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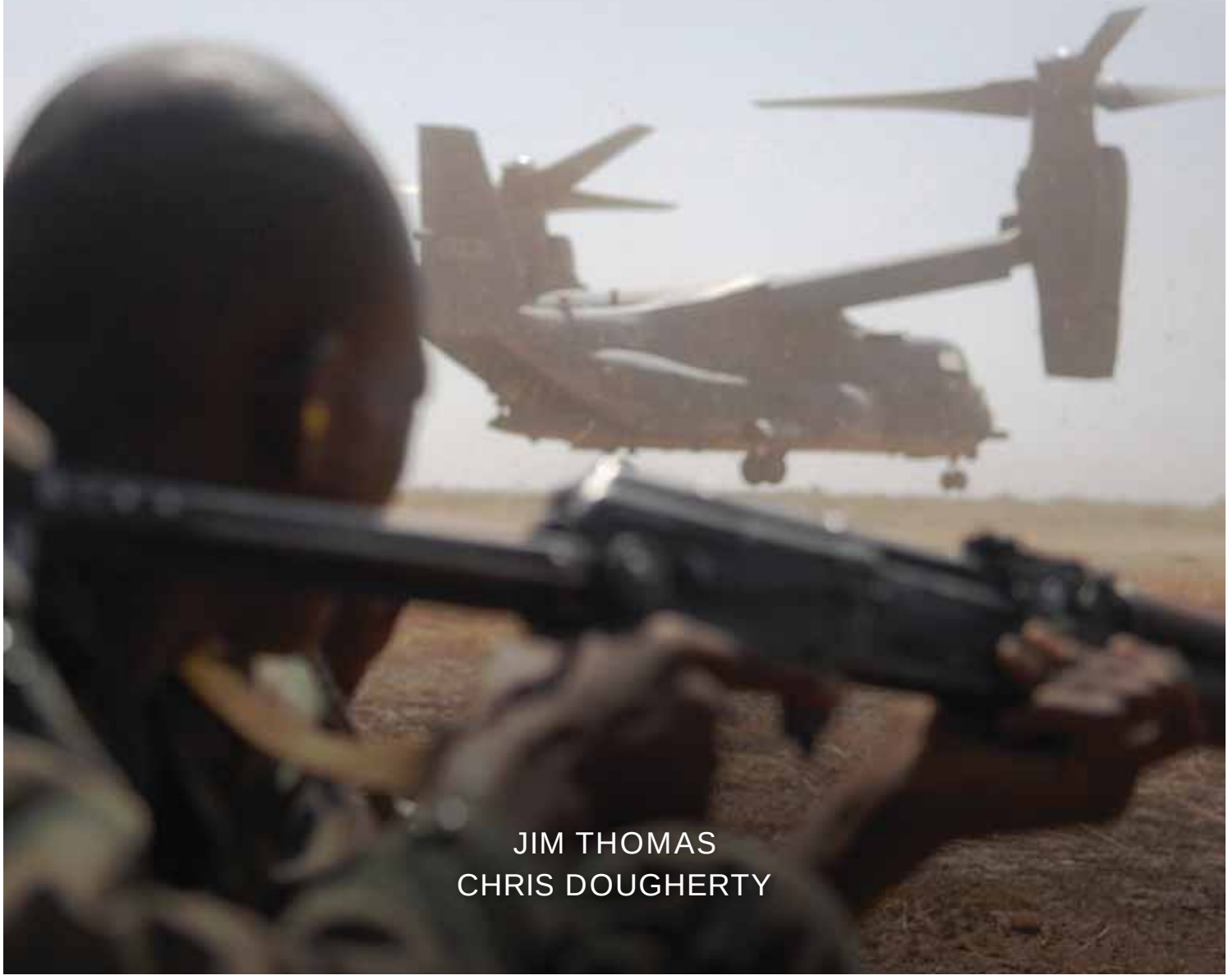
BEYOND THE RAMPARTS

THE FUTURE OF U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES



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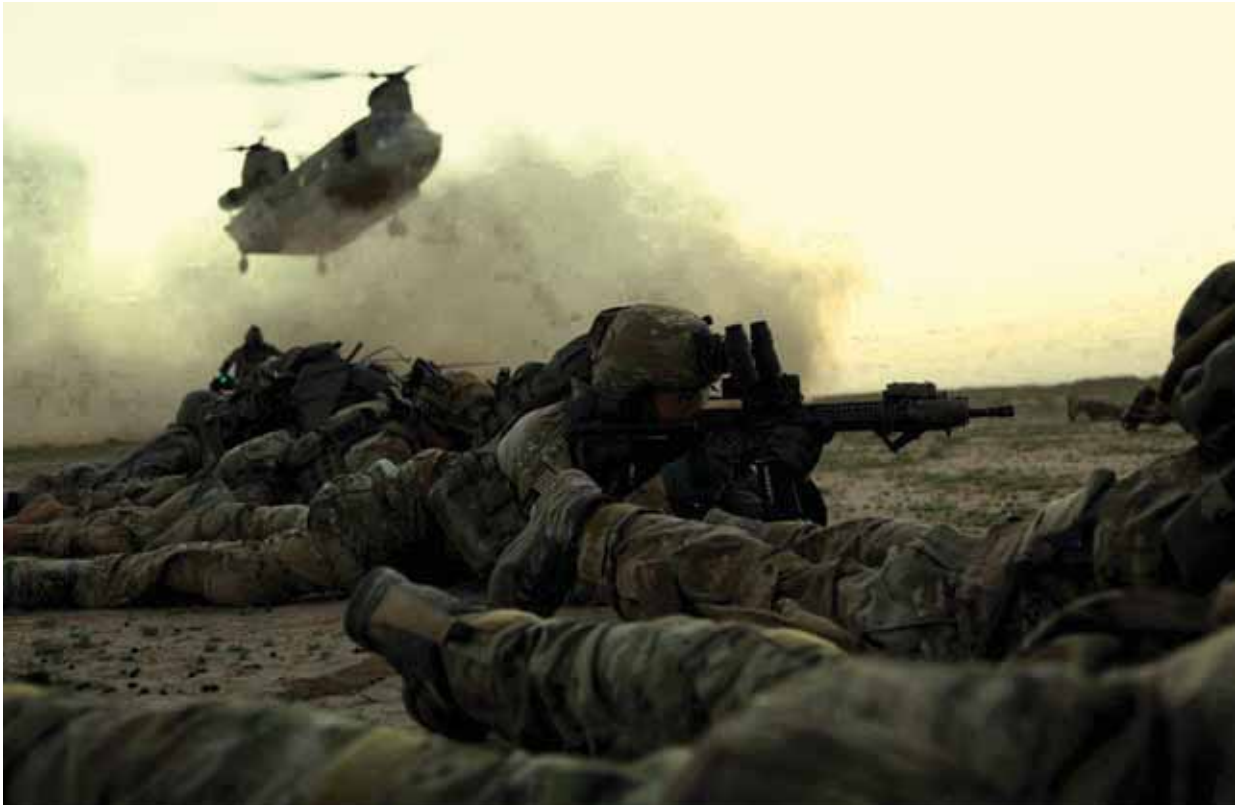
On the cover: A Malian soldier secures the landing zone for an Air Force CV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft during Exercise Flintlock 2008. SOF use training exercises such as Flintlock to build relationships and partner security capacity.

CONTENTS



Rangers from the Army's 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment pull security as they await extraction via an Army MH-47 Chinook of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the crucible of more than a decade of continuous combat operations, Special Operations Forces (SOF) have emerged as one of the most cost-effective "weapons systems" in the U.S. military arsenal and a major source of strategic advantage for the nation. This report explores how the United States might capitalize on and extend this strategic advantage well into the future. As America winds down combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, a confluence of challenges—both domestic and foreign—drives the need to reexamine U.S. strategy and, along with it, the fundamental purposes of the Armed Forces, including SOF. The United States' precarious fiscal situation will undoubtedly lead to tighter defense spending in the coming years. As resources contract, however, the number of national security problems facing the nation is increasing. These include rising volatility in the Middle East, the spread of violent extremism to Africa, nuclear proliferation and the threat of mass-casualty terrorism, the diffusion of advanced military technologies, the return of great-power competitions, and the resurgence of proxy wars.

The upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) offers an opportunity to better align SOF with the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) and widen SOF's aperture beyond the past decade's focus on counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. Returning SOF to their pre-9/11 roles would undoubtedly squander what has been gained over the past decade and forfeit a major U.S. competitive advantage. At the same time, simply extending SOF along their current trajectory would fail to capitalize on their unique strengths to meet a wider array of emerging security challenges. A more prudent course would retain what has proven successful over the last decade, repurpose that which is effective but overly focused on today's challenges, rebuild the capabilities and knowledge that have declined while SOF have been consumed in current operations, and develop innovative solutions to emerging problems. Doing so will ensure that SOF are able to meet future challenges and exploit opportunities as they arise.

The Post-9/11 Transformation of SOF

Since 2001, SOF have conducted continuous, large-scale CT and COIN operations against al Qaeda and associated Islamist violent extremist networks (VENs), the Taliban, and other irregular forces. The demands of these operations compelled SOF to undergo a marked transformation. Despite the purported languishing of unconventional warfare (UW) during the 1990s, post-9/11 UW operations proved resoundingly successful. In 2001, a small number of SOF partnered with irregular Afghan Northern Alliance forces to conduct a rapid UW campaign that ousted the Taliban regime. Since 9/11, SOF CT operations have become more proactive, widespread, and persistent in response to the global threat posed by VENs and virulent insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. SOF have developed an effective network for capturing or killing terrorists through surgical-strike operations. This capability, however, represents only one facet of SOF's approach to reducing the threats posed by VENs. Direct-action CT strikes and raids have tended to overshadow indirect operations that enable foreign security forces or win the support of local populations. Working "by, with, and through" partners is arguably more critical over the long term to advance U.S. national interests and establish durable security conditions.

Foreign internal defense (FID) operations designed to build the capacity of partner nations to combat VENs and deny them sanctuary within their borders have also been essential. SOF have shifted from an emphasis on *training* partner forces in the 1990s to *partnering* with them as combat advisors over the past decade. In recent years, SOF have also shifted the focus of their FID efforts from working principally with central governments and national security forces (e.g., the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police) to building security capacity at the local level through tribal engagement, Village Stability Operations (VSOs), and training, advising, and assisting local security forces such as the Afghan Local Police (ALP).

SOF's operational successes have been underwritten in part by significant growth in the force since 2001. Prior to 2001, approximately 2,800 SOF were deployed overseas. Since then, the number of SOF personnel deployed overseas on an annual basis has roughly quadrupled, reaching approximately 12,000 during the surges in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it has remained near that level for much of the time since then.[1] In an attempt to relieve the stress of repeated deployments, as well as to provide SOF resources to missions other than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM's) end strength has increased by approximately 25,000 personnel, from 38,000 in 2001 to 63,000 in 2012—a 68 percent increase in a little over a decade.[2] This expansion of the force has coincided with sub-

[1] Office of the Secretary of Defense for Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (OSD-CAPE), "SOCOM Deployments: Number of SOCOM Personnel Deployed," PowerPoint Briefing, February 29, 2012, slide 26.

[2] Ibid., slide 37.

stantial budgetary growth. USSOCOM funding has risen from $2.3 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 to approximately $10.4 billion in FY 2013.[3]

SOF's decade of success has not come without costs. Given the inherent risks of special operations, SOF have suffered casualties at a high rate. Furthermore, repeated combat deployments and a high operations tempo (OPTEMPO) have put enormous strains on SOF units, individual operators, and their families. The "fraying" of the force remains a concern for defense planners as they look to the future.

Emerging Strategic Context

Predicting exactly which threats will confront the United States, or precisely where SOF will deploy over the next ten to twenty years, is an impossible task. It is feasible, however, to project forward some of the key trends that will shape planning requirements and the impact they will have on SOF. While the future security environment will present the U.S. Joint Force, including SOF, with a panoply of challenges, there are four in particular that will have arguably the most significant long-term implications for SOF: defeating Islamist VENs; countering weapons of mass destruction (WMD); confronting anti-access and area-denial networks (A2/AD); and waging influence campaigns and proxy wars. The United States will confront these challenges against a backdrop of persistent global economic weakness and its own fiscal predicament.

Islamist VENs pose challenges in the present that will likely persist well into the future. Although surgical strikes have inflicted a heavy toll on the leadership of al Qaeda since 9/11, violent extremism has metastasized and new nodes have spawned in an ever-adapting terrorist network. Consistent with the founding vision of al Qaeda as a "base" from which violent Islamist extremists would develop a global terrorism network, al Qaeda franchises and ideologically associated groups have sprung up throughout the Muslim world, exploiting weak states and endemic instability. This metastasis of extremist franchises is pushing the locus of CT efforts beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. Conducting CT outside of theaters of war will require U.S. SOF to place greater emphasis on "finding and fixing" enemy forces, while partner forces—be they foreign security forces, intelligence services, or law enforcement agencies—conduct the "finishes." More proactive global CT and FID operations will also require pushing smaller SOF units forward for long-duration operations in remote, austere areas. Moreover, it will necessitate a lighter footprint, and the shift away from theaters of armed conflict with a large

[3] Does not take into account effects of sequestration. At time of writing, FY14 budget materials were not yet available. See United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), *FY 2013 Budget Highlights: United States Special Operations Command* (Tampa, Florida: USSOCOM, 2012), p. 6, available at http://www.socom.mil/News/Documents/USSOCOM_FY_2013_Budget_Highlights.pdf.

U.S. presence will limit SOF's ability to rely on General Purpose Forces (GPF) units for logistics and sustainment "enablers."

WMD do not represent new threats to U.S. security interests, but as nascent nuclear powers grow their arsenals and aspirants like Iran continue to pursue nuclear capabilities, the threat of nuclear proliferation, as well as the potential for the actual use of nuclear weapons, will increase. Upheaval in failing or outlaw states like Libya and Syria, which possess chemical weapons and a range of missiles, highlights the possibility that in future instances of state collapse or civil war, such weapons could be used by failing regimes in an act of desperation, fall into the hands of rebel forces, or be seized by parties hostile to the United States or its interests. SOF can contribute across the spectrum of counter-WMD efforts, from stopping the acquisition of WMD by hostile states or terrorist groups to preventing their use. The global CT network SOF have built over the last decade could be repurposed over the next decade to become a global *counter-WMD* network, applying the same logic that it takes a network to defeat a network. Increasing the reach and density of a global counter-WMD network will require expanding security cooperation activities focused on counter-proliferation. Finally, SOF may offer the most viable strategic option for deposing WMD-armed regimes through UW campaigns should the need arise.

The spread of advanced military technologies, such as precision-guided munitions, is enabling a number of countries to construct A2/AD networks that could erode the United States' ability to project military power into key regions. Nations such as China and Iran are actively seeking to acquire and field A2/AD capabilities, including precision-guided ballistic and cruise missiles, attack submarines, fast-attack craft, anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons, computer-network attack capabilities, advanced fighter aircraft, and integrated air defenses, that may challenge the U.S. military's ability to project power. The cumulative effect of spreading A2/AD systems is that the land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace domains will be far less permissive for U.S. military operations. In the face of growing A2/AD threats, the value of low-signature forces capable of operating independently and far forward in denied areas is likely to increase substantially. SOF may offer the most viable ground-force option in future A2/AD environments, either executing direct action against key targets or working by, with, and through partner forces to conduct peripheral campaigns (i.e., operations designed to impose costs and conducted beyond the territory or reach of the enemy). Prior to hostilities, SOF could carry out preparation of the environment (PE) and special reconnaissance (SR) missions. At the outset of hostilities, SOF might serve as an early-entry force to blind or disrupt enemy command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) networks, thereby enabling higher-signature conventional forces to penetrate A2/AD networks. Inserting or extracting SOF from denied environments, and supporting them once there, will challenge SOF aviation and undersea capabilities. Accordingly, SOF will need stealthy means of

insertion from the air and sea. SOF may also need to conduct *foreign external defense (FED)* missions in states to build their capacity to repel foreign military aggression. This could entail helping key partners to create their own versions of A2/AD networks.

The proliferation of WMD and A2/AD capabilities will erode the conventional power-projection capability of not only the United States, but of other countries as well. In the future, states may therefore avoid direct confrontations and be more inclined to use unconventional methods and measures short of war to gain influence and achieve their foreign policy goals. States may also turn to third-party proxies to maintain plausible deniability for their actions. States could engage in influence campaigns and proxy competitions to achieve objectives such as: imposing costs on major competitors, foreclosing opportunities for other countries or non-state actors to gain a foothold in a region, "peeling away" allies or partners from competitors, diverting the attention and resources of competitors (misdirection), conducting cross-border operations against a major power with less risk of confrontation, or controlling (or denying) critical resources and trade routes. SOF will be critical to success in persistent influence campaigns and proxy competitions. They will need exquisite, local-area expertise and language skills, along with deep, longstanding relationships with key local actors built over time by embedding and living with foreign partner forces. Though SOF already operate in smaller units than GPF, the breadth, specificity, and need to minimize the visibility of these operations will place an emphasis on even smaller SOF teams and single operators working in close collaboration with other government agencies.

These four security challenges—coming to the fore during a time of fiscal austerity in the United States and global economic uncertainty—are likely to dominate the national security agenda for decades to come. These challenges are not mutually exclusive and, in almost every case, the challenges are intertwined with opportunities for SOF to impose costs on U.S. adversaries. Given their global nature, and recognizing the interrelationship between the various challenges and opportunities, SOF are uniquely suited to address them asymmetrically.

Reshaping SOF in the Next QDR

Given the demands of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is not surprising that the last two QDRs focused on *sizing* SOF. The 2006 and 2010 QDRs authorized growth in the force as well as their organic and Service-provided enablers. As combat operations in Afghanistan wind down, the next QDR offers an opportunity for *reshaping* SOF to address the wider range of challenges forecast above. Leveraging SOF to expand the nation's option set will necessitate preparing them to confront a future that does not simply mirror the last decade. SOF will need to conduct operations short of war that are more indirect and less kinetic to confront a variety of interconnected challenges. These forward-leaning operations will re-

quire developing lasting relationships with both state and non-state partners. At the same time, SOF will need to regain their readiness for major wars. In particular, this will require redoubling efforts to address challenges like countering WMD and penetrating A2/AD networks, in which SOF are likely to play more salient roles. Reshaping SOF in the QDR should focus on five initiatives:

- Enhancing the Global SOF Network;
- Disaggregating SOF for persistent engagement;
- Improving SOF language proficiency;
- Updating authorities for preventive action; and
- Developing new capabilities to address emerging challenges.

Enhancing the Global SOF Network

To counter al Qaeda and its network of affiliates, SOF have had to create their own human network. This global network has brought together both U.S. national and theater SOF, as well as their foreign counterparts. Going forward, SOF must expand the network and leverage it to address the wider range of challenges described above. These challenges will often cut across geographic combatant command (GCC) boundaries, demanding integrated global approaches. Operations outside designated war zones, moreover, will necessitate greater collaboration with foreign forces and interagency partners. Accordingly, the Department of Defense (DoD) should:

- Strengthen Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) by improving their quantitative and qualitative manning and unifying both national and theater SOF under them.
- Deepen ties with partner SOF by building their capacity, establishing Regional SOF Coordination Centers (RSCCs) like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) SOF Headquarters (NSHQ), and creating additional venues for building rapport among SOF, such as the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC) in the Kingdom of Jordan.
- Extend collaboration with interagency partners by increasing the number of permanent SOF liaison billets at intelligence agencies, law enforcement bureaus, the State Department, and other government agencies; conducting regular interagency task force exercises; and establishing shared interagency tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to help personnel work together effectively.

Disaggregating SOF for Persistent Engagement

Preventing crises from escalating and creating security options that could be exercised in the future will also require a greater emphasis on persistent engagement in a larger number of countries around the world. Rather than dispatching SOF after crises erupt, persistent engagement calls for establishing durable relationships with state and non-state partners long before a critical need emerges. To cover the wider range of challenges described above, SOF will need to operate in far more disaggregated small teams and even as single operators around the globe. Accordingly, DoD should:

- Develop a new breed of SOF to provide granular coverage on a global scale by cultivating specific language and culture experts who, through repetitive and long-term rotations to a single country over the course of their careers, foster "first-name basis" relationships with foreign leaders.
- Embrace a distributed command and control (C2) schema to oversee and direct far-flung operations and develop country-specific engagement plans by establishing Special Operations Commands-Forward (SOC FWDs).

Improving Language Proficiency

Increasing the emphasis on dispersed long-duration missions conducted by small teams and single operators will place a premium on language proficiency. SOF, however, have a long way to go to reach their language objectives. The USSOCOM commander has expressed his concern over the lack of language proficiency across the SOF community and has identified key obstacles retarding progress to improve SOF language proficiency, including institutional preference for combat skills over language skills. To overcome such hurdles, there are four main areas in which changes could help to improve SOF language proficiency:

- Increase the time available to study languages by moving toward a more sustainable personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) with predictable deployments to allow operators to insert language training into their home-station time.
- Create new incentives for gaining language proficiency by establishing minimal language requirements for SOF officers with required re-testing throughout their careers, similar to the National Clandestine Service's (NCS's) requirements.
- Increase the resources devoted to language training by providing any operator who desires language training with commercially available off-the-shelf language software programs to continue language study on his or her own.
- Expand recruiting efforts focused on native speakers by expanding and intensifying recruitment programs for legal immigrants (non-citizens) possessing uncommon foreign language, cultural, and regional skills that would benefit SOF.

Aligning Authorities to Meet Future Challenges

The authorities under which SOF operate must also be adapted and made more flexible to support a preventive strategic approach and address a wider range of challenges. Authorities aimed at building partner capacity (BPC) need to be more agile to support persistent, multi-year engagements rather than episodic training missions. Meanwhile, existing authorities, such as Sections 1204 and 1203 of the U.S. Code, restrict U.S. efforts to build partner capacity to the training, advising, and equipping of partner forces that are involved in CT operations, and limit the amount of funding available. New or expanded authorities that would allow operators to engage in persistent engagement, preventive action, and counter-WMD operations that cut across the area of responsibility (AOR) "seams" of the GCCs are needed to improve SOF's ability to address missions beyond CT.

Addressing Critical SOF Capability Needs

Although "humans are more important than hardware," SOF have traditionally relied on specialized equipment that is not generally available to GPF. As SOF move beyond wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is a need for SOF to focus research and development (R&D) efforts to address emerging A2/AD and WMD challenges in particular. High priority capability investments to meet these challenges include:

- Stealthy air transports to enable SOF to infiltrate A2/AD environments, execute high-risk WMD elimination operations, or conduct UW;
- Long-endurance dry submersibles to enable the stealthy insertion of SOF into denied littoral areas;
- Identity-masking technologies to enable SOF to counter proliferating biometric technologies and maintain their ability to operate clandestinely;
- Novel weapons systems such as directed energy (DE), high-power microwave (HPM), non-lethals, and small precision-strike munitions to achieve focused kinetic and non-kinetic destructive or disabling effects;
- Special systems to provide SOF with protected satellite communications (SATCOM) and the ability to communicate without detection;
- Novel energy sources, such as solar cells and sodium-ion batteries, to lighten the load on operators and reduce logistical demands in remote and austere environments;
- Stealthy, long-range unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) to provide intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and conduct strikes in non-permissive air environments; and
- A next-generation gunship to replace aging AC-130s and provide gunship support in denied areas.

