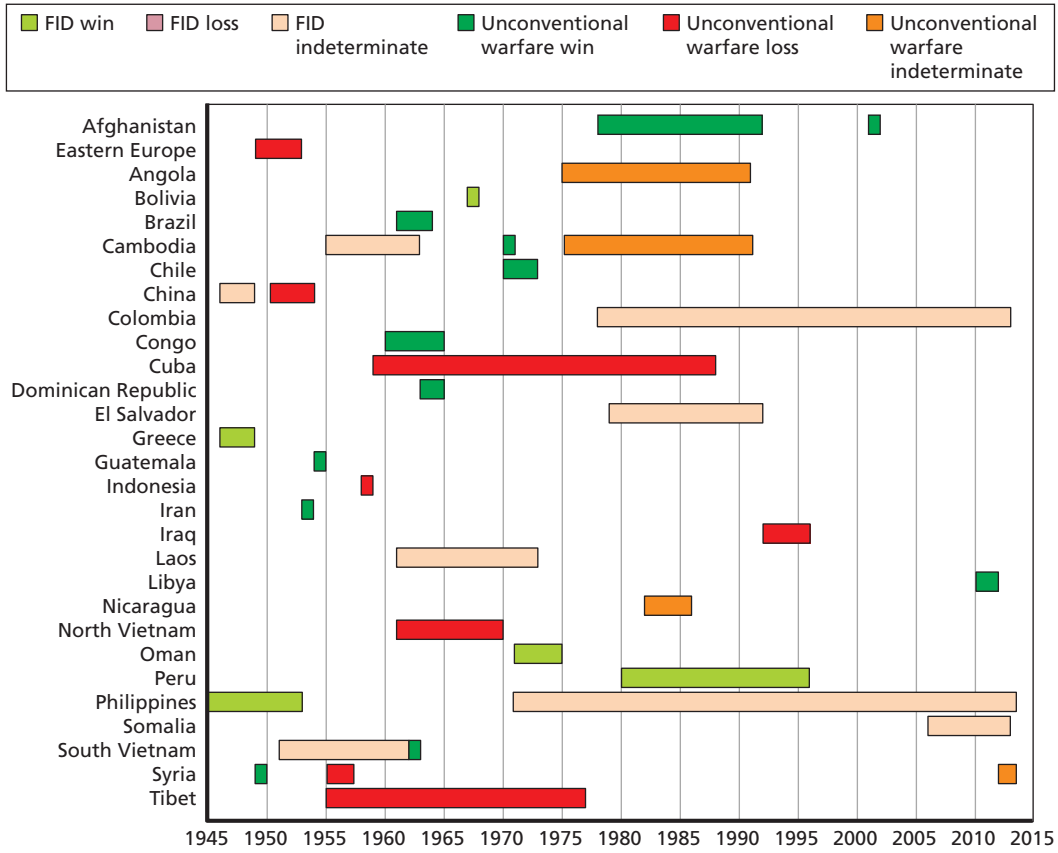
A review of special warfare outcomes since World War II led to several observations relevant to policymakers and campaign planners (see Table D.1). First, special warfare is not a placebo that frequently achieves decisive outcomes over short time horizons. Little more than one-third of FID operations achieve decisive effects, while little more than half of unconventional warfare operations result in clear victories. That said, none of the FID cases were clear losses either, suggesting that it is an effective tool for preventing unacceptable outcomes. Unconventional warfare has higher win and loss rates, implying more decisive outcomes, but they still tended to be protracted affairs by any measure. Although shorter-duration unconventional warfare efforts appear to be more successful, many of them were conducted through *coup d'état* or very mature insurgency guerrilla forces. In some cases (e.g., Tibet, Afghanistan), the protracted nature of the conflict was, itself, a virtue to policymakers, allowing the United

Table D.1
Average Duration of Special Warfare Campaigns (years)

Mission	All	Wins	Losses	Indeterminate
Special warfare	7	4	9	12
FID	11	6	NA	15
Unconventional warfare	6	3	9	8

States to tie down an adversary's resources indefinitely. Figure D.2 shows all the cases, their durations, and their outcomes.

Figure D.2
U.S. Special Warfare Operations Since World War II



Notional Special Warfare Campaigns for Strategic Challenges

The scenarios in this section illustrate the type of training aids that might be used to develop special warfare campaign planners; these scenarios may also assist DoD in identifying capability requirements for special warfare campaigns. These scenarios were developed based on review of 2012 defense strategic guidance, and the recent history of challenges faced by policymakers (see Figure E.1). The defense strategic guidance includes the following “primary missions of the U.S. armed forces”:¹

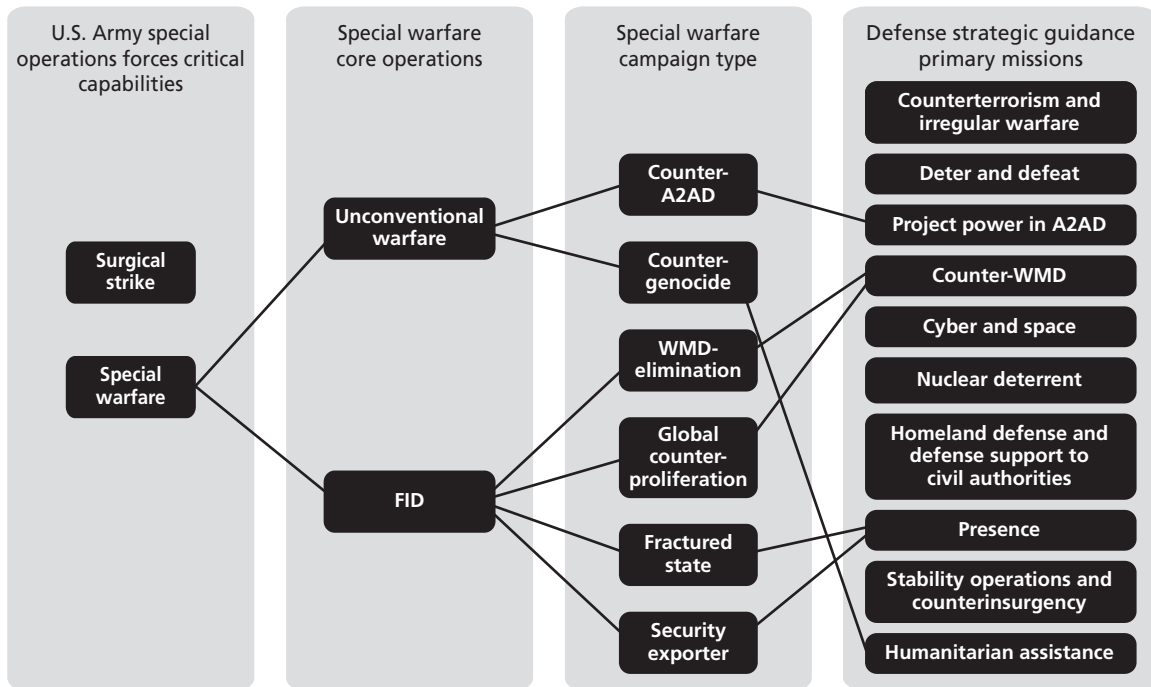
- Counter terrorism and irregular warfare (capacity requirement).
- Deter and defeat aggression (capacity requirement).
- Project power despite anti-access/area-denial (A2AD) challenges.
- Counter weapons of mass destruction.
- Operate effectively in cyberspace and space.
- Maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent (capacity requirement).
- Defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities (capacity requirement).
- Provide a stabilizing presence.
- Conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations.
- Conduct humanitarian, disaster relief, and other operations (including responding to “mass atrocities”).

Consideration of these missions led us to identify seven campaign types that might address these challenges and to illustrate with notional examples. These campaign types do not exhaust the ways special warfare could be employed to address these strategic challenges but are offered as illustrative examples.

- Project power despite anti-access/area-denial challenges:
 - Support conventional power projection: Employing nonstate actors to disrupt a targeted state’s A2AD capabilities (e.g., the Baloch or Kurds in Iran).
 - Support distant blockades: Degrading a peer competitor’s access to overseas resources crucial to its economic growth and political stability. This might be accomplished by facilitating labor strikes in mining operations, or insurgent interdiction of oil pipelines, in third countries supporting the peer competitor.

¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, Washington, D.C., January 2012, pp. 4–6.

Figure E.1
Notional Special Warfare Campaign Types and Defense Strategic Guidance



NOTE: WMD = weapons of mass destruction.

RAND RR77921-E.1

- Counter weapons of mass destruction
 - Covert FID for WMD elimination: When a public relationship of the partner state with the United States is problematic because of the partner state's domestic politics, covert SFA could be provided directly to the partner state to strengthen the security of its WMD assets. Security of WMD assets could also be improved indirectly through the employment of unilateral U.S.-sponsored networks.
 - Counterproliferation against a global network: Interdicting and degrading global proliferation black markets and front companies (e.g., North Korea's Office 39). If a third country refused to take action against a front company producing nuclear-related industrial equipment, sabotage could be employed.
- Conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations
 - FID in a fractured state: Building governance and security capacity in a state with multiple competing sources of authority and legitimacy (e.g., Somalia, Yemen).
- Provide a stabilizing presence
 - Building a regional security exporter: Stabilizing a partner nation through security and economic assistance to enable its regional engagement as a security provider (e.g., operations against the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda to enable the deployment of its forces to other regional hotspots).
- Conduct humanitarian, disaster relief, and other operations
 - Unconventional warfare to counter genocide: Organize, train, and equip for self-defense and evasion a social group targeted for genocide by the incumbent regime (e.g., in Sudan).

In some of these cases, a special warfare operation supports a broader joint campaign (e.g., counter-A2AD). This could include the employment of special warfare capabilities to execute surgical strike–associated missions (e.g., WMD elimination as clandestine FID). In practice, special warfare and surgical-strike capabilities are frequently employed together to achieve synergistic effects. For instance, information obtained through village stability operations can be used to drive targeting by surgical-strike units, while, in turn, surgical-strike units can shape the environment around the village stability operations. Planners will certainly require the capability to integrate the two capability sets, suggesting a need for a broader concept of special warfare.

Project Power Despite Anti-Access/Area-Denial Challenges

Counter A2AD: Unconventional Warfare and FID in Support of Conventional Power Projection

Special warfare activities to counter enemy A2AD capabilities are undertaken largely before the outbreak of overt hostilities. These activities can be thought of as (1) early elements of shaping operations, (2) activities immediately prior to the onset of combat operations, and (3) activities undertaken at H-hour (as an operation commences). Beyond their time phasing, these activities have one of two distinct objectives: to undermine the enemy's development of robust A2AD capabilities and to neutralize the A2AD capabilities the enemy manages to develop before the outbreak of war. In this case, if the targeted regime has long established itself as an international actor whose interests are antithetical to those of the United States and the West, the United States might begin cultivating its neighbors as a routine element of its diplomacy effort.

Concept of Operations

Phase 0 Activities

Over the course of the shape phase, the United States generally seeks to establish a robust presence and influence in the region by maintaining strong relationships with key regional states threatened by the targeted regime. More particularly, U.S. SOF seek to engage friendly states in the region, especially those nearest the likely adversary. In this regard, additional security assistance and intensified combined exercises offer incentives to friendly countries and provide U.S. SOF with an entrée. U.S. SOF then use this access to work with friendly intelligence service to conduct counterintelligence operations to find and neutralize enemy networks that, if allowed to mature, might support an indications and warning capability that might cue the rest of the enemy's A2AD system. Eventually, as U.S.-partner relations deepen, the United States can conclude specific agreements in response to the growing enemy threat and begin developing richer military-to-military relations with the local friendly powers. During this phase, PE activities might include developing communication channels with potential indigenous partners within the country that could support counter-A2AD activities in later phases.

Activities Prior to the Commencement of Hostilities

In this scenario, the targeted regime seeks to close a key sea line of communication, which precipitates active prehostilities on the part of the United States and its allies. As relationships deteriorate and tensions grow with the regional aggressor, U.S. SOF might be authorized to

begin contacting and developing the local indigenous resistance movement in the targeted regime's territory. The aim is to train and equip an internal resistance movement that can contest the lines of communications and the enemy's freedom of movement, thus complicating the regime's ability to employ its A2AD capabilities. More specifically, the focus of this effort is the antiship cruise missile batteries near the sea line of communication that threaten shipping and the U.S. naval presence. U.S. SOF work with the resistance to prepare it to sabotage the missile batteries' support infrastructure (e.g., electricity, water, sanitation).

The resistance force can also provide knowledgeable manpower to help identify potential landing and drop zones outside the range of the enemy's A2AD systems and to provide interdiction teams to prevent the enemy from reaching those areas once U.S. operations begin. In this case, U.S. SOF train and equip the resistance forces to cover the roads leading out of the port complex. U.S. SOF also issue the resistance beacons its personnel can deploy to warn inbound U.S. forces of surviving enemy air defenses and concentrations of enemy forces.

H-Hour Activities

When targeted regime fast-patrol boats fire on a tanker escorted by a U.S. warship, the President determines it is time for military action and directs the Secretary of Defense to execute the appropriate contingency plan. At H-hour, U.S. SOF insert teams and link up with the resistance to mine lines of communication, cover enemy airfields with air defense weapons, sabotage communications and electrical circuits, and take other actions that can degrade the enemy's A2AD capabilities and thus facilitate the arrival of allied forces. Just before H-hour, U.S. SOF also reconnoiter all A2AD locations to confirm that the preliminary U.S. air campaign has disabled them and that landing and drop zones are safe to use. U.S. SOF also assist arriving forces, helping them get organized and orienting them for their onward movement.

Operational Design Considerations

Planners and units conducting operations in this scenario will need to be prepared to develop and execute campaign concepts that pursue the following ends:

- Identify potential insurgent groups in a denied area.
- Validate the feasibility of working through identified insurgent groups, including the political objectives of potential partners.
- Coordinate unconventional warfare efforts targeting A2AD capabilities with joint forces.
- Support friendly state targeting of enemy proxy dark networks.

Unconventional Warfare in Support of a Distant Blockade

Should a nuclear-armed peer competitor with sophisticated A2AD capabilities assert sovereignty over disputed territories using armed force, U.S. policymakers might seek options beyond economic sanctions or conventional warfare that involve direct strikes on the competitor's sovereign territory. In this context, policymakers may fear that economic sanctions are unlikely to roll back the competitor's claims, perhaps leading an ally staking its own claims on the disputed territory and taking precipitous action that would draw the United States into an undesired conflict, or simply that ineffective action would undermine the credibility of U.S. security commitments globally. Policymakers would also have reasonable grounds for concern regarding the risk that a conventional war—even one conducted with purely distant-strike options—might escalate into a nuclear conflict due to ambiguities inherent to selected targets.

Special warfare campaign planners assessing the peer competitor might identify its strategic center of gravity as its domestic political legitimacy, its critical requirement for continued robust economic growth to sustain the competitor government's domestic legitimacy, and its critical vulnerability in its economy's dependence on sea routes for trade and access to resources (e.g., oil, rare earth materials). Under these conditions, policymakers might consider implementing a distant blockade using naval assets and unconventional warfare approaches.

Concept of Operations

The U.S. Treasury, DoS, and CIA work to identify what imports are most critical to the state's economy, identifying countries of origin and transportation routes and modes. DoS orchestrates sanctions against the state, and the United States and its allies implement a blockade. Due to the state's geographic location and deliberate hedging against the risk of blockade (e.g., development of overland routes), the coalition's naval and land-based antiship missile blockade imperfectly cuts off resources from the aggressor state. The special warfare task force, with policy guidance from the National Security Council, identifies countries of origin that are violating the sanctions and undertakes covert actions to undermine their ability to supply the state's economy by working with other U.S. government agencies and encouraging strikes and, in some cases, sabotage at key manufacturing, mining, pipeline, and transportation facilities. Although there is a desire to expand operations to third countries, policymakers determine that this mix of traditional and unconventional blockade is the only way to avoid allies taking more aggressive action to assert their rights over the disputed territory, drawing the United States into a conventional conflict that might escalate into a nuclear one.

Operational Design Considerations

Planners and units conducting operations in this scenario will need to be prepared to develop and execute campaign concepts that

- require integrated analysis and planning with interagency partners
- focus on economic and trade considerations
- involve covert action
- involve SOF activities that may be directed by other U.S. government agencies.

Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction

WMD Elimination in a Weak State: Covert FID

A U.S. partner regime continues to be very protective of its sovereignty. This concern makes it nearly impossible for the prospective partner government to countenance the presence of U.S. forces on its territory. The government, however, has no illusions about the loyalty of its subordinate ministries and agencies and has confirmed that elements of its intelligence agency have become radicalized and are actively working to transfer nuclear weapons to Islamist actors without the authorization of the government. This problem set is exacerbated by the regime's deteriorating stability as an Islamist insurgent group makes advances in securing larger areas of control beyond its traditional safe areas along the state's periphery. The partner government,

knowing it cannot credibly deny or survive an A. Q. Khan–like proliferation event, asks the United States for covert assistance to prevent such transfers.²

Concept of Operations

Given the sensitivities expressed by the partner nation to the presence of U.S. forces on its territory, U.S. assistance evolves along low-observable paths. First, the office of defense cooperation attached to the U.S. embassy serves as the conduit for specialized technical monitoring equipment, in this case portal monitoring equipment for installation at the entry/exit points of all military garrisons, airports and air bases, and seaports. This equipment would alert the authorities to nuclear materials transiting the portals. The United States provides technicians to train the partner government's operators in the installation, maintenance, and use of the equipment. The expectation is that, when there is an alert, local security forces will detain the vehicle and search it to discover what cargo set off the alert.

The United States begins running HUMINT source operations through its official presence in the country to create a nuclear weapon–specific HUMINT network. It does not share this fact with the partner government because neither party is certain of the full extent of its radicalization.

At the same time, USSOCOM directs the creation of a crisis-response JSOTF in another regional partner nation's territory with maritime, air, and land capabilities that enable surgical strike to interdict transfers in the event that the weak state's authorities fail to respond appropriately to portal monitoring alarms. The JSOTF is carefully integrated with U.S. Strategic Command's Joint Functional Component Command–Global Strike and Center for Combating WMD.

As the partner nation's control over its periphery declines due to the increased activity of radical insurgents, the United States covertly engages with marginalized groups in the insurgents' area of de facto control. It bolsters their capacity for self-protection to divert insurgent efforts to further destabilize the partner nation and to enlist their aid as an interdiction force should nuclear material transfer to extremists be identified by HUMINT personnel before surgical-strike capabilities can be employed.

The United States monitors the partner nation's portal devices remotely. Their alerts cue other U.S. surveillance systems, including aerial surveillance from standoff orbits, signals intelligence to identify communication traffic consistent with official complicity, and, in some instances, full-motion video of the vehicle involved.³ The HUMINT network is pulsed to provide near-real-time updates on the transfer event. The U.S. embassy consults with the partner-nation government on the matter, especially to ascertain whether there was a transfer, the facility at which it occurred, and the suspected destination of the stolen weapons.

Based on the best information available, the JSOTF prepares to interdict the vehicle making the transfer. HUMINT from assets near ports and airfields can be critical in this phase of the operation to help the JSOTF understand how the weapons may be leaving the partner's territory.

² Abdul Qadeer Khan is a pioneering Pakistani nuclear physicist and engineer accused by Western intelligence officials of running a black market that sold nuclear technology and information to Iran, North Korea, and other states.

³ Depending on the circumstances of the event (e.g., whether the United States can identify the vehicle transporting the weapon, standoff distances to it, and look angles).

U.S. ships with U.S. SOF lie in wait off the partner nation's coast to conduct visit, board, search, and seizure operations against ships suspected of carrying the nuclear cargo. The ship and crew can be returned to a partner-nation port, where officials will reestablish control over the cargo and begin an investigation.

U.S. aircraft supported by an aerial refueling bridge will await suspect aircraft leaving the partner nation's airspace. They will redirect such aircraft to land on the partner nation's airfields, where government authorities can reclaim the weapons and return them to the appropriate security authority. The aircrews will also be interrogated to unravel the network of officials involved in the scheme to transfer weapons in the first place. In cases in which the aircraft refuses to redirect to partner-nation airspace, U.S. aircraft can follow it to its destination. If that destination turns out to be Iran or North Korea (or another nation inimical to U.S. interests in future), U.S. authorities should be prepared to make decisions authorizing use of force to shoot down the aircraft rather than let it transfer its cargo to such actors.