SOF have demonstrated their ability to adapt through their operational successes and institutional changes over the past decade. The raid that killed Osama bin Laden demonstrated the unique ability to conduct "eyes-on" surgical strikes in denied environments that only SOF can provide. But ultimately, it is their ability to operate by, with, and through partners that truly allows SOF to punch above their strategic weight. SOF's ability to build partner capacity, create adaptable networks, and conduct operations that localize problems and prevent them from escalating should only increase their value as a hedge force in the years ahead.

To fully capitalize on the investment the nation has made in SOF, DoD cannot simply maintain the status quo. SOF must constantly adapt and redefine themselves, while retaining the core characteristics that make them "special." In the next QDR, DoD and USSOCOM have the opportunity to reshape, reorient, and re-posture SOF to meet future challenges such as the metastasis of VENs outside theaters of armed conflict, the emergence of A2/AD networks, the proliferation of WMD and their potential use in terrorism, and the return of great-power competitions and proxy conflicts. At the same time, SOF must retain their trademark adaptability so as to provide the president with the broadest set of options for the inevitable moment when the nation's best-laid plans go awry.

CHAPTER 1 > **INTRODUCTION**

This report assesses how special operations forces (SOF) can advance U.S. national security interests and expand the nation's option set for dealing with security challenges over the next several decades.[4] In light of SOF's recent successes—bookended by the rapid unconventional warfare (UW) campaign that ousted the Taliban in 2001 and the raid that killed Osama bin Laden ten years later—some might question the need for an assessment, arguing if SOF "isn't broken, why fix it?" The United States, however, is approaching an inflection point after more than a decade of continuous combat operations. As America winds down combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, a confluence of challenges—both domestic and foreign—are driving the need for a reexamination of U.S. strategy and, along with it, the fundamental purposes of the Armed Forces, including SOF.

The United States' precarious fiscal situation will undoubtedly lead to tighter defense spending in the coming years. As resources contract, however, the number of problems facing the nation is increasing. These include rising volatility in the Middle East, the spread of violent extremism to Africa, nuclear proliferation and the threat of mass-casualty terrorism, the diffusion of advanced military technologies, and the return of great-power competitions and resurgence of proxy wars. SOF can make important contributions to address all of these problems.

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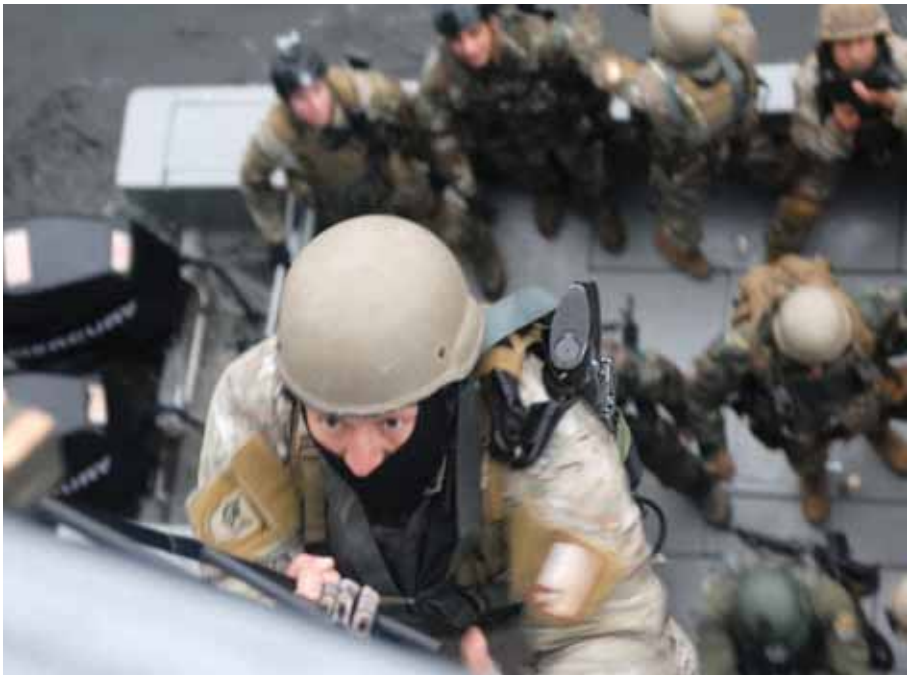
[4] Joint doctrine defines special operations as, "Operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with and/or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and/or a high degree of risk," and SOF as, "Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations." Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *Joint Publication 3-05: Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, April 18, 2011), p. GL-12, available at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_05.pdf.

The Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) issued by former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta in 2012 outlines a few key force attributes that will be in high demand in the future:

> Across the globe we will seek to be the security partner of choice, pursuing new partnerships with a growing number of nations—including those in Africa and Latin America—whose interests and viewpoints are merging into a common vision of freedom, stability, and prosperity. *Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities.*[5]



A member of Chile's Comando de Fuerzas Especiales conducts visit, board, search, and seizure alongside U.S. Navy Special Boat Team personnel. By training and working closely with partner forces, SOF help develop and maintain cooperative security relationships.

SOF will play a central role in a U.S. defense strategy that increasingly emphasizes preventing wars and building the security capacity of like-minded partners to address common security problems. Just as they have done throughout their history, SOF will continue to embody Benjamin Franklin's aphorism, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." As a "low-footprint" military force, SOF

[5] U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2012), p. 3, available at http://www.defense.gov/news/defense_strategic_guidance.pdf.

can provide a forward human-sensor action network that alerts U.S. senior decision-makers of emerging problems and offers an immediately employable instrument to address them. Forward-deployed and -based SOF can prevent security problems from worsening by engaging key partners. They will continue to serve as a global force-multiplier by training and advising the security forces of partner states to take greater responsibility for their security and that of their region. Through persistent engagement, SOF can reduce the probability that substantially greater commitments of U.S. military forces will be required to intervene later in protracted and costly campaigns. And unlike nuclear weapons, which prevent or deter war through their non-use, SOF will prevent security problems from escalating into crises through their constant application along a continuum of operations stretching from peace to the cusp of war. The value of networked, scalable, cost-effective, and highly distributed forces capable of operating in denied or politically sensitive areas will almost certainly grow in coming decades.

SOF will prevent security problems from escalating into crises through their constant application along a continuum of operations stretching from peace to the cusp of war.

SOF's newfound status as a "crown jewel" within the Department of Defense's (DoD's) portfolio of capabilities is grounded in the attributes of the operators comprising the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).[6] More than any other capability in America's arsenal, it is the human dimension—both the people who serve and the domain for which they are optimized—that differentiates SOF from both conventional and nuclear forces. SOF's "first Truth," is that "Humans are more important than hardware."[7] The characteristics that make SOF operators "special" go far beyond the rigorous assessment, selection, and qualification processes of SOF units, which only a small fraction of candidates complete. Though SOF have exceptional physical and psychological stamina, those selected to serve in SOF are first and foremost problem solvers distinguished by their critical thinking skills and ingenuity. Most SOF operators are well-educated and hold college degrees.[8] Although highly trained in the discriminate use of lethal force, SOF are also known for their political acumen and engagement skills, "winning hearts and minds" by leveraging their cultural expertise and linguistic proficiency. Because they operate in the human domain, SOF must also be adept at building relationships by understanding the needs of others, showing empathy, and earn-

6 See Todd Harrison and Mark Gunzinger, *Strategic Choices: Navigating Austerity* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2012), p. ii, available at http://www.csbaonline.org/publications/2012/11/strategic-choices-navigating-austerity/.

7 The "SOF Truths" are intended to capture the essential guiding principles of SOF and special operations. They include: 1) Humans are more important than hardware; 2) Quality is more important than quantity; 3) SOF cannot be mass produced; 4) Competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur; and 5) Most special operations require non-SOF assistance. "SOF Truths," U.S. Army Special Operations Command, available at http://www.soc.mil/USASOC%20Headquarters/SOF%20Truths.html.

8 U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), *Fact Book 2013* (Tampa, Florida: USSOCOM, 2013), p. 55, available at http://www.socom.mil/News/Documents/USSOCOM_Fact_Book_2013.pdf.

ing trust. SOF are generally more experienced than their conventional counterparts, with SOF personnel typically spending eight years in the conventional forces prior to their SOF qualification and ranging in average age from twenty-nine (enlisted) to thirty-four (officer).[9] This combination of problem solving, education, and experience gives SOF the judgment, adaptability, and maturity to execute missions involving high degrees of risk and political sensitivity. These attributes also enable SOF to operate in very small teams (a dozen or fewer operators) with greater independence than their conventional force counterparts, whether they are conducting direct-action missions in denied areas or patiently applying their more indirect and less kinetic engagement skills to enable foreign security partners. It is SOF's ability to combine direct and indirect actions, surgical strike and special warfare that allow them to achieve strategic effects far beyond their small numbers.[10]

From the crucible of more than a decade of continuous combat operations, SOF have emerged as one of the most cost-effective U.S. "weapons systems" and a major source of strategic advantage. The USSOCOM budget is less than 2 percent of total defense spending.[11] Even accounting for Service-provided capabilities, funding, and support for special operations, the total spent on SOF is still less than 4 percent of the total DoD budget.[12] Yet these four cents on every defense dollar deliver results that far exceed the resources spent to accomplish them. While other countries have elite forces, no other country has the wherewithal to conduct multiple special operations around the world, ranging from direct-action raids to building the internal defense capacity of foreign security partners in order

9 Ibid.

10 The terms "surgical strike" and "special warfare" are derived from U.S. Army doctrine and are not accepted joint terms. They are used, however, to describe the two major facets of special operations this report addresses. Surgical strike provides a primarily unilateral, scalable direct action capability that is employed in CT, counter-proliferation, hostage rescue, kill/capture operations against designated targets, and other specialized tasks of strategic importance. Special warfare provides a capability that achieves impact largely by working with and through others to assess and moderate behavior, address local conditions, and/or build indigenous warfighting capability, typically in long-duration campaigns. This capability is employed in unconventional warfare (UW), counterinsurgency (COIN), foreign internal defense (FID), security force assistance (SFA), stability operations, and select intelligence activities such as preparation of the environment (PE). U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication 3-05: Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2012), pp. 1-2, available at http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adp3_05.pdf.

11 See U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), *FY 2013 Budget Highlights: United States Special Operations Command* (Tampa, Florida: USSOCOM, 2012), p. 9, available at http://www.socom.mil/News/Documents/USSOCOM_FY_2013_Budget_Highlights.pdf.

12 Admiral William H. McRaven (USN), Commander United States Special Operations Command, statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement*, March 6, 2012, p. 3, available at "Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven (USN), Commander, United States Special Operations Command, Before the 112th Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee," March 6, 2012, p. 3, available at http://www.socom.mil/Documents/2012_SOCOM_POSTURE_STATEMENT.pdf.

to bring security and the rule of law to under-governed spaces where extremism could otherwise flourish. A central question for this report, therefore, is: how does DoD capitalize on and extend this strategic advantage well into the future to address the challenges that are beyond the next ridgeline?

The report begins by tracing the evolution of SOF as a key strategic instrument of power and the growth of USSOCOM since the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks. It then outlines the key challenges that the United States is likely to confront over the next several decades and how they may differ from those of the past decade. The report concludes with recommendations for shaping SOF to meet future challenges. The assessment's recommendations are intended to inform policymakers and the public as the congressionally mandated Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is beginning. Previous QDRs in 2006 and 2010 led to the doubling of SOF and expansion of their "enablers" (i.e., the logistics, intelligence, aviation, and other capabilities normally provided by conventional forces that are critical for SOF to accomplish their missions). Decisions in those past QDRs responded to the demands of long-duration wars in the Middle East, which have accounted for more than 80 percent of SOF deployed globally in the past decade.

The upcoming QDR offers an opportunity to better align SOF with the Pentagon's 2012 DSG and widen SOF's aperture beyond the past decade's focus on counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations to address a broader range of security problems confronting the nation. Returning SOF to their pre-9/11 roles would undoubtedly squander the remarkable special operations capability that DoD and USSOCOM have built over the past decade and forfeit a major U.S. competitive advantage. At the same time, simply extending SOF along their current trajectory would mark a failure to capitalize on their unique strengths to meet a wider array of emerging security challenges. A more prudent course would retain what has proven successful over the last decade, repurpose that which is effective but overly focused on today's challenges, rebuild the capabilities and knowledge that have declined while SOF have been consumed with current operations, and develop innovative solutions to emerging problems. Doing so will ensure that SOF are able to meet future challenges and exploit opportunities as they arise.

CHAPTER 2 > THE POST-9/11 TRANSFORMATION OF SOF

The raid on Abbottabad, Pakistan that killed Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011—nearly ten years after the 9/11 attacks—was one of fourteen operations SOF conducted that night.[13] Prior to 2001, it would have been hard to imagine SOF conducting that many raids in a single night halfway around the world, let alone an operation deep inside a country with which the United States was not at war. The success of the bin Laden raid offers one snapshot of the transformation SOF have undergone from the pre- to the post-9/11 era. Such direct-action, surgical-strike missions, though, have tended to overshadow indirect, special-warfare operations to enable foreign security forces or win the support of local populations. Special-warfare missions working "by, with, and through" partners are arguably more critical over the long-term to advance U.S. national security interests and establish durable security conditions. As Admiral Eric T. Olson (U.S. Navy–Retired), a former USSOCOM commander, once said, "Direct Action is important, not decisive; Indirect Action is decisive."[14]

This chapter begins by reviewing SOF's post-9/11 operational successes—in both surgical-strike and special-warfare operations—which demonstrate how SOF have adapted and evolved since 2001. It then reviews USSOCOM's growth and transformation as a global command. The chapter concludes by assessing SOF's "new normal" following more than a decade of continuous combat operations and rapid growth.

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[13] Carol Ross Joynt, "Admiral William McRaven Defends Petraeus at Tina Brown's Hero Summit Dinner," *Washingtonian Capital Comment Blog,* November 15, 2012, available at http://www.washingtonian.com/blogs/capitalcomment/news-gossip/admiral-william-mcraven-defends-petraeus-at-tina-browns-hero-summit-dinner.php.

[14] Admiral Eric T. Olson (U.S. Navy–Retired), "Command Brief given to Naval Postgraduate School Students and Faculty," September 2, 2008. Cited in Major Christopher D. Pratt (U.S. Army), *Permanent Presence for the Persistent Conflict: an Alternative Look at the Future of Special Forces,* Graduate Thesis (Monterey, CA: Naval Post Graduate School, 2009), p. 15, available at http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/theses/2009/Jun/09Jun_Pratt.pdf.

An Afghan girl watches as a Marine Critical Skills Operator supports the Afghan Commando Kandaks and NATO liaison forces patrolling her village.

A Decade of Operational Successes

For SOF as much as conventional forces, the wars of the last decade have been a stark departure from the operational pattern of the 1990s. In the era leading up to 9/11, SOF typically conducted short-duration, episodic missions such as Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCETs), or supported peacekeeping operations. By contrast, over the last eleven years SOF have conducted continuous, large-scale CT and COIN operations against al Qaeda and associated Islamist violent extremist networks (VENs), the Taliban, and other irregular forces. The demands of this strategic shift have compelled a number of changes. This section details three important areas of operational adaptation within SOF since 9/11: 1) the rebirth of unconventional warfare (UW); 2) the development of SOF's CT network; and 3) the evolution of the foreign internal defense (FID) mission and rise of tribal engagement.

Revitalizing Unconventional Warfare

During the Cold War, military planners envisaged Special Forces (SF) Operational Detachment-Alpha (ODA) teams executing UW as an adjunct to combined-arms maneuver in a total war against a nuclear-armed Soviet Union.[15] Had Warsaw Pact forces overrun Western Europe, SF ODAs would have stayed behind and organized a resistance force to continue the fight. SF also planned to foment uprisings throughout the Warsaw Pact to divert the energy and attention of their military forces away from the invasion of Western Europe.[16]

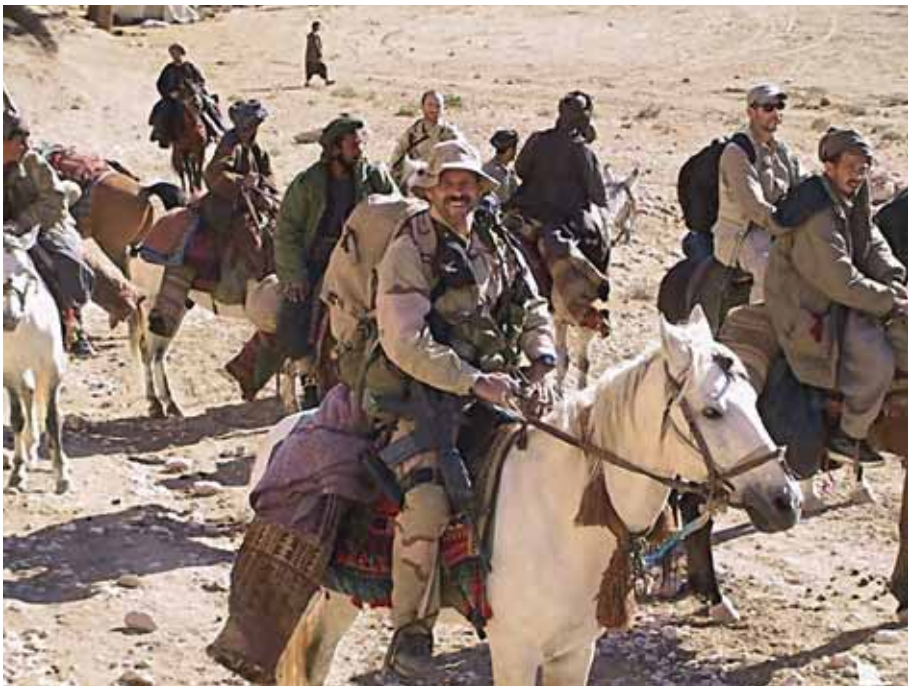
Following the demise of the Soviet Union and largely bloodless political revolutions across Central and Eastern Europe, SF lost their principal planning scenario for conducting large-scale UW. The Pentagon's post-Cold War prioritization of fighting wars against regional non-nuclear powers in the 1990s further eroded the strategic case for UW. Fighting "nearly simultaneous major regional contingencies," as envisaged in the 1993 Bottom-Up Review and the subsequent 1997 QDR, required the U.S. military to be able to depose a regime quickly in one theater and then rapidly redeploy to a second theater to defeat another power.[17] In this context, Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) saw UW operations as too slow to effect regime change within their planning parameters. Moreover, because UW campaigns require considerable preparation prior to hostilities, American policymakers might not lay the groundwork for them before they were needed, or have the constancy to sustain such efforts across political transitions. While SF never fully lost their core UW skills, in the 1990s they functioned mainly as trainers of

[15] ODAs, or "A-Teams" are twelve-man teams that are the basic unit of action for the U.S. Army Special Forces. Each team is typically led by a captain (O-3), with a warrant officer serving as the assistant commander, and a team sergeant, usually a master sergeant (E-8), as the senior NCO. The team contains one operations/intelligence sergeant, and two each of: weapons sergeants, communications sergeants, medical sergeants, and engineering sergeants. See "Special Forces," U.S. Army, available online at http://www.goarmy.com/special-forces/team-members.html. The definition of UW is "Operations conducted by, with, or through irregular forces in support of a resistance movement, an insurgency, or conventional military operations." See U.S. Department of the Army, *Field Manual No. 3-05.130 Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2008), p. 1-2, available at https://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-05-130.pdf.

[16] See Dr. Richard B. Remnek, "A Possible Fallback Counteroffensive Option in a European War," *Air University Review,* November-December 1983, available at http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1983/nov-dec/remnek.html; and Major Robert E. Kelly (U.S. Army), *U.S. Army Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Doctrine: Engine of Change or Relic of the Past?* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2000), pp. 1-3, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA378713.

[17] See Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, *Report on the Bottom-Up Review* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, October 1993), p. iii, available at http://www.dod.mil/pubs/foi/administration_and_Management/other/515.pdf; and Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, May 1997), "Secretary's Message" section, available at http://www.dod.mil/pubs/qdr/toc.html.

partner militaries through JCETs.[18] They also conducted peripheral tasks in support of conventional forces, such as hunting for Scud missiles in western Iraq and working as liaisons attached to coalition forces during the 1991 Gulf War.[19]



Utilizing the CIA's ties to Afghan warlords and supported by precision U.S. airpower, Army Special Forces soldiers and their Northern Alliance partners ousted the Taliban regime with a minimal commitment of U.S. ground forces.

UW in Afghanistan, Fall 2001

America's response to the 9/11 attacks marked a rebirth of UW. After infiltrating Afghanistan just weeks after the terrorist attacks, a handful of ODAs from the Army's 5th SF Group, along with embedded Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) Special Tactics (ST) operators, linked up with Central Intelligence Agen-

America's response to the 9/11 attacks marked a rebirth of UW.

[18] According to *Joint Publication 3-05 Special Operations,* a JCET is: "A program conducted overseas to fulfill US forces training requirements and at the same time exchange the sharing of skills between US forces and host nation counterparts." See JCS, *Joint Publication 3-05 Special Operations,* p. GL-8. These missions are short in duration (typically no longer than a month) and episodic. Oversight for these missions is exercised by the Department of State, DoD, U.S. ambassadors, Congress, and host-nation authorities.

[19] U.S. Department of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1992), Appendix J, p. 528.

cy (CIA) Special Activities Division officers already on the ground.[20] Exploiting the CIA's longstanding relations with Afghan warlords, the ODAs partnered with irregular Northern Alliance forces to conduct a rapid UW campaign that ousted the Taliban regime and hunted down remnants of al Qaeda in Afghanistan.[21] According to the official Army history, "it had taken fewer than sixty days of concentrated military operations and only a few hundred soldiers to seize the country from the Taliban and its terrorist allies."[22] The resounding success of this campaign, despite the purported languishing of UW during the 1990s, was a testament to SOF's adaptability and tactical proficiency, as well as those of their conventional force cohorts and the members of the intelligence community.

The Taliban government's dissolution in less than two months belied UW's reputation as a slow-acting means of regime change. Afghanistan, however, was fertile ground for a UW campaign. Having bloodied the Soviet Army in Afghanistan during the 1980s using a covert paramilitary campaign that ultimately forced the Soviet Union's retreat from the country, CIA and SF personnel were familiar with the country, its terrain, and key leaders. The Taliban could not control large areas of Afghanistan before 9/11, which gave the ODAs sanctuaries in which they could link up with the Northern Alliance and from which they could launch their offensive. The Taliban also lacked advanced weaponry such as modern air defenses that could have helped them offset key U.S. advantages in airpower and air mobility.