When HUMINT and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) intelligence indicates the cargo is moving along surface routes, the United States can share that information with the partner nation's authorities and afford them the opportunity to arrest the traffickers. As a failsafe mechanism, however, U.S. SOF would deploy preemptively to the border crossings indicated by ISR and HUMINT to backstop the partner-nation authorities. In this role, U.S. SOF would take up hidden positions in adjacent territory as the last chance to interdict the transfer operation.

Operational Design Considerations

Planners and units conducting operations in this scenario will need to be prepared to develop and execute campaign concepts toward the following ends:

- Integrate employment of special warfare and surgical-strike capabilities.
- Identify potential WMD elimination networks. Unless mercenary, networks will likely exist for some other purpose.
- Build high-end intelligence capabilities in nonstate partner forces.
- Sustain long-endurance partnerships with a low probability of employment (e.g., embed).
- Conduct "surgical" extraction/elimination of WMD materiel in fluid environments.
- Identify or train personnel capable of discerning the motives and capabilities of potential WMD elimination networks.
- Identify or train personnel who can safely secure and transfer WMD materiel.
- Create a fusion cell for integrating WMD and violent extremist organization intelligence.
- Accept the risk of compromise associated with long-endurance missions with low probability of employment to build networks trusted with WMD-related missions.

Global Network Counterproliferation: Covert Counterproliferation

A targeted regime has an established history of smuggling and trafficking to raise convertible currency. It has engaged in counterfeiting U.S. currency and drug, weapon, and human trafficking and has been implicated in a nuclear proliferation network. One of the by-products of its involvement in these activities has been the creation of a "dark network" to conduct its trafficking operations. The network's daily operations have been entrusted to a low-profile unit within the targeted regime's military.

After years of speculation about “hard landings” and “soft landings” to describe the nature of the regime’s likely eventual demise, the United States is taken completely by surprise when the regime spontaneously collapses. Within hours, hordes of refugees appear along the targeted regime’s border and attempt to cross into a friendly nation. Shortly thereafter, U.S. and partner-nation intelligence begins detecting combat between the former regime’s army units. Intelligence officials interpret these engagements as contests for control of local fiefdoms by unit commanders. A key concern for U.S. and partner-nation officials, in addition to refugees, humanitarian assistance, and the escalation of violence among armed target regime factions, is the fate of the country’s WMD programs and, in particular, its nuclear weapons. Making these concerns more compelling and urgent, intelligence personnel have been collecting indications that the dark network is actively seeking buyers for elements of the nuclear arsenal and its delivery systems. Indicators include signs of interest from other regimes hostile to U.S. interests.

Concept of Operations

WMD Elimination and Counterproliferation

The presidents of the United States and the partner nation concur that they cannot allow the transfer of WMD—not the weapons themselves, associated technology and data, or the scientists and technicians who worked in the program. The two presidents agree to a multifaceted campaign comprising

- offensive counterforce strikes against the 100-some known and suspected WMD-related facilities
- follow-on seizure of those facilities to secure and survey them to determine whether they contain WMD-related materials and personnel
- render-safe operations for any related materials and their removal for subsequent disposal
- a public appeal to the surviving political and military leadership to cooperate, including personal cash incentives for officials who do so.

Intelligence officials and planners agree that it is likely that looters and residual security forces will be encountered at many of the WMD-related sites. Therefore, battalion task forces will be necessary to seize and clear each site so that technicians can conduct the surveys and locate any WMD-related materiel, technology, data, or personnel. Each battalion task force will build on one or more infantry battalions. The task forces will have a SOF and explosive ordnance disposal component and a nuclear weapon technical component.

The concept of operations (CONOP) is straightforward. The infantry will conduct the assault on the site, defeat local security forces if they resist, drive off looters, and establish a perimeter. SOF and explosive ordnance disposal personnel will work together to get nuclear technicians to the interior of the site, breach and defeat locks and antitampering devices, and create an environment in which the technicians can do their work. When WMD-related items are discovered, the technicians and explosive ordnance disposal personnel will conduct the render-safe operations, and SOF will provide security until disposition instructions are received. In instances in which the material is to be evacuated by air to a secure location, SOF will provide the en route security.

Because the United States and the partner nation do not have enough infantry to conduct simultaneous operations against all WMD-related sites, an air cap will provide security over

as-yet-unoccupied locations until U.S. or partner forces are freed to move to them. In instances in which personnel on the ground persist in attempting to enter these sites, a combatant commander's in-extremis force company will be on strip alert to respond. Should large-unit resistance be suspected, the larger response units may be called upon to respond.

In cases in which marauding regime army units attempt to interfere with U.S. and host-nation WMD recovery operations, the tactical air control parties with the battalion task force will employ close air support to help route the enemy.

In some cases, U.S. and partner SOF are able to engage target regime military commanders who were contacted through an intelligence entity. The U.S. and partner SOF form joint teams to embed in the former regime's military unit to help destroy former regime elements that decline integration with the partner nation.

Unfortunately, the amount of time required to deploy these forces results in the leakage of important documentation and materials. Although the state has collapsed, the regime's office for managing its international illicit commercial activities network becomes a conduit for selling WMD materiel. SOF works with the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the CIA to map dark networks and interdict transfers. In some cases, this requires interdiction in depth through nonstate partners in nations in which the United States does not wish to risk escalating tensions through conventional force strike packages.

Operational Design Considerations

Planners and units conducting operations in this scenario will need to be prepared to develop and execute campaign concepts that pursue the following ends:

- Create a counter-WMD intelligence fusion cell with a forensic finance capability. This may require the augmentation of WMD technicians with personnel with technical language expertise (e.g., bilingual scientists) in combined WMD elimination operations.
- Develop HUMINT networks in WMD-relevant commercial sectors in both denied areas and neutral countries with poor enforcement mechanisms.
- Coordinate joint and interagency interdiction efforts against air, land, and sea lines of communication.
- Employ combined SOF teams operating in denied areas.
- Develop nonstate partners in denied areas to block threat movements for counterproliferation missions.

Provide a Stabilizing Presence

Stabilizing a Fractured State: Multinational FID

Tensions between diverse populations in a country that influences U.S. national interests have occasionally flared into violence over the past several years, and the government has consistently failed to implement serious reform programs.⁴ In this scenario, these trends continue and strengthen over the coming decade, ultimately leading to violence and potential state collapse. Considering its national interests, the United States chooses to help stabilize the country and support a change in government rather than risk its implosion.

⁴ The regime management and counter-genocide scenarios are adapted from ongoing RAND research.

Background

In the decade following 2015, the government becomes progressively weaker, losing control of several peripheral regions of the country. Governors of these regions gradually cement their own authority, developing extensive informal networks and alliances with parts of the country's military.

In the presidential election of 2020, the electoral victory of the incumbent president is violently disputed in certain regions. Elements of the military, led by renegade groups of officers, stage a coup and declare martial law in an effort to prevent further disintegration. The military quickly disintegrates, with many security units allying with regional governors. As violence escalates toward full-scale civil war, the United Nations (UN) Security Council, with the concurrence of the government of the country in question, approves a peace enforcement operation under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Rebel groups vow resistance to any international forces that deploy in their country.

Concept of Operations

In this scenario, the United States and coalition partners opt for an intervention designed to separate the warring parties temporarily while brokering a power-sharing agreement as quickly as possible. As the old regime collapses, SOF (in conjunction with local and interagency partners) help create and empower new governance structures. The United States seeks to minimize its peacekeeping force requirements by relying on other international forces and the remnants of the government's security forces wherever feasible.

A key effort entails deploying a peacekeeping force that bolsters the security gaps between the regions in conflict of the country. Much of this area is sparsely populated, reducing force requirements (but increasing the need for aviation assets). The international peacekeeping force, however, will be responsible for providing population security in the capital city and the ethnic flashpoints of other major cities. It will also be responsible for security along critical resupply routes.

While international security forces conduct security operations to help stabilize the country, SOF conduct operations to further facilitate the transition. SOF, in concert with interagency and international partners, assist stakeholders in

- enabling social movements to challenge existing powerbrokers without descending into lawlessness
- supporting the introduction of a modicum of pluralism so that broad coalitions can form and endure
- empowering civil society institutions to coordinate the demands of the population so that opposition movements can neither be easily crushed by current elites nor inevitably turn into vehicles for another group to take control of existing extractive institutions
- supporting capacity-building efforts for a free press.⁵

In support of this design, SOF lead a number of operational efforts. First, they conduct FID to support the transition from the government's collapse to a healthier state of governance. Key tasks for this undertaking include identifying key actors and groups with power, influ-

⁵ Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*, New York: Crown Publishers, 2012, pp. 460–461.

ence, and authority who desire more effective governance that takes into account the concerns of multiple stakeholders. With this understanding in mind, SOF conduct special warfare with appropriate partners to help build the requisite individual, organizational, and institutional systems so that the new government has a monopoly over violence. SOF may also support non-combatant evacuation operations for international workers, diplomats, and other expatriates in the country in a non- or semipermissive environment. They will be also responsible for surgical strikes against any terrorist or insurgent forces that target international personnel or members of the new government coalition.