Most importantly, the 2001 UW campaign in Afghanistan demonstrated the critical function of relationships, which allowed SOF to work indirectly by, with, and through partner forces. SOF were able to partner with the Northern Alliance quickly because of connections developed by the CIA with key Northern Alliance leaders long before 9/11.[23] The Northern Alliance was a willing and able partner that possessed substantial irregular forces. Crucially, after spending years at war with the Taliban, the Northern Alliance shared the United States' desire to remove them from power.[24]

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[20] Dr. Richard W. Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom: The United States Army in Afghanistan, October 2001-March 2002* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2004), CMH Pub 70-83-1, pp. 8-10, available at http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Afghanistan/Operation%20Enduring%20Freedom.htm.

[21] Ibid., p. 10. For more details, see Doug Stanton, *Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan* (New York: Scribner, 2009), pp. 57-122; and James A. Schroder, "Observations: ARSOF in Afghanistan," *Special Warfare*, 15, Issue 3, September 2002, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8226.

[22] Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom,* p. 27.

[23] Stanton, *Horse Soldiers,* pp. 57-122; and Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 3, 2009), pp. 7-9.

[24] Stanton, *Horse Soldiers,* pp. 52-59.

Close cooperation among SOF, intelligence agencies, and general-purpose forces (GPF) was also key to the UW campaign's success. Although led by SOF, the success of the UW campaign relied heavily on interagency cooperation as well as close coordination with GPF, particularly in joint air-ground operations. The ability of SF soldiers and AFSOC ST personnel to call in air strikes and close air support from Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps strike aircraft gave the U.S.–Northern Alliance coalition a crucial asymmetric advantage over the Taliban, which lacked any effective means to contest the air domain. "The massive close air support brought down by Special Forces," Richard Stewart has explained, "had a huge and immediate psychological effect on the Taliban, causing panic and fear."[25] Fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft supplied more than firepower; they also provided transportation and logistical support, as well as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). Once operations began, ad-hoc collaboration in the field between intelligence personnel and the ODAs helped ensure the sharing of tactical intelligence gathered on the battlefield.[26] Together, longstanding relationships with a willing and able irregular force partner, along with close collaboration among SOF, the interagency, and GPF helped bring about victory in the first UW campaign conducted by U.S. SOF in the 21st century.

UW in Iraq, Spring 2003

The success of UW in Afghanistan led to the incorporation of a UW sub-campaign in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Shortly before the start of OIF in March 2003, the Government of Turkey refused to allow the Army's 4th Infantry Division to deploy through Turkish territory for the purpose of striking Iraq from the north. Confronted with this problem, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) planners devised an alternate plan relying on SF to conduct an economy of force UW operation. Working with friendly Kurdish Peshmerga forces, and once again supported by airpower, the SOF-led Task Force Viking defeated Ansar al-Islam, a terrorist group affiliated with al Qaeda in northern Iraq. The ODAs and their Peshmerga partners then conducted offensive operations against Iraqi regular Army formations along the so-called Green Line, which divided the Kurdish region from the rest of Iraq.[27]

The Battle of Debecka Pass stands out in this UW campaign. In the engagement, U.S. SOF (including two ODAs from the 3rd SF Group, a liaison element from the 10th SF Group, and two Air Force Combat Controllers) partnered with approximately eighty Peshmerga to defeat an Iraqi motorized infantry company that

25 Stewart, *Operation Enduring Freedom,* p. 11.

26 For examples of the relationship between SOF and the Northern Alliance enabled by intelligence personnel see Stanton, *Horse Soldiers,* pp. 57-122.

27 Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), pp. 331-334.

had been reinforced with T-55 tanks.[28] With the Peshmerga serving as the main ground element, SOF coordinated airstrikes and engaged Iraqi armored forces with Javelin anti-tank missiles, defeating a much larger and heavier conventional force.[29] Task Force Viking's success in northern Iraq reinforced lessons from the UW campaign in Afghanistan. The 10th SF Group had maintained ties to the Kurdish population of Iraq since the first Gulf War, and these longstanding relationships, coupled with the unique linguistic and cultural knowledge of the 10th Group personnel, facilitated a close partnership between U.S. SOF and the Peshmerga.[30] Airpower again provided a decisive advantage, with B-52 bombers softening Iraqi positions before the engagement, and Air Force and Navy fighters providing close air support during the battle.[31]

Between operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, UW rebounded from perceived irrelevance at the turn of the 21st century to become the principal instrument of regime change in Afghanistan and a key contributor to the successful invasion of Iraq. SOF's success in these operations rested on three major factors. First, SOF operators—including SF, AFSOC ST personnel, and the pilots and aircrews from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) and AFSOC—demonstrated their ability to adapt to ambiguous tactical situations. Second, SOF's ability to direct precise air attacks was a force-multiplier for friendly irregular ground forces. Without precision-guided firepower, aided by airborne ISR and experienced ST airmen, the UW campaigns to unseat the Taliban and create a northern front in Iraq likely would have taken much longer. Finally, SOF relied on effective partner forces to provide manpower, local knowledge, and political legitimacy. In turn, effective partnerships such as those between the ODAs of the 10th Group and the Kurdish Peshmerga required trusting relationships built over time around shared goals.

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28 John D. Gresham and Ana Lopez, "Roughnecks at War: The Battle of Debecka Pass," *Defense Media Network,* August 12, 2010, available at http://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/roughnecks-at-war-the-battle-of-debecka-pass/; Thom Shanker, "The Struggle for Iraq: Combat; How Green Berets Beat the Odds at an Iraq Alamo," *New York Times,* September 22, 2003, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/22/world/the-struggle-for-iraq-combat-how-green-berets-beat-the-odds-at-an-iraq-alamo.html?src=pm; Sean D. Naylor, "Battle of Debecka Pass: How 31 Special Forces troops outgunned and outmaneuvered an overwhelming enemy force," *Army Times,* September 22, 2003, available at http://www.armytimes.com/legacy/new/0-ARMYPAPER-2203854.php; and Mike Perry, "Operation Viking Hammer," *SOFREP,* May 20, 2012, available at http://sofrep.com/7160/operation-viking-hammer/.

29 CWO3 Kevin Wells (U.S. Army), "Eight Years of Combat FID: A Retrospective on Special Forces in Iraq," *Special Warfare,* January-March 2012, available at http://www.soc.mil/swcS/SWmag/archive/SW2501/SW2501EightYearsOfCombatFID.html.

30 Gresham and Lopez, "Roughnecks at War: The Battle of Debecka Pass;" and Naylor, "Battle of Debecka Pass."

31 Gresham and Lopez, "Roughnecks at War: The Battle of Debecka Pass;" Naylor, "Battle of Debecka Pass;" and Thom Shanker, "The Struggle for Iraq."

Building a Counterterrorism Network

> In bitter, bloody fights in both Afghanistan and Iraq, it became clear to me and to many others that to defeat a networked enemy we had to become a network ourselves. We had to figure out a way to retain our traditional capabilities of professionalism, technology, and, when needed, overwhelming force, while achieving levels of knowledge, speed, precision, and unity of effort that only a network could provide.[32]
>
> — General Stanley A. McChrystal, (U.S. Army–Retired)
> Former Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan

SOF CT efforts have also undergone a marked transformation over the last decade. Prior to 9/11, national SOF conducted CT missions that were limited in scope, short in duration, and largely reactive in nature.[33] National SOF, including elite special mission units (SMUs) that specialize in direct-action surgical strikes, were optimized for no-notice hostage rescue missions.[34] In contrast with the pattern of activities in 1990s, SOF CT operations since 2001 have become more proactive, widespread, and persistent in response to the global threat posed by VENs and the virulent insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.[35] In particular, SMUs have grown significantly and are now focused heavily on conducting long-duration "capture or kill" CT missions overseas. Prior to 9/11, national SOF focused most of their preparations on the "finish," or the final tactical engagement to kill or capture terrorists in the "find, fix, and finish" chain of CT operations. Operations against the irregular forces of VENs, however, have shifted the weight of effort toward intelligence gathering. According to Lieutenant General Michael T. Flynn (U.S. Army), currently Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, present-day terrorists are fully blended into the population and exploit clandestine digital networks to communicate and organize while maintaining a low signature, thereby making "finding and fixing" far more difficult than "finishing."[36]

The principal challenge in fighting terrorists and insurgent forces, therefore, has been in sifting plain-clothed irregular enemies from the civilian populations in which they hide. This must be done in an integrated way that breaks down traditional intelligence and operations stovepipes. The desired result is that the

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32 General Stanley A. McChrystal, (U.S. Army–Retired), "It Takes a Network: The New Frontline of Modern Warfare," *Foreign Policy,* March/April 2011, p. 1, available at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/02/22/it_takes_a_network.

33 National SOF are SMUs that respond to national-level tasking and are under the direct command of the president and secretary of defense.

34 General Wayne Downing (U.S. Army–Retired), "Special Operations Forces Assessment," Memorandum for Secretary of Defense and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, November 9, 2005, declassified July 7, 2009, p. 2.

35 Ibid.

36 Brigadier General Michael T. Flynn (U.S. Army), Colonel Rich Juergens (U.S. Army), and Major Thomas L. Cantrell (U.S. Air Force), "Employing ISR: SOF Best Practices," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 50, No. 3, 2008, p. 57, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA516799; and Downing, "Special Operations Forces Assessment," p. 2.

death or capture of one terrorist is not the end of an operation, but can reveal additional information that leads to follow-on operations against other nodes in the terrorist network. As Brigadier General Michael T. Flynn, Colonel Rich Juergens, and Major Thomas L. Cantrell noted,

> The airstrike that killed [Abu Musab al-]Zarqawi was only a fraction of the effort to find and accurately target him. The true operational art behind that strike was a multidisciplined intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) endeavor coupled with agile SOF that patiently laid bare the Zarqawi network and resulted in a find-fix-finish operation. It took more than 600 hours of ISR to track and observe the network that yielded the target.[37]

Similarly, General McChrystal observed that defeating networked enemies necessitated both national SOF as well as theater SOF collaborating to an unprecedented degree with their conventional military, interagency, and foreign counterparts to form a CT "network."[38] This CT network drew on existing techniques and technologies, but adapted and organized them in novel ways to solve the vexing problem posed by fighting a tactically adaptable, low-signature, networked opponent. The CT network, as it exists today, is the result of lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan and combines "network" targeting, low-level fusion of operations and intelligence, all-source intelligence derived from interagency and joint cooperation, and key technological innovations in command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR).

Network-based targeting, also known as Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze, Disseminate, (F3EAD) represented a significant shift from the Army's predominant "Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess (D3A)" approach.[39] As its name implies, F3EAD targeting closely integrates operational CT functions (i.e., find, fix, and finish) with intelligence functions (i.e., exploit, analyze, and disseminate). F3EAD is therefore a less "stove-piped" and more fluid targeting process in which operations and intelligence work closely together to share information quickly and collaboratively. Previously, intelligence and operations were separate, linear processes, with each step or barrier between organizations or command levels slowing down the flow of information among operators, sources, and analysts. This

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37 Flynn, Juergens, and Cantrell, "Employing ISR: SOF Best Practices," p. 56.

38 Unlike national SOF, theater SOF are assigned to the GCCs and operate under each GCC's Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC). These units, which can include SF, SEALs, AFSOC aircraft and special tactics personnel, Civil Affairs (CA), and Military Information Support Operation (MISO) personnel, typically conduct "special warfare" activities working "by, with, and through" local partners as part of the GCC's theater. Frequently, these operations are subsumed under the GCC's Theater Security Cooperation Plan, or TSCP.

39 For more on the development of F3EAD and its divergence from D3A, see Christopher J. Lamb and Evan Munsing, "Secret Weapon: High-value Target Teams as an Organizational Innovation," *Strategic Perspectives,* National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, No. 5, March 2011, p. 33; and Major Charles Faint (U.S. Army), and Major Michael Harris (U.S. Army), "F3EAD: Ops/Intel Fusion 'Feeds' The SOF Targeting Process," *Small Wars Journal,* January 31, 2012, available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/f3ead-opsintel-fusion-"feeds"-the-sof-targeting-process; and Flynn, Juergens, and Cantrell, "Employing ISR," pp. 57-61.

left CT efforts constantly one step behind its adversaries. Breaking down these barriers by fusing operations and intelligence, referred to as "ops-intel fusion," allowed SOF to anticipate opportunities and conduct preventive campaigns against key nodes in the enemy network rather than killing or capturing single, low-level targets through more reactive, sequential, and disconnected operations.[40] Ops-intel fusion was therefore central to the implementation of the F3EAD targeting approach. General McChrystal captured the core premise:

> The idea was to combine analysts who found the enemy (through intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance); drone operators who fixed the target; combat teams who finished the target by capturing or killing him; specialists who exploited the intelligence the raid yielded, such as cell phones, maps, and detainees; and the intelligence analysts who turned this raw information into usable knowledge.[41]

Operations over the past decade reinforced the need to expand ops-intel fusion and push this collaborative model to lower echelons of command. The Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment One—a predecessor to the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC)—pioneered the approach of integrating all-source intelligence fusion teams with small tactical teams.[42]

Building an effective CT network also required close collaboration between SOF and conventional forces, coalition partners, and agencies with little history of working together. The C4ISR assets used by the CT network have often been provided by the Air Force. Afghan National Army Special Forces have provided vital close target reconnaissance. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other law enforcement personnel have assisted SOF with forensics and sensitive site exploitation (SSE), while Department of Treasury officials helped trace terrorist financing. Additionally, National Security Agency, National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and CIA personnel have contributed their expertise in signals, geospatial, and human intelligence, respectively.[43]

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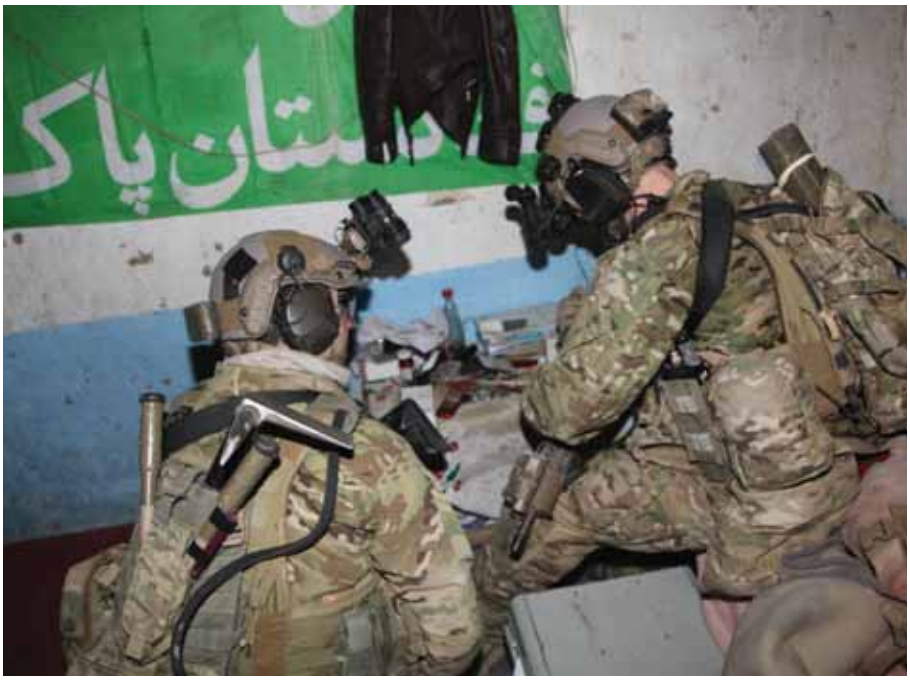
40 Flynn, Juergens, and Cantrell, "Employing ISR," pp. 59-60; Lamb and Munsing, "Secret Weapon," pp. 19-20; and Faint and Harris, "F3EAD: Ops/Intel Fusion 'Feeds' The SOF Targeting Process."

41 McChrystal, "It Takes a Network," p. 3.

42 Lieutenant Colonel John P. Piedmont (U.S. Marine Corps Reserve), *DET ONE: U.S. Marine Corps U.S. Special Operations Command Detachment,* 2003-2006 (Washington, DC: United States Marine Corps, 2010), p. 57; and "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven, USN Nominee for Commander, United States Special Operations Command," testimony before Senate Armed Services Committee, June 28, 2011, p. 37, available at http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2011/06%20June/McRaven%2006-28-11.pdf.

43 Joby Warrick and Robin Wright, "U.S. Teams Weaken Insurgency in Iraq," *Washington Post,* September 6, 2008. Regarding the specific role of law enforcement, see Faint and Harris, "F3EAD: Ops/Intel Fusion 'Feeds' The SOF Targeting Process:" "…the inclusion of law enforcement personnel and their investigative, forensic, and information-sharing capabilities were critical in the process of turning intelligence into evidence, which became more and more important in the non-lethal capabilities of F3EAD as the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan evolved."



U.S. and Coalition SOF conduct sensitive site exploitation after a raid on a suspected Taliban leader. The SOF CT network can quickly process, exploit, and disseminate information acquired during raids such as this, which enables rapid prosecution of follow-on targets.

Ultimately, the true "innovation" of the SOF CT network was the way it brought all these different personnel, organizations, and capabilities together and fostered collaboration to pursue shared objectives with minimal bureaucratic friction. According to Christopher Lamb and Evan Munsing of the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, using the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) structure to bring these myriad personnel and intelligence sources together with SOF operators in "high-value target teams" proved to be a powerful CT tool.[44] Expanding information sharing and collaboration between these teams and conventional forces has increased their capability and geographic reach, helping to turn around the war in Iraq and find Osama bin Laden.[45]

The SOF CT network also relied on several key technological innovations in the field of C4ISR. Broadband satellite communications (SATCOM) have been a key technological enabler of SOF CT operations. These systems have been crucial to transmit data, such as full-motion video streams, quickly from sensors to analysts. Similarly, globally distributed "big data" processing and storage capacity has

44 Lamb and Munsing, "Secret Weapon," pp. 1-2.

45 Ibid., p. 1; McChrystal, "It Takes a Network," p. 3; and David Ignatius, "How the U.S. found and finished Bin Laden," *Washington Post,* May 2, 2011, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/how-the-us-found-and-finished-bin-%20laden/2011/05/02/AFXO8jZF_story.html.

enabled data-driven CT operations and rapid processing, exploitation, and dissemination (PED) of intelligence. Reflecting the value of C4ISR to CT operations, intelligence and communications were the two largest "operational support" sub-activities in the 2013 USSOCOM budget request for operations and maintenance (O&M). Similarly, in the procurement account, the budgets for communications, electronics, and intelligence were larger than every non-aviation line item save ordnance replenishment.[46] Both communications and intelligence support for CT operations were largely supported by Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding (and would be among the most vulnerable capabilities if OCO-to-base funding migration does not materialize in the coming years).

Another key innovation is the degree to which unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have become integral to SOF's CT operations. Airborne ISR platforms can collect a wide range of intelligence, including full-motion video, wide-area scans, still photos, electronic intelligence (ELINT), and signals intelligence (SIGINT). They play an important function in "fixing" enemy forces prior to kinetic operations. Although SOF rely heavily on the regular Air Force for UAV ISR coverage, the 2006 QDR directed AFSOC to stand up a UAV squadron to provide dedicated support to SOF. AFSOC stood up the 3rd Special Operations squadron, which operates MQ-1 Predators, and later added the 33rd Special Operations Squadron, which operates MQ-9 Reapers.[47] Together, these two squadrons are building their capacity to conduct continuous airborne surveillance in up to ten geographically dispersed areas.[48] In addition to fielding its own fleet of UAVs, SOF have pioneered the use of new sensor packages, such as wide-area motion sensors and high-definition, full-motion video.

46 U.S. Department of Defense, *Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Estimates USSOCOM* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2012), p. SOCOM-810, available at http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2013/budget_justification/pdfs/01_Operation_and_Maintenance/O_M_VOL_1_PARTS/O_M_VOL_1_BASE_PARTS/SOCOM_OP-5.pdf; and U.S. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 President's Budget Submission: United States Special Operations Command Justification Book, Procurement, Defense-Wide* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2012), p. XII, available at http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2013/budget_justification/pdfs/02_Procurement/United_States_Special_Operations_Command_PB_2013.pdf.

47 "3rd Special Operations Squadron Fact Sheet," U.S. Air Force, February 27, 2012, available at http://www.cannon.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=12751; "33rd Special Operations Squadron Fact Sheet," U.S. Air Force, February 27, 2012, available at http://www.cannon.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=14992; and Marc V. Schanz, "An Expeditionary Force Searches for Balance," *Air Force Magazine,* November 2010, available at http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2010/November%202010/1110balance.aspx.

48 Major General Richard Comer (U.S. Air Force–Retired), "AFSOC Year in Review: 2011-2012," *Defense Media Network,* August 8, 2012, p. 2, available at http://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/afsoc-year-in-review-2011-2012/2/.

SOF have also driven the innovation of novel technologies to tag, track, and locate (TTL) high value targets, conduct SSE, and collect biometric information.[49] Partnerships with intelligence and law enforcement agencies have improved SOF's SSE and forensic capabilities, including their procedures for handling evidence such as the "pocket litter" found on target personnel as well as detainee interrogation techniques.[50] As SOF have improved their collection and interrogation capabilities, the bulk of new targeting information is generated by intelligence recovered during raids or through the interrogation of detainees.[51] In particular, the use of biometrics—the collection and analysis of unique biological signatures and characteristics such as fingerprints, iris scans, and even the gait of a person walking—has helped to deny enemies the anonymity they might otherwise have had while operating within civilian populations.[52]

The continuing development and corroboration of multiple high-fidelity intelligence sources with biometric information is enabling greater reliance on activity-based intelligence to conduct "signature strikes." Previously, CT "finishes" were usually personality-based, i.e., the target was identified by name as a person of interest. Increasingly, CT strikes may be based on certain threat "signature" activities such as behavioral patterns associated with terrorist operations.[53]

SOF's CT network, and the F3EAD process undergirding it, has become a virtuous cycle.

In sum, SOF's CT network, and the F3EAD process undergirding it, has become a virtuous cycle. According to Michael Vickers, the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, with F3EAD, "one mission leads to another. We didn't know how to do these kinds of operations before 9/11. A lot of intelligence investments we had made came together in 2007."[54] Intelligence feeds SOF with more detailed targeting information, which leads to more successful operations. The precision of the CT network has allowed SOF to be more discriminate in their operations, minimizing inadvertent civilian killings that can strategically undermine the coalition's efforts and hand propaganda victories to U.S. adversaries. From May 2010 through April 2011, out of 2,245 total CT missions conducted by SOF in Afghan-

49 "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven," p. 40; Lamb and Munsing, "Secret Weapon," p. 13; and USSOCOM, *USSOCOM Fact Book 2013,* p. 45.

50 Warrick and Wright, "U.S. Teams Weaken Insurgency in Iraq;" Lamb and Munsing, "Secret Weapon," pp. 6, 41, 51, 52; and Flynn, Juergens, and Cantrell, "Employing ISR," p. 60.

51 Flynn, Juergens, and Cantrell, "Employing ISR," p. 60; and interviews with USSOCOM personnel.

52 Marc Sellinger, "Boosting Biometrics," *Special Operations Technology,* 10, No. 8, October 2012, available at http://issuu.com/kmi_media_group/docs/sotech_10-8_final.