Operational Design Considerations

Planners and units conducting operations in this scenario will need to be prepared to develop and execute campaign concepts that pursue the following ends:

- Assess the capabilities, power, influence, authority, and intent of stakeholders and current state of existing political institutions.
- Analyze socioeconomic, cultural, geographic, historical, religious, political, and ethnic conditions that affect the operational environment and foster discontent among the populace.
- Understand both popular and elite politics in the targeted country.
- Shape popular support for selected components of the resistance.
- Anticipate radical dialogue and depress polarizing dynamics.
- Enhance the capacity of pragmatists and moderates to resolve deep-level conflicts and meet constituent needs.⁶

Building a Security Exporter in “Phase 0”: FID in a Regional Context

The scenarios described here suggest the deployment of a special operations joint task force to conduct special warfare operations. More commonly, the joint force will be conducting FID in scenarios that may not require or allow such a footprint during what the relevant GCC considers steady-state, noncrisis, conditions (referred to as phase 0, or the shape phase).⁷ Shaping operations are often much smaller in scale and the number of personnel involved than most crisis scenarios (though covert unconventional warfare may be still smaller). The operational environments can be very different between crisis and phase 0 scenarios (less volatile). However, shaping operations still require operational art to make a positive impact over time. As one special warfare practitioner noted, “SOF operational art involves never leaving phase 1.”⁸

A common sentiment for GCCs is “If a crisis drives them out of phase 0, they’ve failed.”⁹ Colonel (ret.) Dave Maxwell, a well-regarded special warfare practitioner and researcher,

⁶ The last four bullets were adapted from Don E. Beck, “Lincoln and Polarization” *Integral Leadership Review*, January 7, 2013.

⁷ The “phase 0” language is drawn from the six-phase joint operation construct: shape (0), deter (I), seize the initiative (II), dominate (III), stabilize (IV), enable civil authority (V), and a return to shape (0). The most recent joint planning doctrine (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0, Washington, D.C., August 11, 2011a) treats these phases as notional rather than prescriptive, but the usage is still common among practitioners.

⁸ Interview by the research team, February 14, 2013.

⁹ Interview with a Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, staff member, Pentagon, July 19, 2013.

observed, “We need a phase 0 campaign plan, not a campaign plan with a phase 0.”¹⁰ In this scenario, we seek to illustrate how a special warfare campaign might be employed in the shape phase to shore up the stability of a partner nation that has the resources and regional credibility to become a security exporter to its neighbors, furthering U.S. policy objectives in the region while reducing the direct burden on U.S. resources.

Background

The people of a developing country are caught between the efforts of government leaders who protect certain extractive institutions for personal gain and other leaders who are working toward more inclusive governance structures. Security forces mirror this societal dynamic between leaders who defend the status quo and use their power for personal gain and those who see a better future by safeguarding a more inclusive and pluralistic political process. This friction between inclusivity and exclusivity frustrates opportunities for its citizens to become educated, access to essential services, and grow small businesses. Discontent is simmering in many parts of the country, with occasional outbreaks of violence and demonstrations. Moderate civil society, business, and government leaders help keep the tension in check thanks to entrepreneurial efforts that provide employment and educational options to their constituents. If these destabilizing issues can be addressed, the partner nation has sufficient resources and capacity to become a net security exporter in a troubled region.

Concept of Operations

SOF deploy small hybrid teams, including civil affairs and military information support personnel, to support the country team. The regional TSOC provides active support (such as intelligence, logistics, contracting, and communications) and facilitates “up and out” coordination with the GCC, Washington-based DoS staff, and other relevant country teams in the region on behalf of its deployed elements.

Deployed elements provide bottom-up innovative initiatives and work with the country teams and TSOC leaders to obtain top-down guidance, resources, and commitments. They work together with various agencies and country team partners to produce a coherent operational design that weaves together a variety of exercises, foreign military sales, joint combined exchange training, mobile training teams, exchange programs, and other related capacity-building initiatives. This coordinated effort aims to “help shape the operational environment and keep the day-to-day tensions between nations or groups below the threshold of armed conflict.”¹¹

Operational Design Considerations

Planners and units conducting operations in this scenario will need to be prepared to develop and execute campaign concepts that pursue the following ends:

- Understand the needs, concerns, capabilities, authorities, and limitations of interagency partners in the country team.
- Assess the capabilities, power, influence, authority, and intent of key stakeholders in the country and the current state of their political institutions.

¹⁰ Interview with Dave Maxwell, Washington, D.C., April 12, 2013.

¹¹ Headquarters, U.S. Department of the Army, 2012, p. I-3.

- Analyze socioeconomic, cultural, geographic, historical, religious, political, and ethnic conditions that affect the operational environment and foster discontent among the populace.
- Synchronize partner capacity building, information operations, and civil actions (and surgical-strike operations, if necessary) with the country team and partner nation across time, space, and purpose.
- Design security cooperation programs to facilitate interoperability and operationalize engagement with partners.
- Translate, understand, and integrate the programs, processes, and goals of other agencies into a coherent plan to achieve a synchronized effect.¹²

Conduct Humanitarian, Disaster Relief, and Other Operations

Counter genocide Unconventional Warfare

The country in this scenario is landlocked, poor, almost devoid of physical infrastructure, and desperately short of educated and experienced technocrats to run its fledgling institutions. At present, it is entirely dependent on neighboring countries to transport its natural resources and goods to world markets, but these countries have been locked in a conflict that impedes trade and commerce.

Background

In this scenario, tensions escalate between the government and opposition factions. Violence is precipitated by disagreements over the distribution of natural resource revenues and the concentration of power in the current government, but the conflict echoes and magnifies long-standing ethnic and cultural tensions among the diverse stakeholders. Because the government remains little more than an abstraction throughout much of the country's territory beyond the capital, there is little to keep these tensions from escalating into large-scale violence. Neighboring countries fan the flames by providing money and weapons to armed opposition groups. Eventually, the civil war escalates to include a clear potential for genocide. The conflict leaves in its wake more than 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), along with hundreds of thousands of refugees. The capacity of the NGOs operating in the country is overwhelmed, and their ability to operate is greatly hindered by extreme insecurity. The level of risk and scale of the humanitarian disaster is such that the region does not believe it can provide the requisite capabilities and instead asks for assistance from the UN. The UN Security Council supports a peace enforcement operation authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter with a mandate to enforce a tenuous ceasefire, protect civilians and deliver humanitarian aid, and support the creation of a functional government of national unity.

The United States seeks to avoid renewed genocide in the region, to “make good” on its long-standing commitment and considerable aid to the country, and to secure its minor but not trivial interests in the region (preventing broadening destabilization, foreign intervention, and further disruptions to regional natural resource exports). U.S. participation in a peace-

¹² Brian Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero*, Denver, Colo.: Outskirts Press, 2013.

keeping operation is complicated by the risk that terrorists or rebel forces will seek to strike Western peacekeepers using local supporters.

Concept of Operations

From a special warfare perspective, SOF work with international partners, including government and nongovernmental entities, to create a safe and secure environment to facilitate the return of IDPs and the formation of a power-sharing government. In nonpermissive or semi-permissive environments, SOF help prevent a humanitarian crisis, especially among IDPs at risk of starvation. Integrated special forces, military information support, and civil affairs elements also provide emergency humanitarian relief for IDPs in remote and highly insecure locations and coordinate actions with NGOs caring for the IDPs in more accessible locations.

SOF also employ their capabilities and expertise to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate former combatants and develop capable, responsible security forces. SOF planners design programs to build partner capacity for security forces, including selected army and police units. Beyond providing special warfare support, SOF will also conduct surgical-strike missions to interdict material support for insurgents along the borders with neighboring countries.

Operational Design Considerations

Planners and units conducting operations in this scenario will need to be prepared to develop and execute campaign concepts that pursue the following ends:

- Employ a special operations joint task force.
- Integrate special warfare and surgical-strike capabilities (including operations, logistics, and command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance).
- Analyze socioeconomic, cultural, geographic, historical, religious, political, and ethnic conditions that affect the operational environment and foster discontent among the populace.
- Assess the capabilities, power, influence, and intent of the diverse stakeholders (including existing political institutions).
- Understand the capabilities and limitations of governmental and nongovernmental partners providing humanitarian, food, and medical assistance.
- Evaluate and upgrade as needed existing lines of communication, transportation systems, and logistical infrastructure to facilitate operations (including the delivery of humanitarian assistance).
- Design and manage civil-military operations centers and other similar collaborative platforms to bring stakeholders together to find common ground and take collective action.

Preparation of the Environment

SOF consider PE to be a critical activity to lay the groundwork for conducting many special operations, particularly those defined as *special warfare* in Army Doctrine Publication 3-05. Yet, these activities are not well understood by the joint and interagency communities. This poses a difficulty for their proposal, approval, and incorporation into the military and joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational planning processes and their conduct in relevant countries during the “shape” phase of a military operation (also known as phase 0). In addition, current classified doctrine, regulations, and training documents on PE may require further elaboration to increase their rigor and consistent application, which could, in turn, increase the concept’s acceptability to the supported commander and the chief(s) of mission. Finally, an evaluation of the current mechanisms by which these activities are conducted could lead to recommendations for improvements in those mechanisms or the introduction of additional means by which PE could be conducted in relevant countries.

Preparation of the environment is defined in JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, as “an umbrella term for operations and activities conducted by selectively trained special operations forces to prepare the operational environment for potential future special operations.”¹ PE has been approved for inclusion in the DoD dictionary of doctrinal terms (JP 1-02), but as of this writing it has not been included.

The 2014 revision of JP 3-05 features a significantly expanded the description of the concept, which was brief in the 2011 version, and attempts to explain why it is essential to special warfare, and more broadly, to the assessment and development of viable options that may be proposed to a supported commander to address threats and conflicts short of waging major combat operations. The revision also explicitly describes PE’s three component activities: OPE, advance force operations, and intelligence operations.

It also states that PE is

conducted during the shape phase of an operation as well as for developing and preparing for the entry of forces and supporting agencies to resolve conflicts using either lethal or nonlethal actions. PE supports special operations advance force operations (AFO) being conducted to refine the location of specific, identified targets and further develops the operational environment. Special operations AFO encompass many operational preparation of the environment (OPE) activities, but are intended to prepare for near-term [direct action]. Special operations AFO may include, but are not limited to: close-target reconnaissance; tagging, tracking, and locating (TTL); reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI) of forces; infrastructure development; and terminal guidance. Unless

¹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014, p. IV-3.

specifically withheld, special operations AFO also include [direct action] in situations when failure to act will mean loss of a fleeting opportunity for success.²

A deeper appreciation of the degree to which special operations depend on PE for success is necessary. Most of the core activities require detailed knowledge of nongovernmental friendly and enemy “dark networks” to leverage them or target and disrupt, degrade, or defeat them, as well as for identifying and developing the specific means for doing so.³ PE requires an extended period of time for forces to gain the requisite knowledge and entrée on the ground and to make the practical arrangements that are the necessary precursors to the follow-on special operations activity.