53 See Greg Miller, "CIA seeks new authority to expand Yemen drone campaign," *Washington Post,* April 18, 2012, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-seeks-new-authority-to-expand-yemen-drone-campaign/2012/04/18/gIQAsaumRT_story.html; and Scott Shane, "Election Spurred a Move to Codify U.S. Drone Policy," *New York Times,* November 24, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/25/world/white-house-presses-for-drone-rule-book.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

54 As quoted in Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, *Counterstrike: the Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against al Qaeda* (New York: Times Books Henry Holt and Company, 2011), p. 85.

istan, 1,896 (84 percent) saw no shots fired, while 1,862 missions captured or killed the intended target and/or their associates (83 percent).[55] Moreover, the development of the CT network and use of F3EAD have helped SOF shift the focus of CT efforts from going after Taliban and al Qaeda foot soldiers, who can be regenerated easily, to a greater focus on high-value targets such as senior commanders, logisticians, bomb-makers, financiers, and propagandists with specialized skills who are more difficult to replace. Finally, F3EAD has imposed immense costs on VENs by inducing them to adopt extraordinary operational security measures to avoid detection by coalition forces.

Conducting Persistent Foreign Internal Defense

> While the direct approach captures everyone's attention, we must not forget that these operations only buy time and space for the indirect and broader governmental approaches to take effect. Enduring success is achieved by proper application of indirect operations, with an emphasis in building partner-nation capacity and mitigating the conditions that make populations susceptible to extremist ideologies.[56]
>
> – Admiral William H. McRaven
> Commander, USSOCOM

Since 9/11, SOF have developed an effective network for capturing or killing terrorists through surgical-strike operations. This network, however, represents only one facet of SOF's approach to reducing the threats posed by VENs. Surgical-strike capabilities, while impressive, are unlikely to be sufficient to defeat terrorist movements on their own. Direct action is most effective when married, through organizations like the Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan (SOJTF-A), with FID operations designed to build the capacity of partner nations to combat VENs and deny them sanctuary within their borders.[57]

SOF have shifted from an emphasis on *training* partner forces in the 1990s to *partnering* with them as combat advisors over the past decade.

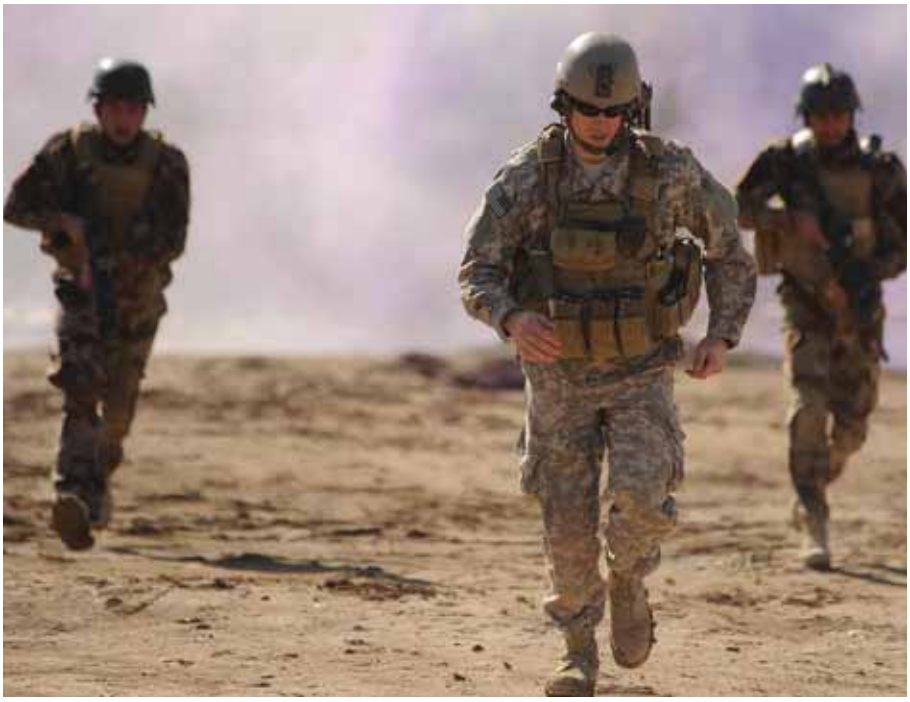
SOF's conduct of FID has undergone a significant shift over the last decade, and particularly since the onset of the Iraqi insurgency in late 2003. While there are many facets to this transformation, two areas of change have been particularly salient: how SOF conduct FID, and with whom they conduct it. With respect to the former, SOF have shifted from an emphasis on *training* partner forces in the 1990s to *partnering* with them as combat advisors over the past decade. In recent

55 Lieutenant General John F. Mulholland (U.S. Army), "U.S. Army Special Operations Command State of the Command Brief," June 3, 2011, PowerPoint Briefing, p. 14.

56 Admiral William H. McRaven, "Q&A with Admiral William H. McRaven," *Special Warfare,* April-June 2012, 25, Issue 2, p. 10, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/10170.

57 USSOCOM defines FID as, "Providing training and other assistance to foreign governments and their militaries to enable foreign governments to provide for its country's national security." U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), "About USSOCOM," available at http://www.socom.mil/Pages/AboutUSSOCOM.aspx.

years, SOF have also shifted the focus of their FID efforts from working principally with central governments and national security forces (e.g., the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police) to building security capacity at the local level through tribal engagement and Village Stability Operations (VSOs). The following sections describe these changes in greater detail, as well as FID operations outside CENTCOM's area of responsibility (AOR) working with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police.



An Army Special Forces soldier trains Iraqi SOF. Operating alongside partner forces as combat advisors allows SOF to conduct "on-the-job-training" with partner forces, thereby rapidly increasing their combat effectiveness.

The Rebirth of Combat FID

SOF FID missions, which before 9/11 consisted principally of episodic JCETs, changed rapidly after the Iraqi insurgency intensified in 2004.[58] Rather than training a standing foreign military unit outside of a combat zone, SOF had to

[58] A recent JCET conducted by Naval Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen (SWCC) with their counterparts in the Jamaica Defense Forces was typical of this kind of operation. The JCET lasted a month, and involved training existing Jamaican security forces outside of a combat theater. The purpose behind the JCET was as much to educate the SWCC unit on how to train foreign forces as it was about building Jamaican security capacity. See Sergeant 1st Class Alex Licea (U.S. Army), Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) Public Affairs, "SOCSOUTH, Jamaican Partners Participate in Exchange Training," *Tip of the Spear,* October 2012, pp. 6-7, available at http://www.socom.mil/News/Tip%20of%20The%20Spear%20Archive/Tip%20of%20The%20Spear%20Magazine%20Archive%202012/October%202012.pdf.

build partner CT and COIN capacity from scratch while under fire, and then conduct combat operations alongside those newly formed forces. This pushed SOF to resurrect the combat advisor mission as a means of conducting "on-the-job training" with partner forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.[59]

The combat advisor mission is not a new one for SOF; it reprises a role that SOF played in both Vietnam and El Salvador. Yet it represents a significant departure from the JCET-style training that predominated in the 1990s.[60] SOF combat training and advising were instrumental in building up Iraqi security capacity, integrating Iraqi CT forces into operations, capitalizing on their local knowledge, and putting an Iraqi "face" on operations. Later, SOF would draw upon and adapt this model in Afghanistan while building up the Afghan National Army Special Forces, Commando Kandaks, and Afghan Special Police. Combat training and advisory missions have not been limited to Army SOF (ARSOF). AFSOC's 6th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) has conducted "Aviation FID" to train partner fixed- and rotary-wing pilots while educating partner forces on the application of airpower more broadly.[61] Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) have been assigned to partner forces to call in close-air support. SEALs and Marine Critical Skills Operators (CSOs) have also taken on broader combat advisor responsibilities drawing on their FID skills.[62]

Combat FID operations combining training and combat advisory missions enabled SOF to build competent partner security forces while also establishing closer relationships with local populations. Accompanying partner forces as embedded advisors allowed SOF to monitor their tactical proficiency and identify potential leaders in a combat environment. Sharing the risks of combat with their partners helped SOF teams foster trust and demonstrate their tactical proficiency, which in turn gave their advice more credence.[63] Building strong partner relationships and developing combat capability, particularly for more complex CT and COIN operations, has required time and patience. The long duration of combat advisor deployments—up to a year or longer vice typical month-long JCETs—has

59 Master Sergeant Michael O'Brien (U.S. Army), "Foreign Internal Defense in Iraq: ARSOF Core Tasks Enable Iraqi Combating-Terrorism Capacity," *Special Warfare,* 21, Issue 1, January-March 2012, p. 22, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/9673.

60 Major D. Jones (U.S. Army), "Foreign Internal Defense: and Why Words Matter," *Special Warfare,* 19, Issue 4, July-August 2006, p. 23, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8241.

61 "6th Special Operations Squadron Fact Sheet," U.S. Air Force, available at http://www2.hurlburt.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=3496.

62 Carmen Gentile, "Navy SEALs serve as buffer between Afghans and Taliban," *USA Today,* October 8, 2012, available at http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2012/10/07/navy-seals-taliban-afghanistan-commandos/1615287/; and J.R. Wilson, "MARSOC Year in Review," *Defense Media Network,* June 24, 2011, available at http://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/marsoc-year-in-review/.

63 O'Brien, "Foreign Internal Defense in Iraq," p. 22.

been critical in establishing rapport between SOF and their local partners. Finally, combat FID provides political benefits by closely integrating U.S. and host-nation operations to balance risk and account for cultural considerations.[64]

Air Force Combat Controllers and Pararescuemen disembark from a UH-1 Huey of the 6th Special Operations Squadron during training. The Air Force's 6th Special Operations Squadron trains partner forces on the operation and maintenance of non-standard aircraft such as the UH-1, and Russian-built Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopters.

Tribal Engagement, Village Stability Operations, and the Afghan Local Police

Historically, FID missions have tended to focus on building national-level security institutions. Several years after the United States intervened in Afghanistan and Iraq, COIN operations still emphasized training and equipping those countries' national armies and police forces. In Iraq, for example, SOF initially concentrated on training and advising national CT forces and special weapons and tactics (SWAT)-type police such as Iraqi SOF and the Iraqi Emergency Response Brigade.[65] Despite their early concentration on building security capacity at the national level, SOF were among the first to recognize the value of a bottom-up approach that emphasized building local security by engaging with tribes and villages to protect rural populations and extend security to vulnerable areas insurgents

64 "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven," p. 15.

65 CWO3 Kevin Wells (U.S. Army), "Eight Years of Combat FID: A Retrospective on Special Forces in Iraq," *Special Warfare,* 25, Issue 1, January-March 2012, p. 16, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/9673.

and terrorists could otherwise exploit. This tribal engagement model of FID has proven particularly valuable in Afghanistan.[66]

By 2009, there was growing recognition that, given Afghanistan's geography and weak central government, a strategic focus on building national institutions was inadequate to address the security needs of rural populations. "Top-down reconstruction strategies," as Seth Jones has argued, "may have been appropriate for countries such as Japan after World War II and Iraq after 2003, both of which had historically been characterized by strong centralized state institutions. But they do not work as well in countries such as Afghanistan, where power is diffuse."[67] Coalition leaders gradually began to see the merits of intensifying engagement with the tribes. Tribal engagement represented a departure from the coalition's strategy of building national institutions and disbanding warlord militias. Under that previous strategy, SOF were largely focused on "kill and capture" missions or were training and advising Afghan National Security Forces.[68] A few ODAs, however, began engaging with tribal partners to improve security at a grassroots level.[69]

Increasingly, tribal engagement has become the central means to build security and governance at the local level by capitalizing on SOF's UW skills. The objective of tribal engagement is not to disrupt or overthrow a regime as in classic UW, but rather to disrupt and deny sanctuary to enemy irregular forces, in this case the Taliban, foreign fighters, and groups such as Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG). SOF have used their UW expertise proactively to enhance the legitimacy of the central Afghan government by working through provincial governors and sub-governors, building trust with tribal leaders, and increasing tribal support for anti-Taliban actions.[70]

Increasingly, tribal engagement has become the central means to build security and governance at the local level by capitalizing on SOF's UW skills.

66 Major Jim Gant (U.S. Army), *One Tribe at a Time: a Strategy for Success in Afghanistan* (Los Angeles, CA: Nine Sisters Imports, 2009), pp. 10-11, available at http://rohrabacher.house.gov/sites/rohrabacher.house.gov/files/documents/one_tribe_at_a_time.pdf.

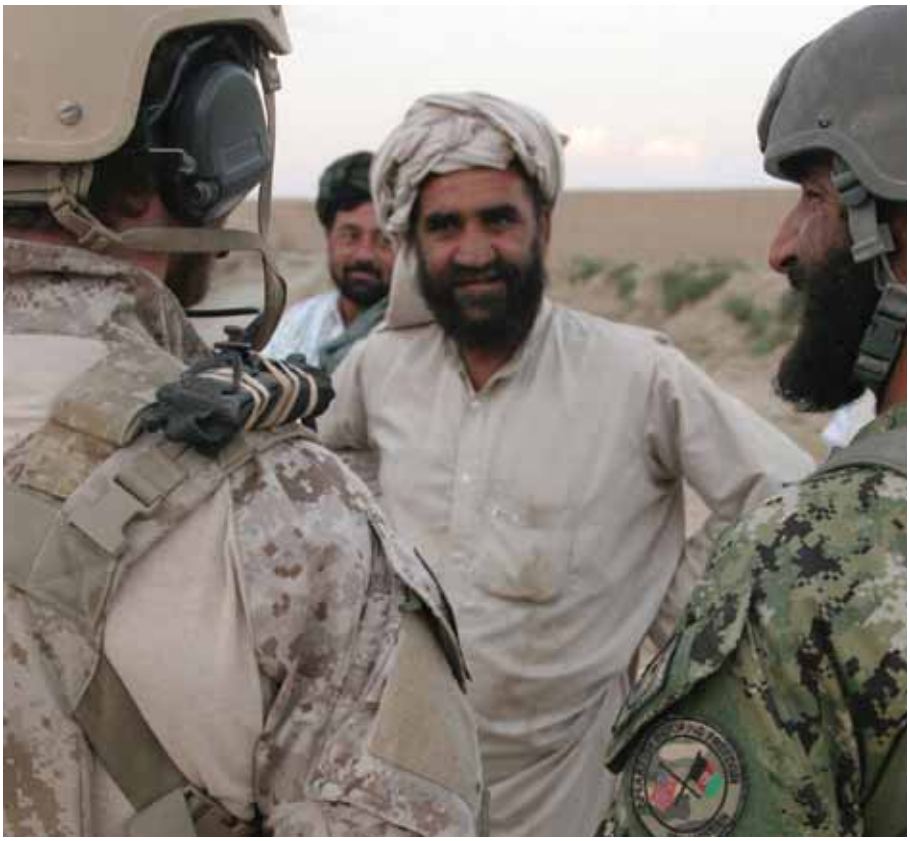
67 Seth G. Jones, "It Takes the Villages: Bringing Change From Below in Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs,* May-June 2010, available at http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~kmcm/Articles/It%20Takes%20the%20Villages.pdf.

68 Ibid.; and Major Matthew D. Coburn (U.S. Army), "It Takes a Village to Counter an Insurgency: Adopting a village-focused plan to counter insurgency in Afghanistan," *Special Warfare,* 30, Issue 4, July-August 2007, p. 9, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8245.

69 Major Darin J. Blatt (U.S. Army), Captain Eric Long (U.S. Army), Captain Brian Mulhern (U.S. Army), and Staff Sergeant Michael Ploskunak (U.S. Army), "Tribal Engagement in Afghanistan," *Special Warfare,* 22, Issue 1, January-aFebruary 2009, p. 23, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8257.

70 Ibid.

Village Stability Operations (VSOs) represent the adoption of tribal engagement—which heretofore had been applied sporadically—as a central pillar in the current "bottom-up" COIN/CT strategy in Afghanistan. In many respects, VSOs represent the return of long-dormant concepts from Vietnam such as the Marine Corps' Combined Action Platoons (CAPs), SF's partnership with the Montagnard tribesmen, and the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program. They are, however, a significant departure from the manner in which SOF have conducted FID for the roughly three decades between the end of Vietnam and 9/11. VSOs have produced impressive results: SOF have recruited and trained nearly 11,000 Afghan Local Police (ALP) and VSOs have been established in 57 districts.[71]



An Army Special Forces soldier and his Afghan interpreter meet with a local tribal leader during Village Stability Operations in Afghanistan. Gaining the approval and trust of local leadership is the key first step to securing rural areas that weaker central governments may be unable to govern effectively.

[71] Admiral William H. McRaven (USN), *Posture Statement*, p. 10.

VSOs typically consist of four interconnected lines of effort: gaining the trust of village elders, building local security capacity, strengthening local civilian institutions and infrastructure, and effectively conveying information about these efforts to target populations.[72] Gaining the trust of tribal elders is the key that "unlocks" support for the other lines of effort.[73] After establishing relationships with tribal elders, ODAs conduct patrols to improve local security. One important distinction between VSOs and previous approaches is the emphasis on SOF teams taking up residence in safehouses within the village, rather than remaining at isolated firebases outside the local communities. Living side-by-side with villagers creates a continuous security presence that was previously missing, increases the confidence of villagers, and eliminates opportunities for the Taliban or other hostile forces to intimidate local populations when coalition forces are not present.

The second major change has been the focus on building the ALP, a de-centralized, armed "neighborhood watch" force that can maintain security in rural areas beyond the normal reach of national army and police forces.[74] ALP candidates are vetted not only by U.S. SOF, but also most importantly by their village and tribal elders. The ALP is an important complement to the national forces. Since they are protecting their own villages and tribal regions, ALP forces are often more adept at detecting and countering the presence of VEN or Taliban operatives in their areas than either U.S. or national-level Afghan forces.

Coupled with SF efforts to build security capacity through the ALP and conduct tribal engagements, Civil Affairs Teams (CATs) have been integral to VSOs by working to address the infrastructure and other pressing development needs of their tribes. The CATs apply their expertise and resources working through district governments and existing tribal structures. This enhances the legitimacy of local leaders as they take responsibility for projects, and builds connections to the central government from the bottom-up.[75]

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72 These three lines of operation are typically carried out in four phases: shape, hold, build, and expand and transition. See Colonel Ty Connett (U.S. Army) and Colonel Bob Cassidy (U.S. Army), "Village Stability Operations: More than Village Defense," *Special Warfare,* 24, Issue 3, July-September 2011, pp. 24-27, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8888.

73 Thomas R. Searle, "Tribal Engagement in Anbar Province: The Critical Role of Special Operations Forces," *Joint Forces Quarterly,* 3rd Quarter, 2008, p. 63, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA516791&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf; Gant, "One Tribe at a Time," p. 14; and CWO3 Stephen N. Rust (U.S. Army), "The Nuts and Bolts of Village Stability Operations," *Special Warfare,* 24, Issue 3, July-September 2011, p. 28, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8888.

74 Lieutenant Colonel Basil Catanzaro (U.S. Army), and Major Kirk Windmueller (U.S. Army), "Taking a Stand: Village Stability Operations and the Afghan Local Police," *Special Warfare,* 24, Issue 3, July-September 2011, p. 33, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8888.

75 Captain Neiman C. Young (U.S. Army), "4th and Long: the Role of Civil Affairs in VSO," *Special Warfare,* 4, Issue 3, July-September 2011, pp. 19-20, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8888; and Connett and Cassidy, "Village Stability Operations," p. 26.

Projects are normally completed with local labor and direction, which gives villagers a sense of pride and ownership in their accomplishments and creates a greater interest in protecting and sustaining what they have built. By providing tangible benefits to the local population, completed projects such as schools, wells, and agricultural development help establish the bona fides of the SOF teams and improve the image of the Afghan national government, as well as facilitate the process of connecting local villages to district governments.[76]

Military Information Support Teams (MISTs) have also played an essential part in VSOs, not only in countering Taliban propaganda and conducting analysis of local attitudes and concerns to guide operations, but also in publicizing efforts to build local security, governance, and infrastructure to gain popular support.[77] According to SF Lieutenant Colonel Scott Mann, Military Information Support Operations (MISO) promote a narrative that,

> Instead of depending on the government for everything, the individual becomes an active participant and is empowered by government and Coalition assistance…This localizes security, politics, and development, so that the government no longer has to provide everything all the time; the individuals taking responsibility for their own villages accomplish the common objectives of security, development, and governance. Amplifying individual successes reinforces the alignment of words with deeds.[78]

Effective MISO therefore go hand-in-glove with civic action by disseminating information about the projects and thereby encouraging other villages to participate in the program. VSOs are central to a larger "oil spot" COIN strategy of slowly expanding security at the local level. MISO are crucial to accelerating this expansion by encouraging other tribes to join the VSOs program, while simultaneously countering Taliban propaganda.[79]

Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines

SOF have also conducted FID to deny VENs sanctuary and reduce their influence beyond Afghanistan. In 2001, the southern islands of the Philippines were a safe haven for the al Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Islamist insurgent group the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). To counter this growing Islamist VEN threat, U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) launched Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) in January 2002. Unlike contemporary CT

[76] Gant, "One Tribe at a Time," p. 32.

[77] Connett and Cassidy, "Village Stability Operations," p. 27.

[78] Lieutenant Colonel Scott Mann (U.S. Army), "Shaping Coalition Forces' Strategic Narrative in Support of Village Stability Operations," *Small Wars Journal,* March 31, 2011, p. 4, available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/shaping-coalition-forces-strategic-narrative-in-support-of-village-stability-operations.

[79] Connett and Cassidy, "Village Stability Operations," p. 27.

operations in Afghanistan, OEF-P focused on assisting the Philippine government to protect its citizens, defeat the Islamist insurgency that had taken hold around the island of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, and deny sanctuary to VENs. OEF-P's success has demonstrated the value of the special-warfare approach of working "by, with, and through" partners to achieve common security goals.

Intensified training and advising of the AFP began in early 2002 with the deployment of approximately 1,500 U.S. troops, the core of which was a sizeable ARSOF component. The first major operation expanded on the yearly *Balikatan* ("shoulder-to-shoulder") bilateral training exercise.[80] Although nominally a training exercise, *Balikatan* 2002 took the fight directly to the ASG's strongholds in the southern islands. Unlike FID operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. SOF did not engage directly in combat but instead provided their Philippine partners with tactical training, ISR, logistical, and civil affairs (CA) support.[81] With U.S. assistance, the AFP gradually won the support of the local populace and drove the ASG from their sanctuary on Basilan Island. Meanwhile, a combination of Philippine human intelligence and U.S. technical capabilities (including aerial surveillance and SIGINT) enabled the two countries to "find and fix" the location of the ASG leader Abu Sabaya and an American missionary couple held hostage by the ASG for over a year. With U.S. SOF in support, the AFP conducted an operation in June 2002 that rescued one of two missionaries (the other was killed during the raid) and killed Abu Sabaya at sea as he moved between islands.[82] In recognition of the assistance they provided, U.S. SOF who participated in *Balikatan* 2002 were awarded the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation.[83]

[80] Balikatan 2012 was the twenty-eighth of these annual combined exercises. See "Balikatan 2012: Towards an Enduring Partnership," Armed Forces of the Philippines, March 7, 2012, available at http://www.afp.mil.ph/index.php/news/1063-balikatan-2012-towards-an-enduring-partnership.

[81] Linda Robinson, "The Future of Special Operations: Beyond Kill and Capture," *Foreign Affairs,* 91, No. 6, November-December 2012, available at http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/138232/linda-robinson/the-future-of-special-operations; and Major Matthew J. Gomlak (U.S. Army), and Major Stephen Fenton (U.S. Air Force), "Real Results: Military Partnerships in the Philippines," *Special Warfare,* 25, Issue 3, July-September 2012, p. 37, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/10629.

[82] A description of the U.S.-Philippine teamwork involved in both missions can be found in Mark Bowden, "Jihadists in Paradise," *The Atlantic,* March 2007, available at http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/03/jihadists-in-paradise/305613/2/?single_page=true.

[83] See Jim Tice, "Balikatan citation OK'd for wear," *Army Times,* June 2, 2008, available at http://www.armytimes.com/news/2008/06/army_PI_award_060208w/.

Since 2002, a cadre of SOF have continued to train, advise, and assist the AFP and Philippine National Police (PNP) in CT and COIN. Renamed Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P), this U.S. force is typically 500-600 strong[84] and co-located with their Philippine partners at a dozen military and police facilities around the country. Over the past ten years, small elements and individual operators from JSOTF-P have embedded with AFP units ranging from three-star operational commands to tactical units, as well as with law enforcement units like the PNP. JSOTF-P has also partnered with U.S. government agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).[85] Importantly, all of JSOTF-P's activities are closely coordinated with the ambassador's country team by a full-time SOF liaison officer assigned to the U.S. embassy. This ensures that OEF-P is synchronized with the objectives and activities of U.S. foreign policy toward the Philippines.[86]

JSOTF-P has delivered results far beyond its small numbers. Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker have argued that "Perhaps none of the military's far-flung efforts at establishing counterterrorist networks to fight terror networks better illustrates the cost-benefit analysis than the small force committed to the Philippines."[87] With the training, advice, and assistance of SOF, the AFP have evolved into a capable CT and COIN force that is more tactically proficient and more responsive to the needs of the populace. The readiness of rotary-wing aircraft was one striking example of how U.S. training and advice improved the AFP's COIN and CT capabilities. In 2001, prior to the creation of JSOTF-P, Philippine helicopters had a mission readiness rate of approximately 15 percent. By 2007, U.S. training and advice had helped AFP logisticians improve mission readiness to around 80 percent.[88]

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84 Over the past decade JSOTF-P has typically comprised an SF company, CA company, and MIST, a Navy SEAL Platoon with supporting small boat and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) detachments, several fixed wing transport aircraft and helicopters, and a small Air F orce contingent of air controllers and weathermen. A small force of general-purpose soldiers or Marines typically provides base security. All told, total U.S. forces in the Philippines at a given time have typically averaged around 500-600 personnel. See Major Stuart L. Farris (U.S. Army), *Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies, 2009), pp. 38-39, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA505075. According to the Congressional Research Service, total upkeep costs of JSOTF-P are approximately $50 million annually. See Thomas Lum, *The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 5, 2012), p. 16, available at http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33233.pdf.

85 Colonel Fran Beaudette (U.S. Army), "JSOTF-P Uses Whole-Of-Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," *Special Warfare,* 25, Issue 3, July-September 2012, p. 11, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/10629.

86 Beaudette, "JSOTF-P Uses Whole-Of-Nation Approach to Bring Stability to the Philippines," pp. 9-11.

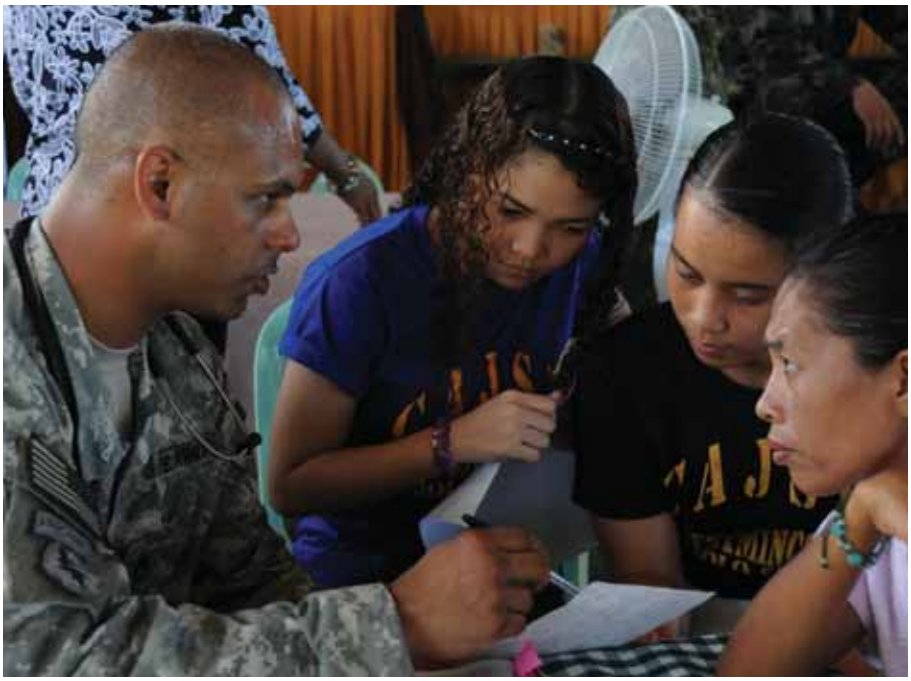
87 Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike: the Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against al Qaeda,* p. 194.

88 Peter Brookes, "Flashpoint: No Bungle in the Jungle," *Armed Forces Journal,* March 2007, available at http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2007/09/2926516/.

Supporting AFP CT operations has been only one facet of JSOTF-P's work. According to Colonel Bill Coultrup (U.S. Army), a former JSOTF-P commander, most of the task force's effort has been has focused on civil-military operations to:

> "[C]hange the conditions that allow those high-value targets to have a safe haven. We do that through helping give a better life to the citizens: good governance, better health care, a higher standard of living… that's how we prevent the bad guys from getting a grip on the local population."[89]

To that end, CATs have worked with local authorities to provide humanitarian and development assistance to the Philippine population, particularly in previously underserved rural areas. As of 2010, JSOTF-P had implemented over one hundred-fifty construction projects such as schools, wells, and local health clinics worth over $20 million.[90]



An Army Civil Affairs Team medic with the Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines conducts a medical civic action program. Non-kinetic, special-warfare operations such as these are key to building long-term trust and security.

[89] As quoted in Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike: the Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against al Qaeda,* pp. 195-196.

[90] Lum, "The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests," p. 17; and Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike: the Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against al Qaeda,* p. 195.

Mark Bowden has made the case that JSOTF-P, rather than operations in Iraq or Afghanistan, may offer greater lessons for defeating a global network of Islamist VENs:

> As a model for the long-term fight against militant Islam [OEF-P] is better than either of those larger engagements. Because the enemy consists of small cells operating independently all over the globe, success depends on local intelligence and American assistance subtle enough to avoid charges of imperialism or meddling, charges that often provoke a backlash and feed the movement.[91]

Small-footprint, low-visibility FID has enabled the AFP and PNP to destroy the ASG's capabilities and weaken its popular appeal to a point where it "no longer possesses the organizational and ideological strength to constitute a key terrorist threat,"[92] and retains perhaps only 10 percent of its former strength.[93] Meanwhile, the combined COIN efforts of U.S. SOF and Philippine forces have undermined support for the MILF insurgency and weakened the connection between local insurgencies like the MILF and VENs such as the ASG.[94] JSOTF-P's cooperative approach has won the appreciation of the AFP and Philippine government and rekindled a strategic relationship. Thanks at least in part to the relationships and trust established by SOF, the government of the Philippines has recently offered greater access to conventional U.S. forces, and appears willing to cooperate on measures to address a wider set of security issues.[95]

Expansion of SOF and Their Enablers

SOF's operational successes have been underwritten in part by significant growth in the force since 2001.

SOF's operational successes have been underwritten in part by significant growth in the force since 2001. Prior to 2001, approximately 2,800 SOF were deployed overseas. Since then, the number of SOF personnel deployed overseas on an annual basis has quadrupled. During the surges in Iraq and Afghanistan, that number grew to around 12,000, and remained near that level for much of the period since.[96] In an attempt to relieve the stress of repeated deployments, as well as provide SOF to service missions other than the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, USSOCOM's end strength has increased by approximately 25,000 personnel,

91 Bowden, "Jihadists in Paradise."

92 Lum, "The Republic of the Philippines and U.S. Interests," p. 16.

93 Peter Brookes, who helped shape OEF-P policy in 2001-2002, asserted in 2007 that ASG's numbers had been "whittled down" during the first 5 years of OEF-P from 2,000 to 200. Brookes, "Flashpoint: No Bungle in the Jungle."

94 Ibid.

95 Craig Whitlock, "Philippine President Aquino seeks U.S. military aid," *Washington Post,* June 8, 2012, available at http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-06-08/world/35462555_1_president-benigno-aquino-iii-clark-air-base-philippine-leaders.

96 Office of the Secretary of Defense for Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (OSD-CAPE), "SOCOM Deployments: Number of SOCOM Personnel Deployed," PowerPoint Briefing, February 29, 2012, slide 26.

from 38,000 in 2001 to 63,000 in 2012—a 68 percent increase in a little over a decade.[97] This expansion of the force has coincided with substantial budgetary growth. USSOCOM funding has risen from $2.3 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 to approximately $10.4 billion in FY 2013.[98]

The expansion of SOF has occurred in three distinct phases: internal growth between 2001 and 2005; growth directed by the 2006 QDR, which called for expanding SOF's force structure and end strength by roughly one-third; and growth resulting from the 2010 QDR, which recommended expanding SOF's organic enablers and Service-provided capabilities to bring them into alignment with the ongoing expansion of the force. This section will review briefly how this growth occurred.

Internal Growth: 2001-2005

After 2001, SOF grew within existing, pre-9/11 force structure by bringing units up to their full allotment of troops.[99] On 9/11, many SOF units were below their authorized manning levels, with some SF units manned at only 80 percent of total authorized capacity.[100] Even those units that were "fully" manned on paper often lacked a complete complement of deployable operators because many personnel were attending individual training, injured, or otherwise non-deployable. Additional gaps existed at key "high-demand/low-density" positions. For example, shortages of AFSOC Combat Controllers were (and remain) a perennial problem.[101]

USSOCOM initially responded to the spike in demand for SOF after 9/11 by bringing units up to authorized manning levels. It did so by increasing recruitment and training efforts. The U.S. Army Special Forces Command (USASFC), for instance, instituted the "18X Program," which recruited SF candidates directly from the civilian population in addition to their traditional practice of drawing from the Army's enlisted ranks. USASFC also increased the throughput of the SF Qualifi-

97 Ibid., slide 37.

98 Does not take into account effects of sequestration. At time of writing, FY14 budget materials were not yet available. See USSOCOM, *FY 2013 Budget Highlights: United States Special Operations Command,* p. 6.

99 This allotment is known as Modified Table of Organization and Equipment, or MTOE.

100 Dick Couch, *Chosen Soldier: The Making of a Special Forces Warrior* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2007), p. 41. According to General Downing, "Prior to the September 11 attacks, many SOF units were experiencing manning shortfalls in their existing force structure," Downing, "Special Operations Forces Assessment," p. 1.

101 See Michael Peck, "Air Guard Takes Steps To Retain Seasoned Combat Controllers," *National Defense,* September 2005, available at http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2005/September/Pages/Air_Guard25601.aspx; and Lieutenant Colonel Tim Creighton (U.S. Army), "Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) Shortage: Training Opportunities and Initiatives to Increase and Maintain the JTAC Population," *Horizons,* Issue 4, Summer 2012, pp. 1-4, available at http://www.socom.mil/FMD/Horizons/Horizons_Issue_4.pdf; and Marlena Hartz, "Special Ops: Supply barely keeping up with demand," *Clovis News Journal,* July 14, 2006, available at http://cnjonline.com/cms/news/story-549725.html.

cation Course (commonly referred to as the "Q Course").[102] The 75th Ranger Regiment replaced its Ranger Indoctrination Program (RIP) for junior enlisted and its Ranger Orientation Program (ROP) for non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and officers with the more comprehensive Ranger Assessment and Selection Program (RASP) to ensure that new recruits would be better prepared for combat when they arrived at their unit. Naval Special Warfare Command (NAVSPECWARCOM, or more commonly NSW) moved to increase the graduation rate of its Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) course and created a "pre-BUD/S" program at the Great Lakes basic training facility.[103]

While these efforts to increase recruitment and training throughput were (and remain) effective, the rapid growth of the insurgency in Iraq from 2004 through 2005 made clear that the "temporarily elevated" 20 percent deployment rate that USSOCOM experienced during the invasion of Iraq would thereafter be the rule, rather than the exception. Put simply, filling out existing units was no longer adequate; USSOCOM would need to increase its force structure to meet the demands of the "Long War" against violent Islamist extremism envisioned in the 2006 QDR.

Building Force Structure in the 2006 QDR

As the Iraqi insurgency spread in 2004 and 2005, former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace (U.S. Marine Corps) commissioned the late General Wayne A. Downing (U.S. Army–Retired) to conduct a classified assessment of SOF to inform the upcoming 2006 QDR.[104] In his report, General Downing stated that prior to 9/11, "SOF was structured for and conducted short-duration deployments and combat operations," but by 2005, "SOF operators [were] conducting more operations in a week, at a higher rate of complexity, than their pre 9/11 predecessors conducted in a career." General Downing concluded that, "It is imperative that SOF capacity be increased…[since] [w]e have essentially the same SOF ground force structure that we had prior to 9/11."[105]

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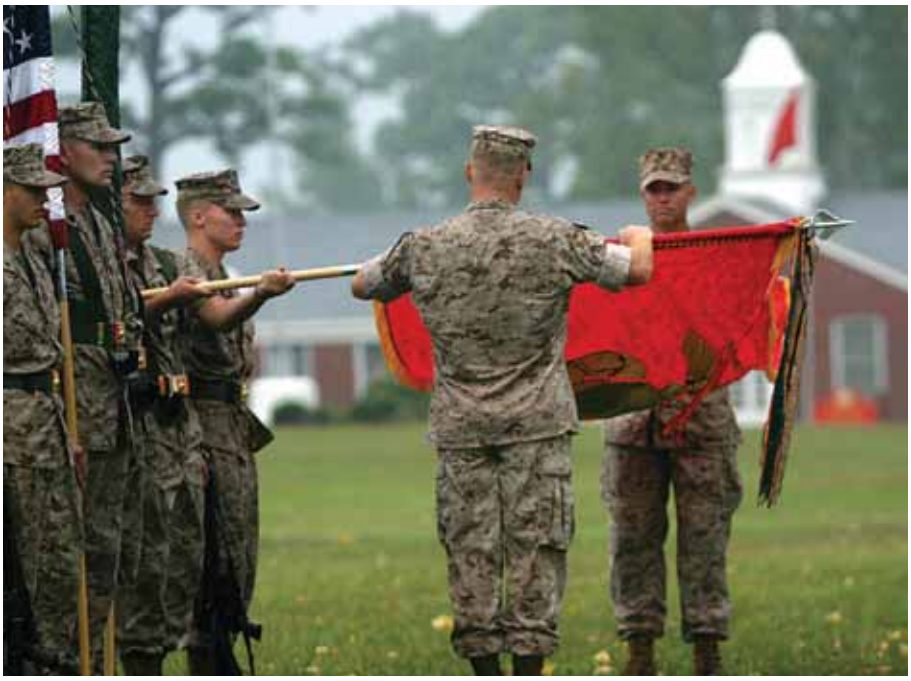
[102] Michael G. Vickers, Director of Strategic Studies, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, testimony before the subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities, *SOCOM's Missions and Roles*, June 29, 2006, p. 2, available at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2006_hr/060629-vickers.pdf.

[103] Gidget Fuentes, "Navy officials hope course yields more SEALs," *Navy Times,* April 19, 2008, available at http://www.navytimes.com/news/2008/04/navy_moreseals_041908w/.

[104] General Downing, a former commander of USSOCOM, was joined by Major General William Garrison (U.S. Army–Retired), a former JSOC commander, and Dr. Michael Vickers, a former SF and CIA officer then working at CSBA. Both Downing and Vickers also served on the QDR Red Team that made similar recommendations on the need for expanding SOF that were ultimately adopted in the course of the QDR.

[105] Downing, "Memorandum: Special Operations Forces Assessment," p. 4.



Marines fold the colors during a ceremony in 2006, in which the 2nd Force Reconnaissance Battalion was deactivated and the 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion—part of the newly created Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command—was activated in its stead.

The 2006 QDR endorsed General Downing's recommendations, directing the largest increase in SOF force structure since the Vietnam War, an overall 15 percent increase in USSOCOM's end strength.[106] In total, the 2006 QDR reforms added 13,119 additional billets to USSOCOM's end strength at a cost of $7.54 billion.[107] The QDR authorized SF to grow from fifteen battalions to twenty by adding an additional battalion to each of the five SF groups. SEAL teams increased their manning by roughly one-third and NSW added riverine capacity. MISO (then called Psychological Operations, or PSYOP) and CA units saw a one-third increase in their end strength. U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) shifted its reserve CA and PSYOP units to the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) to better align them with the units they deploy with.[108] Following the successful

106 U.S. Department of Defense, *2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2006), pp. 43-45, available at http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/QDR20060203.pdf; and Andrew Feickert, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 17, 2006), p. 4, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA458280.

107 U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), "SORR J-8 AMS – Historical QDR 06 and 10 Issues," USSOCOM, Unclassified Briefing, p. 4.

108 On November 14, 2006, the reserve CA and PSYOP units within USSOCOM were transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC). See Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., "The 2006 'Divorce' of US Army Reserve and Active Component Psychological Operations Units," *Small Wars Journal,* March 2, 2012, available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-2006-"divorce"-of-us-army-reserve-and-active-component-psychological-operations-units.

deployment of the Marine Corps Special Operations Command Detachment One in 2005, DoD authorized the creation of MARSOC. AFSOC was ordered to shift its combat search and rescue (CSAR) units to the Air Force's Air Combat Command. AFSOC also gained approval to establish its own organic UAV squadron to support special operations missions. Finally, the 2006 QDR authorized the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) to become a three-star billet and directed comparable growth in JSOC end strength.[109] Consistent with the "SOF Truth" that SOF cannot be mass-produced, the implementation of these recommended actions to grow SOF has taken time. USASOC, for example, is only now finalizing the establishment of the fifth additional SF battalion in FY 2013.[110]

Growing Enablers in the 2010 QDR

While the 2006 QDR focused on building SOF capacity, the 2010 QDR complemented this growth by increasing the number of key enablers such as intelligence analysts, logisticians, and aviation forces to support the growth in SOF. In total, the 2010 QDR added another 3,572 authorized billets to USSOCOM, at a cost of $1.67 billion.[111] The growing importance of feeding timely information into the F3EAD targeting cycle prompted investments in ISR collection and PED capacity.[112] In light of continual high demand for rotary-wing aviation to support special operations, DoD directed the 160th SOAR to add a company of MH-47G Chinook helicopters, and instructed the Navy to allocate two squadrons of helicopters to support Naval special operations.[113] DoD also instructed AFSOC to purchase light, fixed-wing aircraft and non-standard helicopters to enable the 6th SOS to better engage with and train partner air forces.[114] One of the most significant decisions authorized AFSOC to recapitalize its fleet of older-model C-130 variants with modern C-130Js. Finally, the 2010 QDR extended the growth in active-duty CA teams that had begun in 2006.[115]

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109 Feickert, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress* (2006), p. 5; and Sean D. Naylor, "More than Door-Kickers," *Armed Forces Journal,* March 2006, available at http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/03/1813956/.

110 Andrew Feickert, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, June 26, 2012), p. 2.

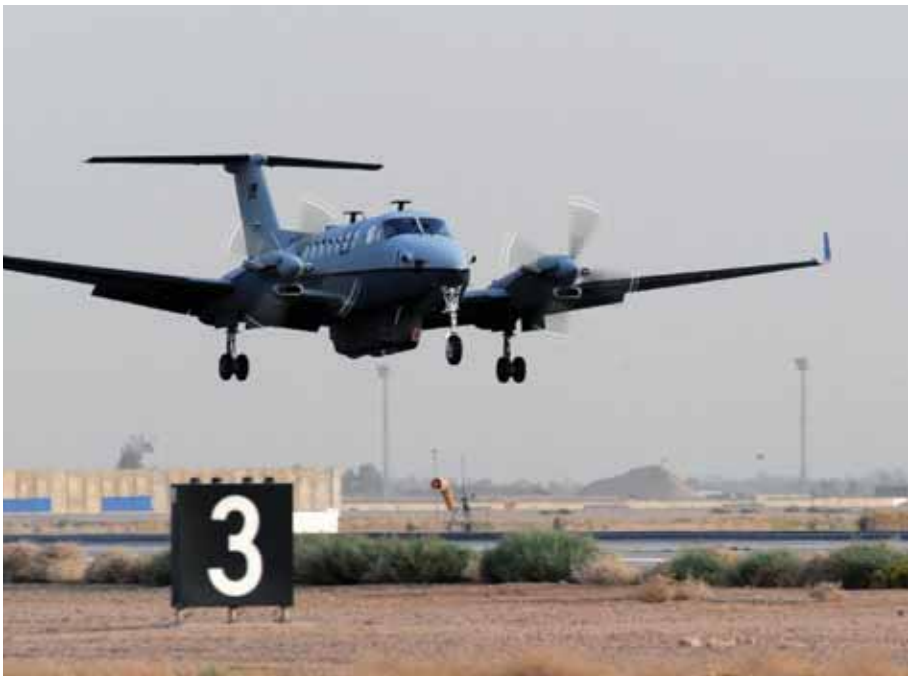
111 USSOCOM, "SORR J-8 AMS – Historical QDR 06 and 10 Issues," p. 4.

112 U.S. Department of Defense, *2010 Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2010), pp. 24, 28-30, 40, 91, 101, available at http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf.

113 Andrew Feickert and Thomas K. Livingston, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 3, 2010), pp. 5-6, available at http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rs21048.pdf.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.



This Air Force MC-12 intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft is one example of the Service-provided enablers that help support special operations. These capabilities have seen substantial growth over the last decade, and were a particular area of focus in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review.

In summary, USSOCOM has added significant force structure since 2001:[116]

- USASOC gained five SF battalions, SF combat support and combat service support units, three Ranger companies, the Ranger Special Troops Battalion, three CA battalions, five CA companies, three MISO companies, an MH-47G company for the 160th SOAR, and the Army Special Operations Aviation Command (ARSOAC).
- NAVSPECWARCOM (NSW) saw increases to its combatant crewman detachments, unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), submarine support capabilities, Naval Special Warfare headquarters, and Naval Special Warfare Group combat support and combat service support units.
- AFSOC grew its Combat Aviation Advisor capacity. It added two UAV squadrons (one of MQ-1 Predators and one of MQ-9 Reapers) as well as the associated distributed ground stations.[117] It also increased non-standard aviation capacity of the 6th SOS for partner engagement and training.