The essential conundrum is that these PE activities are necessary to produce sound, realistic estimates, proposals, and concepts of operations, especially in countries where U.S. forces have little or no access, and other intelligence and informational sources are lacking. These activities provide the vital information and insight needed to assess the potential, the risk, and the feasibility of possible special operations activities. The burden is on the TSOC or other designated special operations entity to craft a viable estimate and proposed course of action (COA) for the employment of SOF to address a threat or potential threat in a given country of interest. To develop such proposals, SOF personnel who are specifically prepared to undertake PE must be permitted to conduct these activities to generate COAs for the supported commander.

The argument for a robust approach to PE (in countries where incipient or actual threat conditions warrant) is grounded in the mandate to provide options to the supported commander. These options include an array of possible flexible deterrence response operations.⁴ SOF have the capability to provide creative options to the supported commander to undertake activities that can mitigate or potentially even prevent threats, conflicts, or the development of a wider war. If postured and presented as a conflict mitigation and conflict prevention tool, special operations and the attendant precursor PE activities might find greater receptivity from the supported commander and the chief(s) of mission whose prerogative it is to grant or withhold country clearance for any PE activity carried out in his or her jurisdiction. Special operations commanders made decisions that compounded this reticence in the early years after 9/11 when they inserted personnel in countries without chief of mission approval.⁵

Thus, the ideal approach to providing the widest array of viable options would be for the supported commander to adopt a proactive attitude toward authorizing the conduct of PE where warranted but couple that proactivity with a measured and rigorous approach to subsequent evaluations and assessments informed by the on-the-ground knowledge. Intensive

² U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014, p. II-4–II-5.

³ *Dark network* usually refers to a covert and illegal network, but it might also be used to describe any hidden or relatively unknown network or organization that could be mobilized by friendly or enemy forces. The term was coined by Jorg Raab and Brint Milward in “Dark Networks as Problems,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 2003; it is also cited in Seth Lucente and Greg Wilson, “Crossing the Red Line: Social Media and Social Network Analysis for Unconventional Campaign Planning,” *Special Warfare*, July–September 2013.

⁴ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0, Washington, D.C., August 11, 2011b.

⁵ Open-source references to military liaison elements (discussed later in this section) and the issues involving them include Thom Shanker and Scott Shane, “Elite Troops Get Expanded Role on Intelligence,” *New York Times*, March 8, 2006; David Ignatius, “The Blurring of CIA and Military,” *Washington Post*, June 1, 2011; Rowan Scarborough, “Special Operations Forces Eye Terrorists, Command Draws Up War Plans,” *Washington Times*, August 12, 2005; and Ann Scott Tyson and Dana Priest, “Pentagon Seeking Leeway Overseas, Operations Could Bypass Envoys,” *Washington Post*, February 24, 2005.

PE carried out over time should enable special operators to develop valuable information that directly contributes to improved estimates, mission analysis, and the development of COAs and CONOPs.⁶ As part of these established planning processes, the additional knowledge should also directly feed an improved risk and feasibility assessment that is required for COAs, CONOPs, and further plan development.

The 2014 revision of JP 3-05 should increase general awareness of PE, the requirement for it, and its utility to the supported command, and there might be value in similarly revising other overarching joint doctrinal publications. The rationale for doing so is the tendency of GCCs and the wider policy planning community to adopt an overly narrowly conception of shape, or phase 0, activities.⁷ Although JP 5-0 does include the mandate to include “shaping activities for contingency plans,” the great majority of activities in theater campaign plans are security cooperation activities, which may contribute to or provide cover for PE but do not substitute for the specific PE components of OPE, AFO, and intelligence operations.

The language in JP 5-0 does provide for the conduct of PE, but it may not be readily apparent to GCC planners, staffs, and commanders. Steady-state operations and activities, which encompass shaping activities (including shaping elements of contingency plans), should be designed to support ongoing operations, prepare to defeat potential adversaries, succeed in a wide range of contingencies, build the capacity of partner nations, and, in conjunction with other instruments of national power, promote stability in key regions and support other broad national goals. The campaign plan is the primary vehicle for designing, organizing, integrating, and executing security cooperation activities.⁸

Specifically, the PE activities required in the shape phase (or phase 0) will strike many conventional planners, staff, and commanders as logically part of a contingency plan. But if PE is not undertaken until a decision is made to execute a contingency plan, there will often be insufficient time and, therefore, knowledge, access, placement, and influence to accomplish the various precursor activities to lay the groundwork for a special operations plan to succeed, even if the plan’s objective is to mitigate a conflict or disrupt or degrade an enemy threat rather than prevent the former or achieve total victory over the latter.

This mismatch in phasing conceptions is most acute in the case of unconventional warfare: The first two or three of the seven doctrinal phases of unconventional warfare logically occur in the shape phase (phase 0).⁹ But it is equally problematic for other special warfare missions, given the importance of conducting PE and doing so in a deliberate and thorough manner so that it can feed the plans and assessment process, as well as ensure the success of any subsequent operations that are authorized.

⁶ Per JP 5-0, TSOC commanders are to develop their estimates to shape GCC theater campaign plans (U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011a, p. II-7). JP 5-0 also provides formatting guidance for a notional strategic estimate.

⁷ In an interview with the researchers, a senior special operations commander stated that, “as a TSOC commander, if you manage your [joint combined exchange training] and participate in Ellipse exercises, you can be a success.” He characterized the GCC as mostly attuned to security cooperation activities (interview with a two-time former TSOC commander, August 7, 2013).

⁸ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011a, p. II-22.

⁹ Paul J. Tompkins, Jr., “Planning Considerations for Unconventional Warfare,” unpublished document, Ft. Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Operations Command, 2012, discusses the mismatch in phasing constructs and the resulting confusion as it relates to unconventional warfare.

Chief of mission and GCC anxieties over PE activities may not always be a result of doctrinal confusion; substantive concerns could also arise over the political, operations security, and force protection risk associated with PE activities being compromised. These concerns need to be seriously examined, understood, and addressed when planning for PE activities.

Improving PE Employment

In recent years, an extensive body of classified guidance has been developed to educate and instruct special operations personnel in the conduct of PE. A review of the relevant publications suggests that this guidance is generally clear, sound (grounded in law and doctrine), and consistent. A full examination of whether the doctrine and other guidance is adequate was outside the scope of our study, but some experts interviewed believed that further development and greater detail were needed to ensure that PE activities were carried out consistently and produced desired results (e.g., knowledge, placement, access, and development of targeting information, friendly networks, and physical infrastructure).

The failure to conduct PE with sufficient lead time and rigor is one factor in the spotty historical record with regard to special operations, particularly unconventional warfare.¹⁰ One practitioner leveled a sweeping critique of this track record, including the proficiency required to conduct not only unconventional warfare but also PE for other special warfare activities. The first slide of a presentation he provided to the research team stated,

Unfortunately we as a community have lacked the appropriate verbiage, terms of reference and common understanding required to institute a professional standard of knowledge and skills, thereby undermining its credibility with key decision makers. As a result, civilian and military leadership have very mixed feelings regarding this topic. Until we are willing to address the first point the second point will not change.¹¹

The first two phases of unconventional warfare (preparation and initial contact) overlap to some degree with PE activities carried out for other special warfare missions. Phase 3 of unconventional warfare, infiltration, might overlap as well in that the essential activity of this phase is to infiltrate the area in which a resistance force is operating, establish communication with its population base, and make contact with the resistance organization. The subsequent phase, if authorized, would entail the actual organizing, training, and equipping a resistance force.¹²

Grdovic suggests that there is a need for greater focus in doctrine and professional education on the critical role of feasibility assessments in the operations process. Elements of a feasibility assessment might include an evaluation of whether indigenous leadership possesses a baseline of requisite skills, whether there is a sympathetic population base that is sufficiently strong to withstand likely government retaliation, the severity of regime vulnerabilities, and

¹⁰ Interview with Mark Grdovic, a retired special forces officer who has conducted extensive research on unconventional warfare, August 7, 2013.

¹¹ Mark Grdovic, "Unconventional Warfare," briefing provided to the researchers, 2011.

¹² Mark Grdovic, *A Leader's Handbook to Unconventional Warfare*, Publication 09-1, Ft. Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, November 2009.

whether there is terrain conducive to guerrilla operations. In addition, Grdovic recommends that a set of minimum criteria be established to screen the compatibility of potential partners' goals, ideology, and behavior with U.S. interests. Feasibility assessments may include clandestine operations prior to any decision to conduct unconventional warfare.

However, commanders and policymakers should keep in mind that this fine distinction between assessing the viability of unconventional warfare partners and the actual conduct of unconventional warfare operations may be lost on the targeted country if this form of PE is discovered. Careful consideration should be given to whether the prospective value of PE activities is worth the risk to U.S. diplomatic goals. These considerations should be weighed, in turn, against the challenge of reactive planning when policymakers become interested in executing a special warfare campaign and conditions on the ground are changing dynamically.¹³

There is a misperception among some in the military, including the special operations community, that a "bag of money can solve most problems, to include the lack of a viable indigenous partner. . . . Money can effectively buy certain [limited] services [ranging from] security services to spies. . . . While the potential for resistance in a given area can be enhanced to a small degree it cannot be manufactured."¹⁴ Such "surrogates" might serve limited purposes, but without a base of popular support and a degree of consonance with U.S. values and interests, the long-term benefits and, indeed, the ultimate success of the venture might be limited or even counterproductive.¹⁵

A systematic approach to PE would include more detailed guidance on the knowledge base that must be developed to undergird the plans and operations for special warfare, as well as a more refined or rigorous approach to assessing both the risk and feasibility of proposed special operations activities. A School of Advanced Military Studies thesis outlined one possible approach that identified PE lines of effort using political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure; specified actions with decisions points; and established both measures of performance and measures of effectiveness to be employed in risk and feasibility assessments.¹⁶

That thesis also raises the possibility that some of this analytical and assessment function could be conducted or supported by USSOCOM. This would have two advantages. First, it would leverage USSOCOM resources to supplement the smaller TSOC staff, among whom the preponderance of regional expertise should logically reside. Second, it could assist in feeding relevant data from across the GCC into the analysis and assessment process. The TSOC

¹³ See Crist's account of how President Carter's national security team requested planning for military intervention in Iran shortly after Khomeini had returned there in February 1979 (David Crist, *The Twilight War: The Secret History of America's Thirty-Year Conflict with Iran*, New York: Penguin, 2013). General Robert Huyser, deputy commander in chief of U.S. European Command, was asked if he would be willing return to Iran to facilitate a coup. According to Crist, "Huyser privately wondered, 'Why didn't they ask that question while I was in Tehran and the Iranian military was still intact?'"

¹⁴ Mark Grdovic, emails to the RAND study team, August 12 and December 16, 2013.

¹⁵ We use the term *surrogate* here derisively. A partner force must have long-term interests sufficiently aligned with those of the United States for the relationship to be described as a partnership rather than a surrogate. The perception that a partner force can be bought, and act purely as an agent of U.S. interests on a transactional basis, may be appropriate for certain short-duration activities that do not require popular legitimacy, but it is not appropriate for a special warfare campaign.

¹⁶ Michael T. Kenny, *Leveraging Operational Preparation of the Environment in the GWOT*, thesis, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.: School for Advanced Military Studies, May 25, 2006. Kenny argues for a more concerted, synchronized approach to OPE. Figure 8 on page 38 of his thesis presents a graphical depiction of logical lines of operation for global OPE.

ought to remain the locus of the COA and CONOP development process, but USSOCOM might provide limited to substantial reachback capability.

USSOCOM might be able to assist in another critical task, which is to develop data and analysis to support the nomination of countries with an incipient or outright threat that should be considered for PE activity. USSOCOM does run the Mission Liaison Element program, but at least one senior commander has recommended that the USSOCOM Strategic Appreciation exercise (an operations research and systems analysis exercise) could be improved and tailored to specifically recommend such target countries for PE, since the number of countries is potentially large and the number of special operations personnel is limited. “It needs to tell me which 20 countries I need to be focused on,” one commander noted.¹⁷

Improving PE Capabilities

The final element that affects the ability of SOF to conduct PE when and where warranted is the mechanism used to conduct the activities. In addition to the development of recent doctrine and other guidance, U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) is engaged in a concerted effort to select and train SOF personnel specifically for PE and unconventional warfare missions. Provided that the TSOCs gain the necessary support from the GCC and chiefs of mission, and that viable plans are developed and approved to launch PE activities in the shape phase as nested in theater campaign plans, this third ingredient to provide qualified personnel to conduct rigorous PE should finally lay the groundwork for vastly improved outputs and success rates in special operations and, particularly, special warfare operations.

The gap in the current mechanism can be summarized as follows. The military liaison element is the primary mechanism developed for PE after 9/11, but performance was inconsistent due to the lack of advanced special operations training and the fact that these individuals were often assigned other duties that prevented the extensive work that proper PE requires. As noted earlier, lack of notification of and approval from the chief of mission soured the post-9/11 environment for more robust PE activity. A more comprehensive evaluation of placement and performance would be advisable to assess whether additional changes are required. This evaluation should provide authoritative answers to the following key questions: Have the right personnel now been assigned to conduct PE in the right locations? Have the designated billets been filled for the requisite amount of time? Have the personnel been able to devote sufficient time to PE activities to provide the required information and develop the relationships, access, and arrangements?

Another innovation in recent years has enhanced the conduct of PE and the execution of sustained special operations. The placement of a forward special operations command or special operations forward liaison element in many countries—often as a *de facto* member of the country team—has ensured that a field-grade officer oversees PE and should ensure full connectivity with the chief of mission and the mission plan. This position has not been codified in doctrine, but in numerous cases, a succession of officers have filled this position over a number of years, generally on one-year tours. Providing a continuous presence, in itself, contributes to PE and provides a mechanism for gaining and sustaining chief-of-mission support for PE’s potential and actual utility.

¹⁷ Interview by the research team, August 7, 2013.

The other mechanism typically used to conduct PE when and as approved by the GCC or other supported commander and the chief of mission is for special operations personnel to conduct these activities during a deployment, training, or other exercises or while assigned temporary duty or a permanent change of station abroad in a country of interest. The potential drawback to all these mechanisms is that the personnel's presence in country is episodic, often of short duration, and other assignments or duties may limit the time available to conduct PE. Given the criticality of PE to almost all special operations core activities, the case could be made for the development of other mechanisms for conducting PE. Third-country nationals, including partner SOF personnel, might be one option, and nonofficial cover assignments could be another. The latter is generally associated with covert action, which requires a presidential finding and stipulation of the agency directed to undertake it. In addition, the ability to create and sustain sufficiently deep cover is another factor that may limit the consideration or application of this latter option.

In summary, three steps may increase the quality and frequency of needed PE activities: (1) improving the SOF interface with the joint planning process at the GCCs to inform the development of special warfare COAs and CONOPs; (2) developing more detailed guidance for personnel conducting PE and more rigorous risk and feasibility assessment criteria and processes; and (3) evaluating the performance of personnel currently conducting PE and potentially developing additional mechanisms for the conduct of PE.

If these efforts are successful, the outcome should be an increased appreciation of the benefits of conducting PE and an increased success rate in the eventual outcomes of special operations undertaken as a result. PE and special operations should be undertaken with the understanding that they are almost always long-term endeavors that require patience and a certain tolerance for vicissitudes and improvisation, within bounds.

PE is the necessary groundwork not only for individual special operations core activities but also for their actual application, which will be a combination of core activities, a sequence of core activities, or a combination of activities and operations by conventional forces or inter-agency partners. It is also necessary for operational-level planning should a special warfare campaign be called for.

Discussion of Study Recommendations

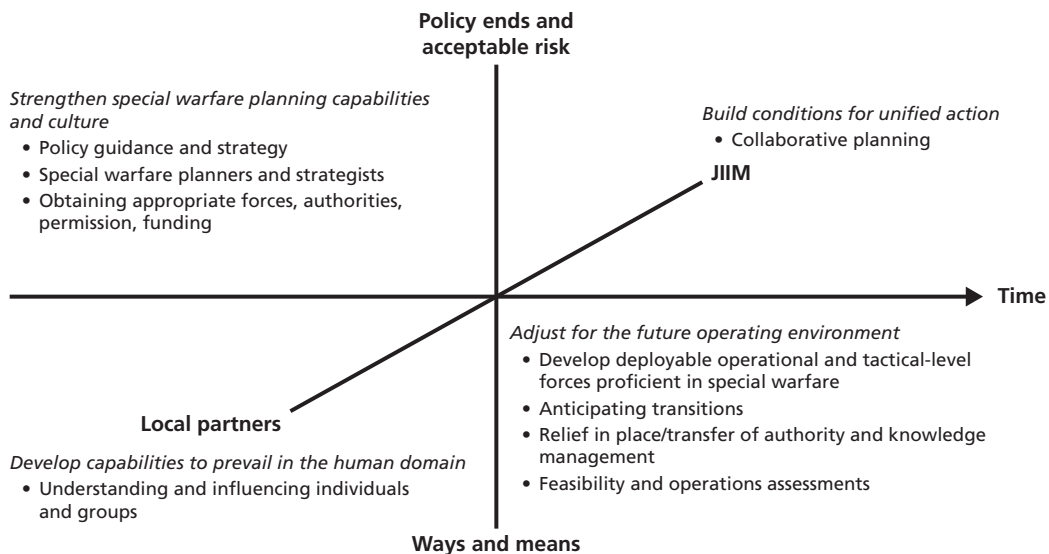
Providing policymakers with a credible special warfare campaign capability requires a variety of efforts by the institutional military, operating forces, GCCs, and policymakers. The framework in Figure G.1 provides a broad illustration of the synchronization challenges for conducting special warfare campaigns, elaborated in the recommendations that follow.

Strengthen Special Warfare Planning Capabilities

Improve the Professional Development of Special Warfare Campaign Planners and Strategists

Currently, special warfare campaign planners are not actively managed, and conventional planners receive limited exposure to special warfare planning challenges. There are two potential solutions to this problem. The SOF community might seek to outsource its strategic and operational thinking by taking on a proponentcy role, selecting members of the existing body of planners and strategists from non-SOF backgrounds for the development of special warfare competence, and designing a career track for them to follow (e.g., a tour as a TSOC planner).

Figure G.1
Framework for Raising Special Warfare to the Operational Level



RAND RR779z1-G.1

The preferred COA would be to develop a viable career track for campaign planners and strategists from within the SOF community. In either case, deliberate thinking about the correct mix of traditional and special warfare experience and strategic education is required. These efforts should be placed in the context of a talent management strategy.

Multiple SOF graduates of the Army's premier campaign planning school, the School of Advanced Military Studies at Ft. Leavenworth, noted that enrollment was not encouraged and that prolonged separation from special forces groups generated significant career risk. A TSOC tour while still a major may be an important developmental experience for SOF campaign planners following graduation from the School of Advanced Military Studies (or after an inter-vening group tour). The John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Unconventional Warfare Operational Design Course and the School of Advanced Military Studies-associated Special Operations, Operational Art Module are steps in the right direction but would likely benefit from greater joint, TSOC, and interagency representation. Currently, there appears to be no structured path for building special warfare strategists, for instance, through the U.S. Army War College's Basic Strategic Arts Program coupled with additional special warfare-specific education. Creating a professional association dedicated to special warfare campaign planners and strategists would be a useful complement to these more career-centric efforts.

Ensure That Special Warfare Campaign Planners Understand Local Complexity and Improve Their Use of Center-of-Gravity Analysis

A high-priority country plan reviewed for this study revealed important misunderstandings of the elements of special warfare campaign design, such as distinctions between strategic and operational centers of gravity and between centers of gravity and critical requirements. These distinctions are more than academic when they facilitate a propensity to start with a preferred target list and plan backwards from there. A target list is not a strategy, and considering it as such risks facilitating a default to the employment of capabilities organic to the planner's organization rather than stimulating critical thought regarding how a joint or interagency approach might be employed to secure U.S. interests or how host-nation nonmilitary capabilities might be leveraged.