116 USSOCOM, "SORR J-8 AMS – Historical QDR 06 and 10 Issues," p. 4.

117 Marc V. Schanz, "The SOF Makeover," *Air Force Magazine,* June 2010, available at http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Pages/2010/June%202010/0610SOF.aspx.

- MARSOC is a completely new addition to USSOCOM. Established in 2006, it includes a Marine Special Operations Regiment (MSOR) comprising three Marine Special Operations Battalions (MSOBs), a Marine Special Operations Support Group, a Marine Special Operations Intelligence Battalion, and a Marine Special Operations School.
- JSOC saw significant increases in manning and enabling capabilities, such as intelligence analysts.

New Responsibilities and Authorities for USSOCOM

USSOCOM is a global functional command that oversees the training, organizing, and equipping of SOF. Congress established USSOCOM in 1987 with the Nunn-Cohen Amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. The amendment came after Operation Eagle Claw in Iran (1980) and Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada (1983) exposed flaws within the nation's special operations units, in particular their ability to conduct joint missions.[118] Although officially a functional command under Title 10, Section 167 of the U.S. Code, USSOCOM's Congressional mandate—and specifically its Major Force Program-11 (MFP-11) authority to acquire or modify equipment peculiar to the needs of SOF—has given it some characteristics of a military service.[119]

USSOCOM's primary function for the vast majority of its existence has been as a force-provider to the GCCs. When deployed to a GCC, SOF are normally under the operational control of that GCC's Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC).[120] Despite its "Service-like" attributes, however, USSOCOM lacks the ability to fully manage the careers of its personnel, the final authority for which resides with their parent Service. USSOCOM only has the authority to "monitor" the careers of its personnel.[121]

USSOCOM's status as a force-provider began to change in 2004, when DoD's Unified Command Plan assigned it operational responsibility for "synchronizing" the department's planning for global CT efforts and, as directed by the secretary of defense, conducting CT operations in exceptional circumstances.[122] Therefore, in addition to being a functional command with service-like responsibilities, USSOCOM assumed a planning and execution function similar to a GCC.[123] The commander of USSOCOM has explained that this synchronization takes place through

[118] USSOCOM is the only unified command specifically created by an act of Congress.

[119] Admiral William H. McRaven (USN), *Posture Statement*, pp. 1, 3.

[120] Ibid., p. 2.

[121] Ibid., p. 16.

[122] "About USSOCOM," U.S. Special Operations Command, available at http://www.socom.mil/Pages/AboutUSSOCOM.aspx.

[123] Admiral William H. McRaven (USN), *Posture Statement*, p. 2.

the "development of the DoD Global CT Campaign Plan (CAMPLAN 7500) and its revisions, and in the parallel development of the GCCs' subordinate regional CT plans."[124] In concert with its position as the synchronizing command in the war on terror, USSOCOM also assumed the DoD lead in Counter Threat Finance activities, with the Department of Treasury having the overall interagency lead.[125]

To support USSOCOM's global synchronization responsibilities, DoD requested (and Congress approved) new funding authorities. These include the Global Train and Equip Program (PL 109-163 Section 1206), more commonly known as Section 1206, and Support of Military Operations to Combat Terrorism (PL 108-375 Section 1208), generally referred to as Section 1208, in 2006 and 2005, respectively.[126] Confusingly, the names for these authorities changed in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2012. What had previously been referred to as Section 1206 has now become Section 1204, and what was previously Section 1208 is now Section 1203.[127] Section 1204 authorizes the secretary of defense, with the concurrence of the secretary of state, to train and equip the military forces of partner states for the purposes of conducting CT or assisting U.S. forces in stability operations. These "train, advise, and equip" missions are typically conducted by SOF.[128] From FY 2006 through the end of FY 2011, what was then Section 1206 disbursed $1.57 billion. Without further authorization, however, Section 1204 funding will cease after FY 2013.[129] Although similar in purpose to Section 1206, Section 1203 (formerly 1208) funding authorizes the secretary of defense to employ SOF to train and equip foreign "indigenous" forces, (i.e., non-state actors) to conduct CT operations.[130] Section 1208 funding was smaller in scale than Section 1206, with Congress authorizing only $50 million for FY 2012. Unless further authorizations are forthcoming, Section 1203 funding authority will cease in FY 2015.[131]

124 "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven," p. 13.

125 Ibid., p. 24.

126 Nina M. Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: "Section 1206" Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 13, 2012), p. 1, available at http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS22855.pdf; and Feickert and Livingston, U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): *Background and Issues for Congress* (2010), pp. Summary, 7.

127 *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012,* 112th Congress, 1st Session, H.R. 1540, pp. 1621-1622.

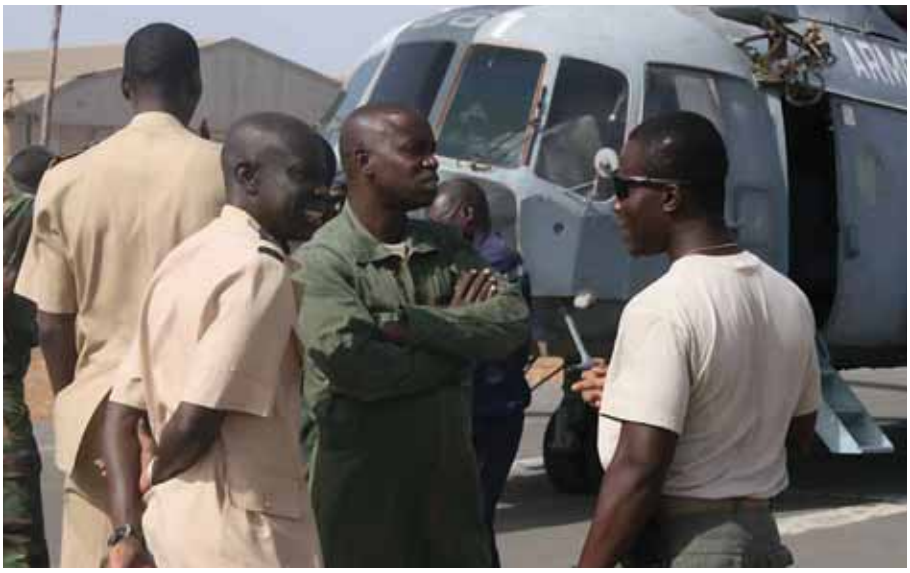
128 Serafino, "Security Assistance Reform," p. 1.

129 Ibid.; and *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012,* H.R. 1540, p. 1622.

130 Feickert and Livingston, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress* (2010), pp. 6-7.

131 *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012,* H.R. 1540, p. 1621.

In addition to Section 1206/1204 and 1208/1203 funding, Congress approved the creation of the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) under Section 1207 (PL 112-81 Section 1207) of the FY 2012 NDAA.[132] Not to be confused with the Security and Stabilization Section 1207 of the FY 2006 NDAA, the GSCF pools funding from DoD and the Department of State (DoS) "to build the security capacity of foreign states, prevent conflict, and stabilize countries in conflict or emerging from conflict."[133] Congress does not appropriate funds for the GSCF; instead, in FY 2012 a total of $250 million was re-programmed from O&M accounts, with $200 million (or 80 percent) from DoD.[134] Section 1207n contains two "transitional authorities" permitting the use of up to $75 million each to build CT capacity in East Africa and Yemen. The GSCF (Section 1207a) is authorized through FY 2015, while the transitional authorities (Section 1207n) expire after 2012, once the GSCF is fully funded and operational.[135] Furthermore, while DoS is the lead agency directing the GSCF, DoD controls the transitional authorities with



Members of the Senegalese armed forces chat with a soldier from the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment during Flintlock 10. The 1200 Series authorities allow SOF to build on episodic exercises such as these to engage with partners more persistently as part of a preventive CT strategy.

132 Nina M. Serafino, *Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF): Summary and Issue Overview* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 1, 2012), p. 1, available at http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42641.pdf.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid., p. 5.

135 Ibid., p. 1; and Charles W. Hooper, "Going Farther by Going Together: Building Partner Capacity in Africa," *Joint Force Quarterly,* Issue 67, 4th Quarter, 2012, p. 13, available at http://www.ndu.edu/press/jfq-67.html.

DoS concurrence.[136] Section 1207 authorities have proven their value by expanding security force assistance (SFA) missions, to include training and advising the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in support of U.S. efforts to combat al-Shabaab, an al Qaeda-affiliated VEN.[137]

Altogether, the "1200 Series" authorities have helped SOF build partner capacity as part of a preventive CT strategy to deny safe haven to VENs with minimal commitment of U.S. forces. They represent the significant shift that has taken place in security assistance since 9/11. Whereas previous authorities, such as JCETs, were suited for short-duration, military-to-military training exchanges to build general military capacity, the new 1200 series authorities are better suited to supporting long-term, persistent engagement. Finally, Section 1207, with its pooled funding and DoS leadership, is emblematic of the post-9/11 shift to greater interagency cooperation in CT efforts.

Whereas previous authorities, such as JCETs, were suited for short-duration, military-to-military training exchanges to build general military capacity, the new 1200 series authorities are better suited to supporting long-term, persistent engagement.

A "Fraying" Force and Efforts to Preserve It

> I have said that this great force is beginning to fray around the edges. The fabric is strong. The weave is tight. It is not unraveling, but it is showing signs of wear.[138]
>
> – Admiral Eric T. Olson
> Former Commander, USSOCOM

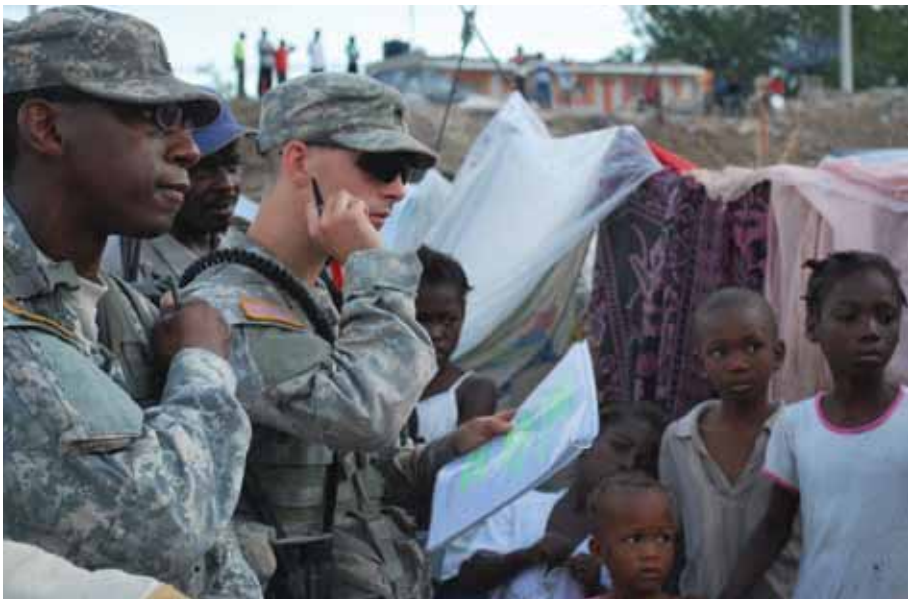
SOF's decade of success has not come without costs. Given the inherent risks of special operations, SOF have suffered casualties at a high rate.[139] While the work of SOF medics have doubtlessly saved many lives, over four hundred USSOCOM

136 Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD SOLIC), Information Briefing, December 7, 2012; and Serafino, *Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF),* p. 10.

137 Hooper, "Going Farther by Going Together," p. 11.

138 Admiral Eric T. Olson (USN), Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee, *Hearing to Receive Testimony on U.S. Special Operations Command and U.S. Central Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2012 and the Future Years Defense Program,* March 1, 2011, p. 7, available at http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/Transcripts/2011/03%20March/11-05%20-%203-1-11.pdf.

139 Uses current approximate end strength for SOF of 63,000, and 1.4 million for DoD as of October 1, 2012. Defense Manpower Data Center, available at http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/ms0.pdf. SOF represent roughly 4.5 percent of DoD end strength. Uses the number of SOF killed in action cited below of 435, and the number of total deaths in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom of 6,612. "Faces of the Fallen," *Washington Post,* accessed on December 10, 2012, available at http://apps.washingtonpost.com/national/fallen/. SOF represent roughly 6.5 percent of all U.S. military personnel killed in action since 9/11. These numbers are rough approximations given that they attempt to derive a rate from a static snapshot. For example, the current ratio of SOF end strength as a percentage of the DoD total is higher than it was for much of the post-9/11 era. Nevertheless, these numbers reinforce the common-sense supposition that SOF suffer fatal casualties at a higher rate than DoD as a whole.



Soldiers from the Army's 95th Civil Affairs Brigade assist Haitian civilians during Operation Unified Response following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Civil Affairs troops are perennially in high demand because of their utility across a broad array of missions, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

A recent study in the *Journal of Special Operations Medicine* showed that a representative sample of SOF personnel screened positive for post-traumatic stress disorder at roughly double the rate… of their GPF counterparts.

personnel have died in the line of duty since 9/11.[140] Many more operators have been wounded in action during operations. Furthermore, repeated combat deployments and a high operational tempo (OPTEMPO) have put strains on SOF units and individual operators. A recent study in the *Journal of Special Operations Medicine* showed that a representative sample of SOF personnel screened positive for post-traumatic stress disorder at roughly double the rate—between 16 and 20 percent—of their GPF counterparts, and the rate of positive screenings for combat-arms SOF was even higher.[141]

[140] The total number is approximately 435 as of December 1, 2012. USASOC has suffered the greatest number of fallen operators, with a total of 309. USASOC Memorial Wall, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, available at http://www.soc.mil/Memorial%20Wall/USASOC%20Fallen%20Heroes%20Home%20Page.html. Seventy-two Naval Special Warfare (NSW) personnel have been killed since 9/11. "Our Fallen Heroes," Navy SEAL Foundation, available at http://www.navysealfoundation.org/about-the-seals/our-fallen-heroes/. Thirty-one AFSOC operators have been killed in post-9/11 operations. Senior Airman Melanie Holochwost (U.S. Air Force), "AFSOC: a History of 'Door Kickers,'" *AFSOC News,* October 15, 2012, updated October 18, 2012, available at http://www.afsoc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123322271. MARSOC has lost twenty-three of its personnel since its creation in 2006. Dan Lamothe, "2 more MARSOC operators dead in attack," *Marine Corps Times*, August 20, 2012, available at http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2012/08/marine-green-on-blue-deaths-marsoc-082012/.

[141] Matthew Hing, MD; Jorge Cabrera, MD; Craig Barstow, MD; and Robert Forsten, DO; "Special Operations Forces and Incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms," *Journal of Special Operations Medicine,* 12, Ed. 3, Fall 2012, pp. 23-35, abstract available at http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23032317.

Despite the growth in end strength and force structure outlined above, SOF remain under stress. SF, CA, and MISO units, in particular, continue to have extremely high OPTEMPO rates. SOF are not the only ones who suffer from high OPTEMPO; their families are also affected by their absences. Deployments are a part of military life, but SOF families are under unique stress due to the frequency and unpredictability of deployments.[142] GPF units typically deploy on a fairly predictable schedule based on established force-generation models (FORGEN). The Army, for example, aims to keep a steady 1:2 "deployed to dwell" ratio, whereby a unit spends two years at home for each year deployed. In contrast, SOF deployments can seem almost random, with units deploying for several months, then returning home for several months, then deploying again. This lack of stability places stress on both operators and their families.

Part of what makes SOF "special" is their extensive training. Therefore, in addition to combat deployments, SOF normally spend more time in training, both at the unit and individual level, than their GPF counterparts. SOF require extra training time both to acquire new skills and to stay current on their existing qualifications. The result for individual operators is a high personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) and less downtime at home with their families.[143] High PERSTEMPO and the lack of predictability in deployments also negatively impact retention. Maintaining family stability is critical to retaining experienced operators. This consideration is particularly crucial at mid-career decision points such as permanent changes of station (PCS) and reenlistments. If their families are struggling, operators are far more likely to choose to either leave the SOF community or separate from the military altogether. While USSOCOM has made improvements to both recruitment and retention, retaining mid-grade officers and NCOs remains problematic. One result of this, according to current and former USSOCOM personnel, is a "bathtub" in the O-4 and O-5 grades, which is especially acute in the SEAL and Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman

142 "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven," p. 29.

143 OPTEMPO was traditionally a measurement of wear and tear on an equipment end-item based on distance traveled, hours flown, or days at sea. Over time, it came to be shorthand for the rate or "tempo" of operations for a given unit, to include both training and combat operations. PERSTEMPO, by contrast, measures all the days that a military service member is away from home, to include unit training and combat operations, as well as personal training, professional military education, conferences, etc. For an explanation of the difference between OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO, see Jim Garamone, "Optempo, Perstempo: What They Mean," *American Forces Press Service,* August 18, 1999, available at http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=42131; and Michael C. Ryan, *Military Readiness, Operations Tempo (OPTEMPO) and Personnel Tempo (PERSTEMPO): Are U.S. Forces Doing Too Much?* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 14, 1998), available at http://congressionalresearch.com/98-41/document.php?study=MILITARY+READINESS+OPERATIONS+TEMPO+OPTEMPO+AND+PERSONNEL+TEMPO+PERSTEMPO+ARE+U.S.+FORCES+DOING+TOO+MUCH.

(SWCC) communities. Retaining a greater number of mid-grade officers and NCOs when they reach career "off-ramps" (typically the O-3 to O-4 transition for officers and the second or third reenlistment for NCOs) is important to maintain USSOCOM's "human capital."[144]

Beginning under Admiral Olson, and continuing under his successor Admiral McRaven, USSOCOM has taken steps to mend these "fraying edges" before long-term damage to SOF occurs. Keeping in mind the first "SOF Truth" that "humans are more important than hardware," both commanders have made preserving the force one of their highest priorities.

The Preservation of the Force and Families (POTFF) program has been central to this effort. According to USSOCOM Command Sergeant Major Chris Faris (U.S. Army), this program gathers information from across USSOCOM to take,

> ...[A] holistic look at education opportunities, training opportunities, pays and incentives, and all of these things that help keep the SOF Force intact within the Department of Defense and out on the battlefield on behalf of our Nation.[145]

The results of POTFF prompted Admiral McRaven to create the USSOCOM Directorate for Force Management and Development under the command of Major General Bennett Sacolick (U.S. Army). Among the ongoing preservation of the force initiatives that this new directorate will oversee are efforts to track SOF PERSTEMPO with greater fidelity to help commanders monitor stress on the force at an individual level, and the finalization of the SOF force-generation process (SOFORGEN) in 2013. SOFORGEN should allow for greater predictability of deployments and better align SOFORGEN with GPF.[146]

144 "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven," p. 32.

145 Command Sergeant Major Chris Faris (U.S. Army), quoted in Master Sgt. F.B. Zimmerman (U.S. Army), "USSOCOM taking care of the Force and Families to the next level," USSOCOM, March 13, 2012, available at http://www.socom.mil/News/Pages/USSOCOMtakingcareoftheForceandFamiliestothenextlevel.aspx.

146 "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven," pp. 8-9.

Repeated combat deployments have also taken a toll on SOF at the institutional level. Due to high OPTEMPO and PERSTEMPO, training time has been curtailed or heavily focused on the skills and missions necessary to succeed in current fights. Some high-demand/low-density assets, such as AC-130 gunships, are simply unavailable for continental United States-based (CONUS-based) training because of heavy deployment rotations.[147] Some SOF component commands have seen a major shift in operational focus away from traditional missions and toward COIN and CT. NSW, for example, worries that it is losing its unique maritime character after a decade of predominantly ground-based operations.[148] Certain traditional skills—such as combat swimming—have atrophied, as they are largely irrelevant in the current fight. Likewise, many within the SF community have expressed concern that greater emphasis on kinetic CT operations after the initial UW campaign in Afghanistan coupled with diminished focus on language proficiency changed the character of SF from a partner-centric special-warfare approach toward more of a direct-action/surgical-strike mindset.[149]

With over 80 percent of deployed USSOCOM personnel in the CENTCOM AOR, SOF have developed close familiarity with the Middle East and Central Asia. Unfortunately, this has come at the expense of language skills, cultural knowledge, and experience outside of CENTCOM. Even within CENTCOM, language ability has suffered given the heavy reliance on contracted interpreters.[150] Developing high-level linguistic skills takes years of training and education and, as noted above, training hours and professional military education have been casualties of the high OPTEMPO since 9/11. The patchwork-quilt of different languages and dialects in Afghanistan only exacerbates this problem by decreasing the ability of SOF to focus on the study of one language. As a result, many SOF teams in Afghanistan still rely on local interpreters to communicate.

147 Schanz, "The SOF Makeover."

148 Interview with senior NSW commander, March 2012.

149 Christopher J. Lamb, Distinguished Research Fellow, Center for Strategic Research, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, testimony before the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, House Armed Services Committee, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, July 11, 2012, pp. 14-16, available at http://armedservices.house.gov/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=9542aed2-5fb8-4bf9-be91-2a99f1c21709.

150 "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven," p. 29.

A Navy SEAL uses a ladder to climb aboard a gas and oil platform during a training exercise. More than a decade of fighting on land has dulled the ability of SEALs' to conduct traditional maritime missions such as gas and oil platform seizures.

The heavy concentration of SOF in CENTCOM has also left gaps in SOF coverage within other GCCs, as demand for SOF far outstrips available supply. According to Lieutenant General John F. Mulholland, then USASOC commander, "We can only satisfy about 50 percent of demand out there…for special operations forces."[151] SOF have experienced difficulty sustaining traditional engagement missions such as JCETs in support of GCCs' Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCPs). Furthermore, the little SOF presence outside of CENTCOM typically prioritizes CT operations, leaving other issues under-resourced.

[151] Henry Cuningham, "Outgoing USASOC commander sees growing demand for special operations," *Fayetteville Observer,* July 22, 2012, available at http://fayobserver.com/articles/2012/07/22/1190975?sac=fo.military.

The "New Normal"

> Our "new normal" is a persistently engaged, forward-based force to prevent and deter conflict and, when needed, act to disrupt and defeat threats. Long-term engagement is a hedge against crises that require major intervention and engagement positions us to better sense the environment and act decisively when necessary. The "new normal," however, translates into increased demand for SOF. The pace of the last ten years is indicative of what we expect for the next ten years.[152]
>
> – Admiral William H. McRaven
> Commander, USSOCOM

The last eleven years has been a tumultuous period for SOF. They enjoyed operational successes that were almost unimaginable to even their most ardent pre-9/11 advocates. Success has required some fundamental changes, as a force that was designed for small, episodic missions in the immediate post-Cold War era has adapted to the "new normal" of persistent global CT operations.

In almost every way, USSOCOM is a vastly more capable organization today than it was on 9/11. It is also a very *different* organization that has been heavily shaped by the demands and experiences of over a decade at war in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the global campaign to defeat VENs. SOF have learned (or in many cases, relearned) key lessons: persistent human relationships are the foundation of military partnerships; it takes a network to defeat a network; security, like politics, is local; cooperation with GPF, interagency, and foreign partners is crucial; and intelligence and precision airpower are critical force-multipliers.

In almost every way, USSOCOM is a vastly more capable organization today than it was on 9/11.

SOF's contemporary focus on CT operations has also come at a cost in terms of preparations for other missions. Despite the calls of numerous USSOCOM leaders, policymakers, and defense analysts for rebalancing toward more indirect, partner-enabling, special-warfare activities, it is SOF's surgical-strike and assault forces that still receive top billing and the greatest share of funding. Today's operators are intimately familiar with the human terrain of Iraq and Afghanistan, but have spent less time preparing environments elsewhere, leaving large gaps in SOF's cultural and linguistic coverage. SOF have become accustomed to operating in designated war zones under a broad mandate authorizing the use of military force and have enjoyed unprecedented support from conventional forces, to include the nearly constant air support and overhead surveillance enabled by total air dominance. Such conditions, however, are unlikely in future operations where SOF are more likely to deploy to austere environments with minimal support and where they may face adversaries more capable of countering U.S. airpower. Finally, the majority of today's SOF have come of age in a time when USSOCOM has been constantly growing in

[152] "Advance Policy Questions for Vice Admiral William H. McRaven," p. 5.

personnel, force structure, and budget; these fortuitous circumstances are unlikely to continue.

With U.S. forces out of Iraq, a major drawdown pending in Afghanistan in 2014, the president and secretary of defense calling for a "rebalance to the Pacific" in defense planning, and fiscal turmoil at home, the next chapter in SOF's history may look as different from the last decade as the post-9/11 era was from the 1990s. But SOF cannot simply go "back to the future." While some pre-9/11 skills will need to be rebuilt, many current capabilities must be retained. The CT network, for example, will be needed to finish off al Qaeda and associated Islamist VENs. Still other capabilities will need to be repurposed to address a broader range of challenges in new locations.

This transition would be difficult at the best of times, and under the most favorable of conditions. Unfortunately, SOF will not get a chance to pause and "reset" the force. A large number of SOF are likely to remain in Afghanistan after 2014. Any reductions in SOF units there will be more than offset by pent-up demand elsewhere. SOF will have to change on the fly—developing new capabilities (or rebuilding old ones) to meet a wider array of national security challenges while retaining or repurposing the successful adaptations of the post-9/11 era. The next chapter outlines the trends that will shape the future security environment and may come to define the "next normal" for U.S. SOF.

An Air Force MC-130J Commando II refuels an Air Force CV-22 Osprey during a training exercise.

CHAPTER 3 > **EMERGING STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

This chapter assesses the key challenges the United States is likely to face over the coming decades and their implications for SOF. Predicting exactly which threats will confront the United States, or precisely where SOF will deploy over the next ten to twenty years, is an impossible task. It is feasible, however, to project forward some of the key trends that will shape planning requirements and the impacts they will have on SOF. While the future security environment will present the U.S. Joint Force, including SOF, with an assortment of challenges, there are four in particular that will have arguably the most significant long-term implications for SOF: defeating Islamist VENs; countering weapons of mass destruction (WMD); disrupting anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) networks; and waging influence competitions and proxy wars. The United States will confront these challenges against a backdrop of persistent global economic weakness and its own fiscal predicament. Following an overview of the global economic and U.S. fiscal environment, each of these challenges will be discussed in turn, highlighting their implications for SOF.

Global Economic Weakness and America's Fiscal Predicament

The financial crisis that began in the United States in 2008 and continues to reverberate through the global financial system represents an ongoing threat to global stability, and its effects on the world economy are likely to persist for the indefinite future.[153] Beyond the United States, close allies in Europe and Asia face even more daunting economic problems that will severely limit their abili-

[153] For more information, see U.S. Department of Treasury, *The Financial Crisis Response in Charts* (Washington, DC: Department of Treasury, April 2012), available at http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/data-chart-center/Documents/20120413_FinancialCrisisResponse.pdf.

ty to make more than modest contributions to security beyond their borders.[154] Unsustainable sovereign debt levels carried by many countries in the Euro zone have contributed to a stalled global economy. Additionally, European efforts to cut spending and raise taxes have resulted in record unemployment: 11.7 percent across Europe as of December 2012.[155] Japan's economy remains hamstrung by its own high level of government debt, which is more than twice its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).[156] Japan faces two interconnected crises: economic stagnation and demographic decline. Japan's fertility rate has been below replacement level for longer than any other country in the world. A shrinking labor force coupled with a disproportionately large elderly population has created a demographic imbalance and made it difficult for Japan to emerge from two decades of economic torpor.[157] Policymakers in the United States, the European Union, and Japan are struggling to devise politically viable formulas to spur economic growth and reduce government debt to sustainable levels over time, while also (in the cases of Europe and Japan) managing their rapidly aging societies. The developed world's economic malaise is placing severe stress on the militaries of traditional U.S. allies in Europe and Asia, which already spend a much smaller percentage of their GDP on defense than the United States. In addressing their fiscal woes, many are planning to cut defense spending even further in the years ahead. [158]

Slowing economic growth and sluggish consumer demand in the so-called "BRIC" countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) have diminished the prospects for those countries to serve as an alternative engine for renewed global growth.[159] Ruchir Sharma has argued that China, which has been the global standout in sustained double-digit GDP growth for more than a decade, has reached "'the Lewis turning point': the point at which a country's surplus labor from rural areas has

154 See Stephen J. Flanagan, *A Diminishing Transatlantic Partnership: The Impact of the Financial Crisis on European Defense and Foreign Assistance Capabilities* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011).

155 Alex Brittain, "European Joblessness is Pushed to New High," *Wall Street Journal,* December 1-2, 2012, p. A11.

156 International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Japan: 2012 Article IV Consultation," IMF Country Report No. 12/208, August 2012, available at http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12208.pdf.

157 Nicholas Eberstadt, "Japan Shrinks," *The Wilson Quarterly,* Spring 2012, available at http://www.wilsonquarterly.com/article.cfm?aid=2143.

158 According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2010, defense expenditure as a percent of GDP was 1 percent for Japan, 1.9 percent for Germany, 1.9 percent for Australia, 2.3 percent for France, 2.6 percent for the United Kingdom, and 2.7 percent for South Korea. The United States spent 4.8 percent of GDP on defense in 2010, including war funding. Data available at http://milexdata.sipri.org/result.php4.

159 Ruchir Sharma, "Broken BRICs: Why the Rest Stopped Rising," *Foreign Affairs,* 91, No. 6, November/December 2012, pp. 2-3. For more information on the global economic outlook, see International Monetary Fund (IMF), *World Economic Outlook: Coping with High Debt and Sluggish Growth* (Washington, DC: IMF, 2012).

largely been exhausted."[160] A precipitous decline of growth rates in China and other major developing economies could signal greater unrest within those countries and heightened tensions with their neighbors and other great powers. The weak global economy, moreover, will exacerbate volatility in many areas of the world, particularly in the Middle East, where popular frustrations have boiled over after decades of poor governance and economic stagnation.

Persistent economic sluggishness could also lead major economies to adopt what Edwin Truman has called "every man for himself" monetary policies, devaluing their currencies by lowering interest rates and printing money at the expense of other countries, thereby "inviting trade wars."[161] If the global economy remains in low gear for an extended period, it would also diminish the security buffer that sustained global growth has provided. So long as the global economic "pie" has been growing quickly enough to raise living standards, states have generally been reluctant to seek a larger share through "beggar thy neighbor" economic policies or by resorting to the use of coercion or force.[162] Disruptions in the supply of commodities, instability in key regions, or territorial disputes all have greater potential to lead to conflict in a world in which there is less economic margin for error.

Over the last several years, economic instability has given a sharper edge to disputes over access to key commodities. For example, China has used its near-monopoly on the production of rare-earth metals, which are key elements in myriad electronic devices such as mobile phones, to threaten Japan during trade disputes.[163] More recently, China and Japan have come into conflict over their competing sovereignty claims for the Senkaku Islands, not because the islands themselves hold any particular value, but because of potential undersea energy and mineral deposits in their surrounding seabed.[164] China is also engaged in a series of growing sovereignty disputes over islands in the South China Sea. Such

160 Sharma, "Broken BRICs," p. 6.

161 Tatsuo Ito and William Mallard, "Global Currency Tensions Rise," *Wall Street Journal,* December 24, 2012, p. A6.

162 Martin Redrado, former head of Argentina's Central Bank, believes beggar-thy-neighbor policies are already being adopted, with the U.S. Federal Reserve seen as one culprit. Regardless of accuracy, such perceptions could spark retaliatory measures such as tariffs or aggressive currency speculation. See Agustino Fontevecchia, "Bernanke's QE2 Is A Beggar-Thy-Neighbor Policy Says Former Argentine Central Banker," *Forbes,* March 2, 2011, available at http://www.forbes.com/sites/afontevecchia/2011/03/02/bernankes-qe2-is-a-beggar-thy-neighbor-policy-says-former-argentine-central-banker/.

163 Paul Geitner, "U.S., Europe and Japan Escalate Rare-Earth Dispute with China," *New York Times,* June 27, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/28/business/global/us-europe-and-japan-escalate-rare-earth-dispute-with-china.html; and Associated Press, "China takes aim at Japan's economy in protest over island ownership," *Fox News,* September 16, 2012, available at http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/09/16/china-takes-aim-at-japan-economy-in-protests-over-island-ownership/.

164 "Japan and China trade barbs over islands at UN," *BBC News,* September 28, 2012, available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19754353.

territorial quarrels are not confined to Asia; the states bordering the Eastern Mediterranean are at odds over control of the recent oil and gas discoveries there.[165]

Domestically, the financial crisis and the concomitant increase in the Federal debt have affected the prospects for U.S. economic growth over the next several decades.[166] Long-term structural economic weakness and the accumulation of government debt will likely lead to fewer resources available for defense, which could thereby reduce the effectiveness of U.S. military forces. Further reductions in defense spending are probable over the next decade as part of a broader effort to reduce public spending and shrink the national debt.

The fiscal situation of the United States and likely reductions in the defense budget could have a number of implications for SOF. Although SOF have largely been spared from DoD drawdowns thus far, USSOCOM is not immune from the effects of further budget cuts.[167] First, reductions in the military Services' force structure and end strength would likely be the centerpiece of any major DoD budget cuts and would certainly affect SOF.[168] Trimming conventional forces would create a smaller pool from which SOF units could recruit. Second, cuts in military benefits would also affect SOF personnel, exacerbating USSOCOM's retention problems, especially with mid-grade officers and NCOs. Third, reducing conventional force structure (or shifting some active-duty force structure into the Reserve Component) would decrease the availability of critical Service-provided capabilities, such as logistics, aviation, and ISR, which largely reside within GPF units. This would limit GPF's ability to support SOF operations.[169] Fourth, given the extent to which SOF's growth over the last decade has been financed by supplemental wartime budgets such as OCO funding, anticipated reductions in OCO as U.S. forces withdraw from Afghanistan could disproportionately affect SOF. Although both the Obama administration and Congress have supported the migration of funding from supplemental budgets into USSOCOM's base budget, there is no guarantee that the migration will continue or fully cover the costs of sustaining capabilities that were procured with OCO funding over the

Although SOF have largely been spared from DoD drawdowns thus far, USSOCOM is not immune from the effects of further budget cuts.

165 Ebru Ogurlu, *Rising Tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy,* IAI Working Papers (Rome, Italy: Istituto Affari Internazionali, March 2012), available at http://www.iai.it/pdf/DocIAI/iaiwp1204.pdf.

166 Congressional Budget Office (CBO), *The 2012 Long-Term Budget Outlook* (Washington, DC: CBO, 2012), available at http://www.cbo.gov/publication/43288.

167 Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, "Defense Strategic Guidance Briefing from the Pentagon," January 5, 2012, available at http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4953.

168 For example, in the 2013 FYDP, compared to 2012, there is a 14 percent decrease in procurement and a 7 percent decrease in personnel funding (likely from a reduction in the end strength of the Army and Marine Corps). Todd Harrison, *Analysis of the FY 2013 Defense Budget and Sequestration* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, August 2012), p. 4.

169 "Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven (2012)," pp. 18-21.

past decade, such as communications, ISR, and distributed PED assets.[170] Fifth, although USSOCOM historically only funds unique, "SOF-peculiar" procurements, that definition may be stretched to the maximum in negotiations with the Services as they see their procurement budgets undergo disproportionate cuts. SOF acquisition of items like MH-47 and MH-60 helicopters or C-130 airframes might suffer as a result.

A final budgetary implication for SOF pertains to SFA funding, which tends to be particularly vulnerable in constrained fiscal environments. Going forward, SOF will conduct SFA activities under a variety of authorities, including: Section 1204, Section 1207 GSCF and Transitional Authorities, Section 1203, JCETs (Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 2011), and Counter-Drug Support (PL 105-85 Section 1033). Despite a widespread recognition that SFA is critically important, the authorities and funding for so-called "Phase Zero" activities have been provided in a rather ad hoc and piecemeal manner over time.[171] Funding for the 1204 and 1203 authorities is authorized annually or every four years; both are set to expire (in 2013 and 2015 respectively).[172] Other authorities, such as the GSCF, come without appropriations, but allow funding to be re-programmed from other accounts, such as O&M.[173] As budgets shrink, however, DoD and DoS may have less flexibility to re-program funds to conduct SFA activities.

Four Key Security Challenges Facing SOF

Against the backdrop of the unsettled global economy and America's fiscal predicament, there are four major challenges that should inform SOF's future development: defeating Islamist VENs; countering WMD; disrupting A2/AD networks; and waging influence and proxy competitions. The following sections detail these challenges and assess their implications for SOF.

Defeating Islamist Violent Extremist Networks

Islamist VENs pose challenges in the present that will likely persist well into the future. Over the past decade SOF have had success in combating al Qaeda and its affiliates the world over and denying them sanctuary in many parts of the Middle East. Surgical strikes have inflicted a heavy toll on the leadership of al Qaeda. U.S. CT efforts have also disrupted its ability to train and equip forces, replace key

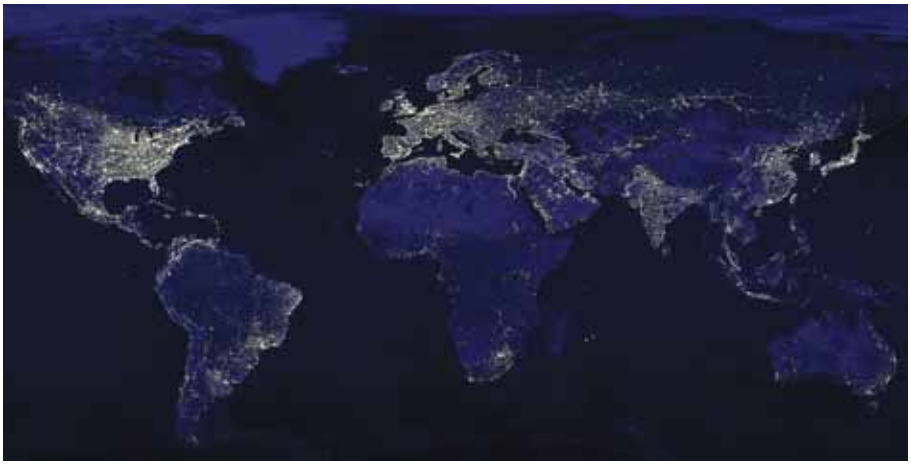
[170] DoD is slowly weaning USSOCOM from OCO with temporary "OCO to Base Migration" funding. USSOCOM, *FY 2013 Budget Highlights United States Special Operations Command,* p. 8.

[171] Phase Zero refers to military activities conducted prior to the normal phases of a war plan, ideally to deter or prevent war, or defuse crises. Phase One normally refers to the deployment and build-up of forces in theater; Phases Two and Three refer to combat operations; and Phase Four addresses post-war and stability operations.

[172] Hooper, "Going Farther by Going Together," p. 13.

[173] Serafino, *Global Security Contingency Fund,* p. 5.

leaders who have been killed, move money and other assets between cells in its network, and command and control (C2) global operations.[174] But as today's sanctuaries are eliminated, VENs will look for new under-governed spaces where they can operate. As al Qaeda's central core has been weakened, violent extremism has metastasized and new nodes have spawned in an ever-adapting terrorist network. Consistent with the founding vision of al Qaeda as a "base" from which violent Islamist extremists would develop a global terrorism network, al Qaeda franchises and ideologically associated groups have sprung up throughout the Muslim world, exploiting weak states and endemic instability.[175]



This NASA composite image of Earth at night as seen from space contrasts the lighted regions of the developed world with the vast stretches of dark, under-governed areas. Al Qaeda and other VENs will continue to metastasize in these shadowy areas and use them as bases from which to strike at the developed world.

In December 2010, the self-immolation of a Tunisian fruit-seller catalyzed a series of Arab revolutions that have resulted in the overthrow of regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, as well as the on-going civil war in Syria.[176] These revolutions and the potential for further upheaval in the region define the "new normal" of the Middle East, with chaotic volatility replacing the decades of relative stability that had been enforced by repressive, authoritarian governments. While

174 Documents captured during the raid on Abbottabad point to the inability of bin Laden to influence and exert control over the global al Qaeda network. *Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?* (West Point: Combatting Terrorism Center, 2012).

175 Rick "Ozzie" Nelson and Thomas M. Sanderson, *A Threat Transformed: Al Qaeda and Associated Movements in 2011* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011), available at http://csis.org/files/publication/110203_Nelson_AThreatTransformed_web.pdf.

176 Marc Fisher, "In Tunisia, act of one fruit vendor unleashes wave of revolution through Arab world," *Washington Post,* March 26, 2011, available at http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-03-26/world/35208433_1_fruit-vendor-bouazizi-police-officers.

the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak's regime in Egypt was a longstanding goal of al Qaeda and its affiliates, the group did not play a significant part in his fall or succession. Nevertheless, revolutions in Libya and Syria have presented opportunities for al Qaeda-linked groups to expand their influence and operations—further revolutions in the region could do the same. In Syria, for example, an al Qaeda affiliate named Jabhat al-Nusrah li-Ahl al-Sham (Front for the Protection of the Levantine People, or the Nusrah Front) claimed responsibility for sixty-six "operations" in June 2012, in addition to providing key assistance for the Free Syrian Army's attacks on Damascus and Aleppo.[177] The group, similar to al Qaeda in Iraq, is composed of large numbers of foreign fighters who have crossed the border into Syria.

While many states in the Middle East remain vulnerable to Islamist extremism, potential instability in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan could have particularly grave consequences. Toppling the House of Saud remains the means for al Qaeda to achieve its ultimate objective of restoring a Muslim caliphate that controls Islam's two most holy cities, Mecca and Medina.[178] Destabilizing the country that possesses one-quarter of the world's proven oil reserves would undoubtedly create global economic shocks. The fall of the Saudi regime might also trigger coups in neighboring Gulf States such as Bahrain, potentially transforming the region overnight. In the case of Pakistan, the greatest prize for VENs would be gaining control of even a handful of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.[179] While the probability of Islamist extremists successfully seizing control of either state currently appears remote, these scenarios represent two of the most taxing that U.S. military planners must prepare to address in the future.

West of the Arabian peninsula, along a crescent stretching from Somalia north across North Africa and down through the western Sahel toward the Gulf of Guinea, Islamist insurgents are exploiting the vast under-governed spaces of Africa to recruit, train, and plan operations. Al Qaeda franchises and other VENs have expanded their operations in Yemen, the Horn of Africa, and across "a wide swath of North Africa," according to former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.[180] While

177 Tim Arango, Anne Barnard, and Hwaida Saad, "Syrian Rebels Tied to Al Qaeda Play Key Role in War," *New York Times,* December 8, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/09/world/middleeast/syrian-rebels-tied-to-al-qaeda-play-key-role-in-war.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0; and Ed Husain, "Al-Qaeda's Specter in Syria," *Council on Foreign Relations,* August 6, 2012, available at http://www.cfr.org/syria/al-qaedas-specter-syria/p28782.

178 Richard L. Russell, *The Global Islamic Insurgency: Saudi Arabia in its Crosshairs* (Swindon, UK: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, September 2005), pp. 10-11.

179 For more information on nuclear terrorism, see Evan Braden Montgomery, *Nuclear Terrorism: Assessing the Threat, Developing a Response* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2009), available at http://www.csbaonline.org/publications/2009/04/nuclear-terrorism/.

180 Gopal Ratnam, "Al-Qaeda 'Cancer' Spreads With U.S. Chasing, Panetta Says," *Bloomberg,* November 21, 2012, available at http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-11-20/al-qaeda-cancer-spreads-with-u-s-chasing-panetta-says.html.

the strength of al-Shabaab in Somalia has arguably diminished over the past several years, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Libya, Niger, and Mali, and Boko Haram in Nigeria are increasing pressure on local governments as they attempt to strengthen their holds over large stretches of territory that have traditionally been difficult to govern.

Islamist extremists in North and West Africa are also forging connections with Latin American narcotics cartels, providing an alternate trafficking network into Europe versus traditional routes through Central America and the Caribbean. According to the United Nations, more than fifty tons of cocaine from the Andean region transits West Africa annually.[181] The commander of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), General Carter Ham, has noted that drug proceeds are fueling AQIM as it establishes a vast sanctuary in northern Mali.[182] As narco-cartels and VENs collaborate, the danger grows that terrorists could exploit drug-trafficking networks in the Western Hemisphere to perpetrate attacks against the United States or destabilize its neighbors.

As violent Islamist extremism atomizes and spreads geographically toward countries with which the United States is not at war, the character of CT operations will necessarily change.[183] The geographic spread of VENs also means that tomorrow's threats will span GCC boundaries. Combatting these threats will require operations on a global scale combining two very different types of operations. First, it will require preventive special-warfare efforts to reduce the number and size of under-governed spaces. Second, there will be a need for timely surgical strikes to thwart imminent terrorist attacks and keep insurgent leaders focused more on their own survival than on planning attacks. The balance between these two approaches, however, will likely shift toward more partner-centric, special-warfare operations.

Working proactively with partner countries where VENs could seek sanctuary can help foreclose terrorist efforts to establish new bases of operations as they retreat from areas such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan border or the Horn of Africa in response to U.S. CT operations. The U.S. global CT campaign can be thought of as employing a "hammer and anvil" strategy, combining the "hammer" of surgical strikes with the "anvil" of partner security forces enabled via U.S. special-warfare activities to deny VENs safe havens. This strategy places a premium on FID, SFA,

181 Amado Philip de Andres, "West Africa Under Attack: Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism as the New Threats to Global Security," UNISCI Discussion Papers, No. 16, January 2008, available at http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/revistas/UNISCI%20DP%2016%20-%20Andres.pdf; and Davin O'Regan, "Narco-States: Africa's Next Menace," *New York Times,* March 12, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/13/opinion/narco-states-africas-next-menace.html.

182 Eric Schmitt, "American Commander Details Al Qaeda's Strength in Mali," *New York Times,* December 4, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/04/world/africa/top-american-commander-in-africa-warns-of-al-qaeda-influence-in-mali.html.

183 Ratnam, "Al-Qaeda 'Cancer' Spreads With U.S. Chasing, Panetta Says."

CA, and MISO in "second-line" countries that might prove attractive sanctuaries for VENs. Regions of Africa bordering the Horn and the Maghreb, in particular, are prime candidates for intensified preventive partner capacity building. Executing this mission will drive new requirements for SOF (and selective GPF) language and cultural training.