One component of developing SOF planners and strategists is habituating them to engaging with relevant U.S. government agencies, as well as with other stakeholders. To facilitate more rigorous analysis, commanders and staffs might consider improved planning tools for specifying the logical relationships between friendly and enemy centers of gravity, critical factors, and COAs.¹ The development of a new design methodology is perhaps the most important innovation in military planning in decades, but it does not obviate the need to penetrate the rich context surrounding a given intervention to identify what truly matters.

Improve SOF Understanding and the Structure of Relevant Special Warfare Funding and Execution Authorities

Legal authorities can place constraints on how a special warfare operation can be executed, though limited knowledge of what these authorities afford can also limit operational planning. With the transition from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and under current fiscal conditions, many of the authorities afforded during these conflicts, typically renewed

¹ Interview by the research team, August 7, 2013. The country plan identified here was reportedly developed without engaging key interagency stakeholders.

annually by Congress, may come under additional scrutiny or be eliminated. Special warfare commanders and planners must engage various U.S. government agencies and joint stakeholders to remain up to speed on the menu of authorities available for planned operations, as well as for advice on methods to fill significant gaps. In particular, many of the unconventional warfare and FID authorities contain stipulations on which actors may be engaged, the purpose of the operation, the methods employed, and the length of the mission.

Conducting a gap analysis of the authorities and their stipulations against the projected demand for unconventional warfare and FID could help inform policymakers on special warfare statutory requirements. Requests for new authorities or permissions are more likely to find support among interagency stakeholders and in Congress when narrowly tailored to meet specific operational requirements. Also, where conventional force and SOF responsibilities begin to merge and overlap in some of these contexts, special care must be applied to establishing clear and effective MOAs for the division of funds between MFP-2 and MFP-11, particularly for unprogrammed needs.

Sheehan stressed in a January 2013 report to Congress that “the patchwork character of existing authorities, each with its own substantive and procedural requirements, presents management challenges in execution.” (See Appendix C for a more detailed discussion.) Therefore, in addition to informing policymakers of their authority needs, SOF commanders and planners should bolster their legal and funding expertise within their respective planning organizations (or leverage existing expertise in the force provider organizations) to take full advantage of available authorities and engage the correct stakeholders.

Improve Access to Subject-Matter Expertise

Given the complexity and uncertainty of the strategic environment, special warfare commanders and planners need ongoing access to expertise in a variety of fields, including culture, history, geography, religion, economics, politics, and social sciences. The SOF community (e.g., USSOCOM, USASOC) should develop networks of subject-matter experts and additional organic capacity to provide a reachback capability to assist forward-deployed elements. USA-SOC’s current outreach effort through its Military Information Support Operations Command Engagement Group is an excellent example of movement in this direction. Additional models that provide more robust organic capability that could be used as reachback support for deployed forces should also be considered.

Create a Special Warfare Planning Culture

Improve the Clarity of Policy Guidance and Operational Objectives

A standard complaint of operational-level planners (e.g., combatant command and TSOC planners) is that they do not receive clear policy guidance. Seeking to design campaigns to achieve policy objectives without a clear understanding of what those policy objectives are can be a frustrating and potentially fruitless exercise.²

That said, policymakers, by nature, seek to understand the full import of their options and to preserve their options for as long as possible before committing themselves to a particular COA. Special warfare commanders and planners should seek to help policymakers explore

² Rosa Brooks, “Obama vs. the Generals,” *Politico*, November 2013.

the implications of setting particular strategic objectives through the development of multiple options, including “off-ramps” (i.e., branches and sequels) that allow policymakers room to maneuver as conditions (and preferences) change. Policymakers, in turn, should recognize that the best way to preserve decision space is not always to defer decisions, but, rather, to recognize when critical investments need to be made early on to preserve options for later.

One of the great SOF strengths is the deference paid to the greater situational awareness of commanders on the ground. However, guidance coming from deployed headquarters is sometimes so broad as to enable subordinate commanders to focus their tactical operations wherever they see fit, resulting in a lack of unity of effort and significant discontinuities across changes in command. If each unit is allowed to pursue its own priorities, even dramatic local successes are unlikely to amount to more than a series of disconnected tactical events:

“You know you never defeated us on the battlefield,” said the American colonel. The North Vietnamese colonel pondered this remark a moment. “That may be so,” he replied, “but it is also irrelevant.”³

If special warfare campaigns are to be fought, then they need the operational focus of a campaign, which implies the ability to synchronize actions to achieve operational and strategic level results.

Treat the “Shaping” Phase as a Campaign

Combatant command theater campaign plans and country plans are often treated as a way of aggregating bottom-up initiatives and opportunities, rather than as a deliberate way of understanding and shaping the environment. Many security cooperation and even PE activities seem like “random acts of touching” to participants and outside observers. In many cases, the development of networks of stakeholders that the United States can leverage in the case of crisis will likely pay larger dividends than the development of tactical proficiency in the host-nation force.

Special warfare campaigns in a GCC commander’s theater campaign plan may be seen as a set of shaping activities, with the connotation that they are setting the conditions for successful conventional operations or simply preventing war. In practice, many of these “shaping campaigns” constitute a decisive effort in themselves and are the most appropriate tool for pursuing U.S. interests.

Improve Campaign Continuity and Planning for Transitions

Special warfare campaigns are typically of long duration and sometimes require significant lead time to develop credible options. Care should be taken to ensure that mechanisms are in place to sustain the campaign (e.g., requests for forces, POM requests, knowledge management, documented tour after-action reports as command teams rotate out).

Commanders at the operational level also have a responsibility to anticipate probable campaign transitions (e.g., from unconventional warfare to FID) and to design the early phases of a campaign to enable the success of latter ones—even when this may entail some short-term risk. Planning through transitions is challenging because the focus in the current phase can be an obstacle to adequate thought being devoted to success in subsequent stages, where stra-

³ Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1982.

tegic objectives are met or rendered irrelevant.⁴ Planning for a transition from unconventional warfare to FID might involve designing clandestine networks so that they can readily be dismantled, like the one supporting the mujahedeen in 1980s Afghanistan.⁵ Taking the reverse view, planning for the transition from FID to unconventional warfare might involve developing partitioned networks in multiple sectors of the host-nation society, government, and the military. Some practitioners have noted that it can be challenging to even recognize when a transition is needed, making their management all the more difficult.⁶

Special warfare campaigns last an average of more than nine years, but shaping campaigns are indefinite, “more like fighting crime domestically than decisive operations.”⁷ For these campaigns to have the desired effects, campaign continuity is a key enabler. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the Combined Information Data Network Exchange (CIDNE) was used as a common database, and JSOTF-Philippines (JSOTF-P) has found it valuable to receive situation reports directly through CIDNE.

In the case of JSOTF-P, the CIDNE data enabled the task force’s analysis of its activities, and the task force commander was surprised by the results of an assessment of its engagement efforts. The commander’s guidance was that engagements should be focused on strategic issues. However, reporting data showed that tactical engagements (e.g., marksmanship training) constituted more than 99 percent of all engagements. The commander would not have been able to see this without the assessment.

Campaign continuity is more than a good database, however. The snapshots provided by situation reports do not provide a full picture of a unit’s experience and insight. Deployments should always be concluded with a brief history of the deployment, perhaps written by a strategic debriefer.

Campaign continuity also includes the long-term cultivation of networks. Security cooperation activities yield valuable connections, but only if they are maintained.

Institutionalize Unified Action

Ensure That Special Warfare Commanders and Planners Conduct Aggressive Outreach to Educate Relevant Stakeholders

Special warfare campaigns will always require the integration of joint and interagency partner capabilities and will sometimes be led by other U.S. government agencies. The SOF community, on both the operational and institutional sides, should seek to develop a special warfare community of interest among critical stakeholders through the development of forums, liaison positions, organizations (e.g., a national capital region presence), and participation in exercises and training activities.

Most SOF special warfare operations are conducted in coordination with conventional forces, other U.S. government agencies, and nongovernmental and international partners.

⁴ Observation by the research team, July 2011 and March 19, 2013.

⁵ Interview by the research team, July 12, 2013.

⁶ D. Jones, *Ending the Debate: Unconventional Warfare, Foreign Internal Defense, and Why Words Matter*, thesis, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2006.

⁷ Interview by the research team, May 16, 2013.

Admiral McRaven stressed the importance of building and sustaining relationships with key partners in his March 2012 congressional testimony. Specifically, he said, “through this network of relationships, SOF can provide a hedge against strategic surprise by identifying and working preemptively to address problems before they become conflicts.” Campaign planning, then, should include identifying and finding ways to incorporate inputs from diverse partners before operations or training programs commence. A shared understanding of the complex issues faced by a variety of actors and means to communicate planning issues helps lay the groundwork for potential collaboration. Having SOF headquarters exchange liaisons with key nodes (conventional force headquarters, other government agencies, international organizations, and even nongovernmental entities) with the ability to connect and collaborate in support of campaign goals would help support SOF planning and coordination requirements. Inserting these liaison elements will also help SOF provide appropriate input during opportune times within the various stakeholders’ planning cycles, which, though infrequently coordinated with one another, tend to occur on regular, predictable schedules.

As mentioned earlier, interviewees noted instances of GCC staffs writing country plans without engaging other government agencies or SOF, as well as instances of SOF partitioning themselves to conduct their separate planning. SOF planners need to be proficient not only in developing their own subordinate plans but also in informing and influencing the larger operational design of which they are a part. Special warfare has unique contributions to make to operational art that go beyond the conduct of SOF operations. Therefore, SOF planners must be better integrated into conventional force planning.⁸ The seventh warfighting function, now referred to as “influence,” has been proposed as one mechanism for facilitating SOF integration into conventional joint task force staffs. The development of the doctrinal groundwork for collaboration is an important first step, but much work remains to adopt the requisite doctrinal principles and translate them into organizational behaviors.

Create Mechanisms for Special Warfare Policy Coordination

Given the intensively interagency nature of special warfare and the risks of policy fratricide, establishing enhanced coordination mechanisms for special warfare within the National Security Council, comparable to organizing for counterterrorism, would constitute an important step toward formulating a coherent U.S. government strategy for the employment of special warfare.

Resolve Joint, Army, and SOF Doctrinal Tensions and Gaps

Our research pointed to the following promising options to resolve special warfare doctrinal tensions and gaps:

- *Mobilization, neutralization, integration.* These terms are explicitly identified as political concepts in Army FID doctrine, but their discussion in joint FID doctrine is almost bureaucratically focused (e.g., recruiting) or addresses the mass public level (e.g., popular support for a regime). Joint doctrine could be enhanced by building on the Army’s work and the broader political warfare literature.
- *Shaping.* Army doctrine treats “shaping” as an activity conducted to set the conditions for a successful “decisive” action. Joint doctrine is more comprehensive, treating shap-

⁸ Interview by the research team, February 15, 2013.

ing operations as either setting conditions or preventing conflict. Since conflict prevention may be the “decisive” effect sought by commanders or policymakers, this language requires some clarification. Moreover, the Army’s own special forces play a critical role in preventive shaping efforts, which should perhaps be reflected in the Army’s doctrine.

- *Special and irregular warfare.* The proliferation of new concepts can create confusion in the community of practice in terms of the capability investments required and the operational solutions needed for particular policy challenges. The Army, SOF, and joint communities should clarify the relationship between these two concepts.
- *Escalation.* The concept of escalation is central to many explanations of conflict dynamics and choices at both the tactical and policy levels, yet it receives almost no attention in current joint or Army doctrine. Given the intense attention paid to the issue of nuclear escalation during the Cold War, this is a peculiar gap. The lack of a similarly comprehensive irregular warfare literature concerning escalation dynamics makes it all the more urgent to describe how commanders and campaign planners at the operational level should address escalation dynamics and how that should be incorporated into the options they present policymakers.

Develop Campaign Assessment Approaches That Are Acceptable Across the U.S.

Government

Many assessment approaches have been developed for counterinsurgency over the past decade, but few are credible. Most focus on the aggregation of tactical measures of progress and effectiveness rather than on assessing operational- or strategic-level trends or changes. Special warfare assessment tools are perhaps even less mature than those for counterinsurgency. Developing unconventional warfare feasibility and campaign assessments that are acceptable across the U.S. government will be challenging but could pay important dividends in terms of credibility and unity of effort.

Improve the Ability to Reconcile National Mission and Special Warfare Command and Control

National mission forces have historically enjoyed complete autonomy in the execution of their missions. This autonomy has been an almost unquestioned fact of life when they deploy. Even in Afghanistan, these tier 1 forces have been integrated with the rest of the SOF command-and-control structure only relatively recently. Although this integration remains appropriate in many cases, this should not be an unquestioned verity. Surgical-strike missions that are not integrated into special warfare campaigns can cause disruptions that take months or even years to repair, if they can be repaired at all.

Develop Capabilities to Prevail in the Human Domain

Improve the Ability to Prevail in the Human Domain at the Operational Level

If the core contribution of special warfare to operational art is the mobilization, neutralization, or integration of operational and strategic centers of gravity, then influence activities at the operational level will be a critical capability for the conduct of special warfare campaigns. Successful campaigns will require the ability to develop a rich contextual understanding of power configurations among groups and actors and how to leverage or disrupt them through lethal or

nonlethal means to advance campaign goals.⁹ This goes well beyond military information support operations activities as usually conducted, requiring a reinvigorated study of and training for political warfare. There are already key conceptual foundations to build on in doctrine, and the publication of *Assessing Revolutionary and Insurgent Strategies: Human Factor Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies* is an important advancement in this direction.¹⁰

Improve Country Expertise

Our interviews and assessment of the unique role of special warfare in joint campaigns indicated that USASOC should consider whether “regional expertise” is sufficient or whether country expertise is a more appropriate goal for select elements of the force.¹¹

Country expertise might be further developed in special forces groups or in other SOF organizational elements under development. A complementary model to consider would be the development of a “reachback” capability to the institutional SOF community (e.g., USSOCOM, USASOC) to allow deployed forces to tap expertise on country and functional issues.

The SOF community should not set an unrealistic goal of expertise for every possible country of interest or for every soldier but, rather, deliberately ensure a continuous level of expertise on select countries critical to U.S. interests. Countries for special focus could be selected based on guidance found in the Guidance for Employment of the Force and operation plan requirements, but these investments should be balanced against investments being made across the U.S. government to ensure that SOF fills a space of comparative advantage both functionally and geographically.

Improve and Develop Institutionalized “Green and White” Intelligence Capability for Nonlethal Targeting and Analysis

Since Lieutenant General Michael Flynn published his critique of intelligence in Afghanistan, there has been considerable attention paid to the issue of developing intelligence on local partners and civilians in the counterinsurgency context.¹² This capability is a critical enabler of special warfare efforts and still has not found an institutionalized solution. One TSOC assessment group interviewed for this research reported that they were responsible for developing “green and white” intelligence, colloquial expressions for civilians and local partners (e.g., host-nation government or military forces). When they had first reached out to their J2 shop to collaborate on the assessment, the response they received was, “We do not do green, and we will never do green.”¹³ While it may be bureaucratically correct that military intelligence assets focus primarily on enemies, there is still a critical need for green and white intelligence. In Afghanistan, civil-military operations centers at the special operations task force (SOTF; battalion-equivalent) level require augmentation on an ad hoc basis to conduct the analysis required by commanders (e.g., Stability Operations Intelligence Section in SOTF-South). This is an

⁹ Interview by the research team, July 10, 2013.

¹⁰ See Paul J. Tompkins, Jr., and Nathan Bos, eds., *Assessing Revolutionary and Insurgent Strategies: Human Factor Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies*, Ft. Bragg, N.C.: U.S. Army Special Operations Command and Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory National Security Analysis Department, January 25, 2013.

¹¹ Interview by the research team, May 8, 2013.

¹² See Michael T. Flynn, Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*, Washington, D.C.: Center for New American Security, January 2010.

¹³ Interview by the research team, February 8, 2013.

enduring capability requirement that has apparently not yet been systematically addressed. Civil affairs, military information support, and the intelligence community should all have important roles. Other U.S. government agencies can be leveraged as well. This capability is a prerequisite for the effective employment of influence activities.

Again, solutions might involve something like the SOTF-based Stability Operations Intelligence Section in Afghanistan or the creation of a civil affairs–based intelligence military occupational specialty. If USASOC moves forward with establishing an expeditionary division-equivalent headquarters, the integration of “green and white” intelligence capabilities should be given careful consideration.

Adjust for the Future Operating Environment

Continue Efforts to Readjust the SOF Focus Beyond Afghanistan

ARSOF 2022 and associated initiatives constitute a solid roadmap for providing the joint force and other U.S. government agencies with the capabilities needed to execute special warfare campaigns in the future. Exercises and experiments for missions beyond Afghanistan and counterterrorism (e.g., unconventional warfare, urban environments, cyber operations) seem appropriate to the future operating environment. However, lessons learned from recent exercises suggest this is a nontrivial transition. Army SOF units in these exercises have attempted to employ approaches used in Afghanistan for very different missions.

SOF leaders should consider diversifying the range of scenarios conducted in special warfare exercises and experiments to incorporate a broader range of operational-level considerations that stress decisionmaking and capabilities in critically different ways.¹⁴ One planner noted, “Robin Sage [a SOF training exercise] is just guerrilla warfare. It doesn’t set you up to think through how Treasury can contribute to a UW [unconventional warfare] campaign.”¹⁵ The range of issues considered might include the risk of inadvertent escalation with third countries or unbalanced aid to a target country that undermines civilian control of the military. Therefore, it will be important to manage the diversity of scenario characteristics to ensure that all critical functions are adequately tested and to ensure transparency in how the scenarios are shaped to test capabilities. One approach is to develop separate scenarios to elucidate different problem sets, rather than attempting to bundle all issues into a single scenario. These scenarios could be employed at the Army’s combat training centers and USASOC’s institutional exercises. Staff exercises and simulations should also focus on shaping campaigns, in addition to wartime contingencies or crisis scenarios. The scenarios developed for this study are illustrative of the range of issues that might be considered, rather than prescriptive.

Continue Developing Balanced Operational- and Tactical-Level Forces with Regional Expertise That Are Proficient in Clandestine Methods

The SOF community should continue to prioritize increasing TSOC planning capacity and capability through direct investments, TSOCs access to reachback capabilities, and as-needed deployable planning elements. Interviewees noted a continued lack of SOF and planning expertise and recent operational experience in TSOCs. One TSOC planner described having

¹⁴ Observation by the research team, March 18, 2013.

¹⁵ Interview by the research team, February 14, 2013.

to reach out across the joint force and institutional Army to bring in the required expertise to conduct planning for an important contingency. Ultimately, that effort took nine months.¹⁶ Another planner in an operational-level command found that the parent TSOC “focused on very narrow concerns. None of them had the region in mind. They were overwhelmed with surgical strike operations. . . . It was less impressive in 2010 than in 2007.”¹⁷

Currently, USASOC has several organizational initiatives under way to enable special warfare, but most of these investments are occurring at the tactical level. USASOC should consider developing a deployable operational-level headquarters element. Currently the O-6 (colonel)-level special forces group is the largest deployable organization, and JSOTF-P is an O-6-level command. Historically, however, conventional campaign planning has occurred at the corps level and above. In Afghanistan, the United States found it necessary to create a two-star headquarters to integrate U.S. and allied SOF forces, manage operations, and conduct SFA. Future special warfare campaigns will encounter comparable levels of complexity and could perhaps be improved by creating a standing organizational capability with a focus on operational-level considerations.

The breadth of organizational initiatives under way across the SOF community, and at USASOC in particular, must draw on a finite amount of human capital and management capacity. As these initiatives mature, a deliberate effort should be made to assess whether and how much new investments are affecting legacy capabilities.

Improve Preparation of the Environment

Current PE activities are considered by some to be disconnected from a clear policy, or clear concepts connecting activities to objectives. The SOF interface with the joint planning process at the GCCs should be strengthened to improve the development of special warfare COAs and CONOPs. Creating staff positions dedicated to special warfare planning would help improve the employment of PE activities. Guidance for personnel responsible for PE should also be clarified. Rigorous risk and feasibility assessment criteria and processes should be established, and processes should also be established to evaluate the performance of the personnel responsible for conducting PE.

¹⁶ Interview by the research team, February 14, 2013.

¹⁷ Interview by the research team, August 22, 2013.

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