Conducting CT outside of theaters of war will require U.S. SOF to place greater emphasis on "finding and fixing" enemy forces, while partner forces—be they foreign security forces, intelligence services, or law enforcement agencies—conduct the "finishes." Outside designated war zones, SOF will have to operate with far more restrictive rules of engagement and greater oversight, resulting in increased ISR requirements. Decision-makers will want multiple fused sources of intelligence to be certain that an individual or group poses a threat before authorizing the capture or killing of high-value targets in a country where the United States is not at war. Under such constraints, higher-resolution ISR systems will be essential for providing policy-makers the necessary confidence that SOF or their partners are engaging the correct target and minimizing collateral damage.[184] Greater ISR fidelity and increased corroboration of multiple sources could also allow SOF to expand the use of signature- or activity-based targeting.[185]

As VENs migrate to remote areas of the vast African continent, the need for wide-area surveillance will increase. Coupled with long-endurance UAVs, SOF can provide persistent surveillance and strike capabilities over large stretches of territory. To support a global UAV-ISR network, SOF will likely require access to low-visibility forward bases from which ISR, strike, and mobility aircraft can operate. In the African littorals—particularly the Gulf of Guinea and the Gulf of Aden—sea-basing will be an attractive alternative to forward operating bases ashore for tracking VENs operating in Somalia, Yemen, Nigeria, or Guinea-Bissau. In concert with the Navy, USSOCOM has prioritized developing Afloat Forward Staging Bases (AFSB) ships like the USS *Ponce*, to support SOF conducting CT operations from the sea.[186] To provide more persistent ISR support, USSOCOM has requested a modified version of the MQ-8 Fire Scout UAV with increased endurance, a request endorsed by AFRICOM.[187]

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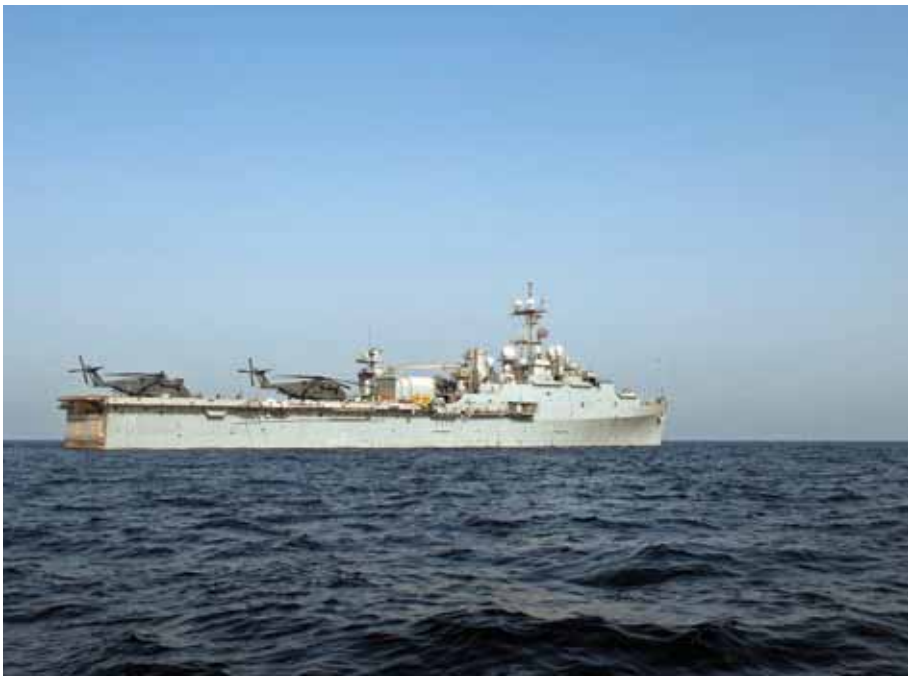
184 Admiral William H. McRaven (USN), *Posture Statement*, p. 21.

185 As its name implies, signature- or activity-based targeting means targeting an individual based on the activities they are involved in, rather than their known identity. This could include targeting an individual based on affiliations with known terrorists, or because they have acquired bomb-making equipment.

186 Edward H. Lundquist, "USS Ponce Afloat Forward Staging Base (AFSB) Will Provide Combat Capability for Fifth Fleet," *Defense Media Network*, May 14, 2012, available at http://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/uss-ponce-afloat-forward-staging-base-afsb-will-provide-combat-capability-for-fifth-fleet/.

187 U.S. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 President's Budget Submission Navy Justification Book Volume 5: Research, Development, Test & Evaluation, Navy Budget Activity 7* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 2012), p. 979.



The Navy recently retrofitted the USS *Ponce* as an Afloat Forward Staging Base. With its well deck and large landing surface for rotary-wing aircraft, the *Ponce* could be an effective sea-base to support special operations ashore in austere or inhospitable environments.

More proactive global CT and FID operations will also require pushing smaller SOF units forward for operations of longer duration. In turn this will necessitate a lighter footprint compared to the large forward operating bases that coalition forces have built in Iraq and Afghanistan. The shift away from theaters of armed conflict with a large U.S. presence will limit SOF's ability to rely on GPF units for logistics and sustainment "enablers." SOF conducting missions from austere forward locations may therefore have little or no support from conventional forces, especially for services such as logistics, long-range ISR, and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC). Operating in this fashion may require greater acceptance of risk in planning and mission execution.

More proactive global CT and FID operations will also require pushing smaller SOF units forward for operations of longer duration.

Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction

The term WMD encompasses chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons (CBRN). Like the terrorist and insurgent threats discussed in the previous section, WMD do not represent new threats to U.S. security interests. As nascent nuclear powers grow their arsenals and aspirants like Iran continue to pursue nuclear capabilities, however, the threat of nuclear proliferation as well as the potential for the actual use of nuclear weapons will increase. Similarly, upheaval in failing or outlaw states like Libya and Syria, which possess chemical

weapons and a range of missiles, increases the odds that in future instances of state collapse or civil war, such weapons could be used by failing regimes in an act of desperation, fall into the hands of rebel forces, or be seized by parties hostile to the United States or its interests.[188] While all of these types of WMD are dangerous, nuclear weapons present threats that are orders of magnitude more destructive than chemical or radiological weapons.[189] Biological agents have proven difficult to weaponize effectively, but their potential as terror weapons warrants greater attention.[190]

Since the end of the Cold War, Pakistan and North Korea have tested their first nuclear weapons, and Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Syria have all attempted to develop them (with varying degrees of success).[191] Iran appears to be on the brink of acquiring a nuclear weapons capability, which could trigger efforts by other states in the region, like Saudi Arabia or Turkey, to acquire their own nuclear weapons.[192] As the number of states and non-state actors possessing nuclear weapons grows, so too will the odds that they will be employed in warfare, brandished to intimidate neighboring states, leveraged to deter the intervention of outside forces, or used to inflict mass casualties as an act of terrorism. The proliferation of nuclear weapons to states such as Iran could create a new nuclear era ruled by a different logic than that which guided the behavior of nuclear powers for much of the Cold War. A greater number of nuclear actors, with larger disparities between their conventional and nuclear capabilities, could make achieving stable nuclear deterrence far more problematic than during the Cold War, with inadvertent or intentional nuclear use becoming more likely.

The expansion of the nuclear club to include unstable states like North Korea, Pakistan, and possibly Iran also increases the probability that a nuclear state could lose positive control of its weapons or fissile material, and that these could fall into the hands of terrorists. In part, this is simple arithmetic: the greater the number of states possessing nuclear weapons, the larger the probability that one of those states loses control of its weapons. On the other hand, the characteristics of nucle-

188 "Watch out! The West is nervous about Syria's chemical weaponry. How to curtail it?" *Economist,* July 28, 2012, available at http://www.economist.com/node/21559671.

189 Richard Danzig, *A Policymaker's Guide to Bioterrorism and What to Do About It* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, December 2009), p. 6, available at http://www.ndu.edu/CTNSP/docUploaded/A%20Policymaker's%20Guide.pdf; and Joseph Cirincione, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenals: Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002, Updated 2006), pp. 3-23.

190 Cirincione, Wolfsthal, and Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenals,* pp. 3-6, 8-11, 45-55.

191 India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974, and then conducted another series of tests in 1998. For more information on the size of these states' nuclear arsenals, see "Nuclear Weapons: Who Has What at a Glance," Arms Control Association, available at https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat.

192 Eric Edelman, Andrew Krepinevich, and Evan Braden Montgomery, "The Dangers of a Nuclear Iran," *Foreign Affairs,* 9, Issue 1, January/February 2011.

ar-capable states may matter more than their number. North Korea, Pakistan, and Iran all have histories as proliferators of weapons technologies and exporters of terrorism.[193] Their intelligence agencies also have longstanding relationships with terror groups.[194] Finally, all face the possibility of internal insurrection or coups.

With respect to Pakistan and North Korea, the greatest threat may be the security of nuclear weapons during internal upheavals such as coups or civil wars. In addition, Pakistan's nuclear posture has intensified already high concerns over the security of its nuclear weapons against internal threats. According to press reports, Pakistan has been taking steps in recent years to improve the survivability of its nuclear forces against preemptive attacks by Indian forces. These steps purportedly include the widespread dispersal of nuclear forces and the clandestine movement of nuclear weapons aboard unmarked civilian trucks.[195] These steps make Pakistan's arsenal more vulnerable to Islamist extremists who could infiltrate the Pakistani security forces and launch attacks on one or more of the growing number of nuclear storage facilities, or intercept nuclear weapons as they are being moved around the country.[196] In North Korea, the potential for state collapse and the regime's concomitant loss of positive control over its nuclear weapons, or the regime's willingness to threaten their use against South Korea or Japan, represent some of the most stressing scenarios that SOF might confront.[197]

In Iran, a nuclear capability could embolden the regime to engage in military adventurism or intensify its proxy wars against Israel and its Sunni Arab foes using Hezbollah and its Quds paramilitary force.[198] Furthermore, an Iranian nuclear weapons program could trigger further proliferation in the region if its Sunni competitors, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt, decide to follow suit and

193 For more information on global proliferation networks, see International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *Nuclear Black Markets: Pakistan, A.Q. Khan and the Rise of Proliferation Networks (A Net Assessment)* (London, UK: IISS, 2007).

194 Jayshree Bajoria and Eben Kaplan, "The ISI and Terrorism: Behind the Accusations," *Council on Foreign Relations,* May 4, 2011, available at http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/isi-terrorism-behind-accusations/p11644; and "Treasury Designates Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security for Human Rights Abuses and Support for Terrorism," U.S. Department of the Treasury, February 16, 2012, available at http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1424.aspx.

195 Jeffrey Goldberg and Marc Ambinder, "The Ally from Hell," *The Atlantic,* December 2011, available at http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/12/the-ally-from-hell/308730/?single_page=true.

196 Jeffrey Goldberg and Marc Ambinder, "Nuclear Negligence," *National Journal,* November 9, 2011, available at http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/the-pentagon-s-secret-plans-to-secure-pakistan-s-nuclear-arsenal-20111104.

197 For more information, see Mark Fitzpatrick, *North Korean Security Challenges: A Net Assessment* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011).

198 Edelman, Krepinevich, and Montgomery, "The Dangers of a Nuclear Iran," p. 74.

acquire their own nuclear deterrent.[199] Finally, a nuclear-armed Iran might use its weapons to threaten the transit of critical energy resources from the Persian Gulf or deter U.S. military intervention in the region.

In sum, the newest members and potential future entrants to the nuclear club pose a significant threat to vital U.S. interests. While the prospect of a VEN acquiring nuclear weapons may be remote, the consequences of such an event could be dire.[200] Such groups would have a strong incentive to use these weapons, either out of a "use it or lose it" fear that the weapon would be recovered, or to fulfill the objective of inflicting damage and casualties several orders of magnitude greater than what occurred in the 9/11 attacks.[201] For these reasons, preventing the spread or use of nuclear weapons may eclipse countering terrorism as a priority U.S. national security objective.

Although nuclear weapons tend to dominate public discourse about WMD threats, bioterrorism also presents a threat that could have consequences on a massive scale. Further, the barriers to developing a bio-weapons capability may be lower. As former Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig has argued, relative to nuclear programs and materials, biological materials are easier to obtain, conceal, and transport. Biological weapons development programs are also much harder to detect.[202] The indiscriminate mass effects of bio-weapons would have great appeal for many terrorist groups, who may be far less concerned over the prospect of blowback than state actors. Additionally, while traditional chemical weapons are less suited for mass casualty attacks than either nuclear or biological weapons, legacy chemical weapon stockpiles in unstable countries like Syria and Libya pose the danger that desperate rulers will use these capabilities in a last-ditch attempt to save their regime, or that the weapons will fall into the hands of rebel forces, including VENs.[203]

The global CT network SOF have built over the last decade could be repurposed over the next decade to become a global *counter-WMD* network.

SOF can contribute to counter-WMD efforts across every line of operation. The global CT network SOF have built over the last decade could be repurposed over the next decade to become a global *counter-WMD* network, applying the same logic that it takes a network to defeat a network. SOF could also have critical responsibilities in the detection and disruption of WMD programs.[204] SOF's

199 Ibid., p. 67.

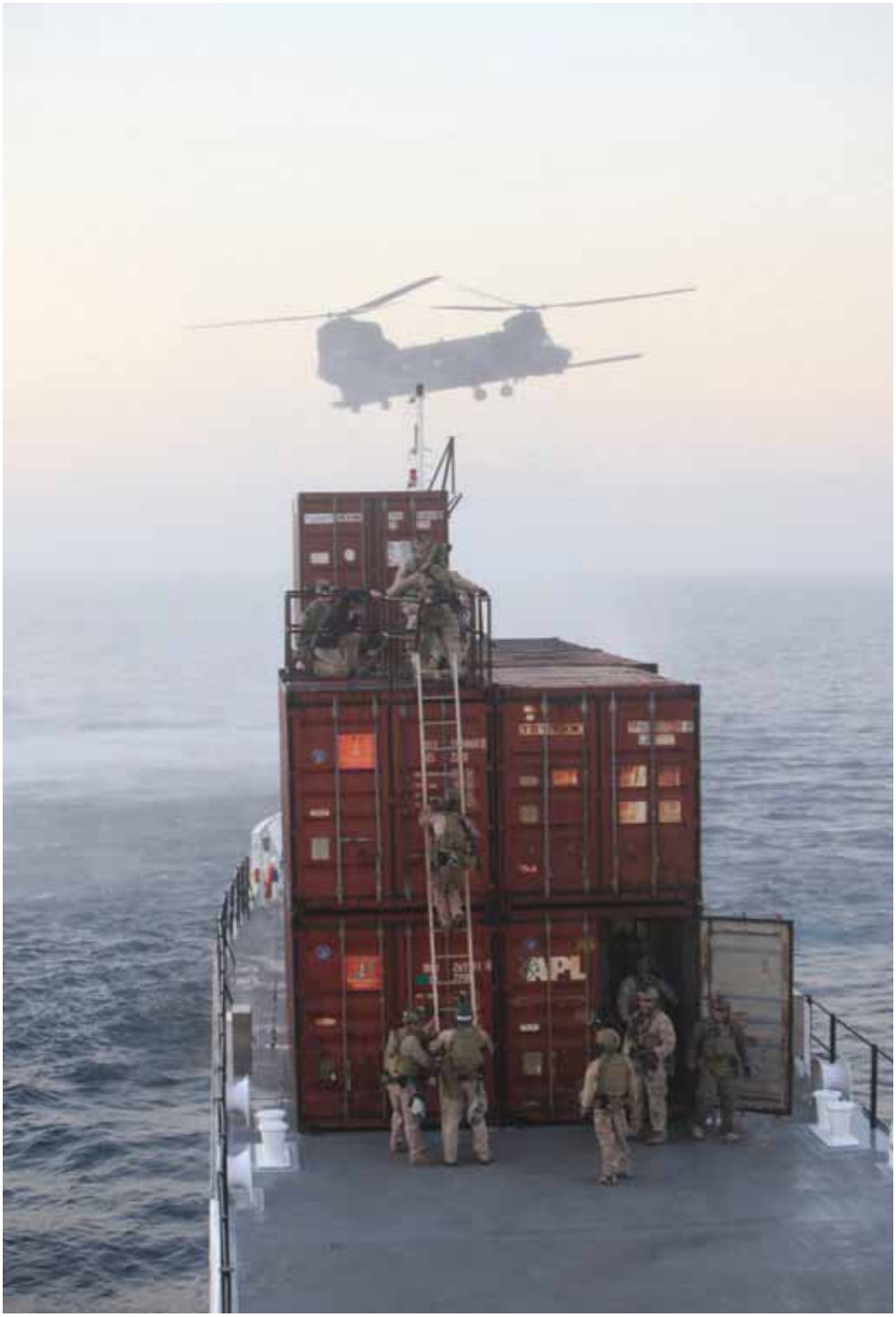
200 For greater detail of the effects of an illustrative attack on Washington, DC, see B.R. Buddemeier, J.E. Valentine, K.K. Millage, and L.D. Brandt, *National Capital Region: Key Response Planning Factors for the Aftermath of Nuclear Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2011), available at http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/dhs/fema/ncr.pdf.

201 Brian Jenkins, *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2008).

202 Danzig, *A Policymaker's Guide to Bioterrorism and What to Do About It,* pp.6-12.

203 Peter Baker and Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Warns Syria on Chemical Weapons," *New York Times,* December 4, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/04/world/middleeast/nato-prepares-missile-defenses-for-turkey.html.

204 Steven P. Bucci, Director, Douglas and Sarah Allison, Center for Foreign Policy Studies, Heritage Foundation, testimony before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Counter-Proliferation Contingency Planning is needed for Syrian WMD,* July 19, 2012.



The 1st Marine Special Operations Battalion conducts visit, board, search, and seizure training with support from the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. SOF's ability to conduct these operations would be a critical part of a global counter-WMD network.

traditional special reconnaissance (SR) skills could help locate or probe suspected WMD sites. Given the extraordinary measures states and terrorist organizations will take to conceal their WMD programs from traditional overhead intelligence collection systems and international inspectors, clandestine or covert SR would offer one of the most effective means of detecting a program or assessing its maturity. Operating under the authorities of other agencies, SOF could conduct preventive direct-action missions to disrupt development programs, help gain access to an enemy's military communications networks, or infiltrate heavily guarded WMD facilities. During a conflict, SOF could conduct surgical strikes against WMD facilities and delivery systems in concert with precision airpower. SOF could also work by, with, and through partner forces to conduct these missions, as foreign nationals may have greater access to target facilities.

SOF could also interdict WMD materials in transit using both direct action or working through partners. SOF should be prepared to conduct unilateral interdiction missions, including visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) at sea against high value targets, as well as potential interdiction operations on land in concert with conventional or partner forces. Training for these types of exercises are already taking place. For example, in 2010, MARSOC CSOs participated alongside members of the USS *Dubuque* LPD-8 boarding team in a VBSS training exercise.[205] To increase the reach and density of a global counter-proliferation network, security cooperation activities focused on counter-proliferation will need to be expanded. SEALs and Special Boat Teams already conduct missions to help train and equip partner security forces to interdict shipments of WMD at sea as part of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a program endorsed by more than ninety countries around the world to stop the transfer of WMD materials. Even as intelligence improves, targeting terrorists' acquisition of WMD or related materials will remain a difficult task, especially when such items are shipped using flags of convenience.[206] The formal conclusion of ship-boarding agreements, an activity carried out under PSI, would provide the legal basis necessary for U.S. forces to disrupt the trafficking of WMD more readily.[207] Broader exercises are also needed to improve land interdiction and border security. Winding down operations in Afghanistan over the next decade as anticipated would free up forces to expand such security cooperation efforts considerably. USSOCOM may also need additional authorities to disrupt WMD programs preventively similar to those that already exist for conducting proactive CT operations against al Qaeda.

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[205] Emory A. Rank, *Manpower Issues Involving Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS),* Master Thesis (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2012), p. 25, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA561868.

[206] A ship that is sailing under a flag of convenience is one that registers under a foreign flag to avoid taxes, save money, or evade government restrictions.

[207] Mary Beth Nikitin, *Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, June 15, 2012), p. 4, available at http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL34327.pdf.

In a conflict against a WMD-armed adversary, the elimination of its WMD stockpiles and delivery systems is likely to be one of the highest planning priorities. A central challenge, and one that SOF might be called upon to execute, is simply locating the weapon caches. SOF assault forces could forcibly enter WMD sites, secure weapons caches, and prepare for the neutralization of the weapons while minimizing collateral effects.[208] Utilizing SOF for this mission rather than precise air-delivered munitions would provide commanders with "eyes-on" confirmation that any WMD had been secured or safely eliminated. During overseas contingencies, SMUs may be required to render safe nuclear weapons or improvised radiological devices found on the battlefield by disarming them to avoid their detonation. Civil authorities may require SOF assistance in dealing with a nuclear terrorist event within the United States or to support partners overseas faced with such incidents. At the same time, SOF must also be prepared to conduct render safe operations in denied areas where the government is uncooperative or has lost control of its weapons.

WMD elimination and render safe missions may require additional force capacity to ensure the ability to deal with simultaneous, geographically distributed nuclear incidents, consistent with the standard al Qaeda method of operations. GCCs each have a Commander's In-Extremis Force (CIF) to deal with terrorist attacks or similar incidents in their AORs. These units are typically no larger than a single SF company. In the future, it may be prudent to increase CIFs in certain AORs by adding an additional company and preparing them to conduct limited WMD-elimination "triage" in coordination with theater explosive ordinance demolition (EOD) teams prior to the arrival of SMUs. Eliminating WMD in hostile countries will require SR and direct-action capabilities to include: stealthy surveillance and strike aircraft; stealthy, penetrating transport aircraft to reach deep into a WMD-armed adversary's territory; WMD-specific tag, track, and locate (TTL) systems; and counter-biometrics to help SOF infiltrate denied areas. Similarly, SOF may need sets of specialized WMD-elimination equipment pre-positioned at clandestine locations around the world to deal with nuclear threats rapidly.

Finally, if the United States goes to war with a nuclear-armed adversary, SOF may offer the least-worst option for regime change. In 2011, former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates famously said that, "…any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined,' as General MacArthur

[208] Rebecca K.C. Hersman and Todd M. Koca, "Eliminating Adversary WMD: Lessons for Future Conflicts," Strategic Forum, No. 211, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, October 2004, available at http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA428300.

so delicately put it." [209] While current and future American political leaders may be reluctant to dispatch large-scale forces to conduct regime change operations akin to Operation Iraqi Freedom, SOF offer a viable strategic option for deposing WMD-armed regimes through UW campaigns should the need arise. Using UW may represent the best alternative to using nuclear weapons or large ground forces to invade and occupy a country possessing WMD. The traditional downside of UW is that preparations for such campaigns could take years to put in place, if not longer. The United States would do well to begin developing limited UW options in advance—by using SOF and intelligence assets to build relationships with groups that could threaten WMD-armed regimes—so that future presidents have a viable unconventional regime-change option when confronting WMD-armed adversaries.

Disrupting Anti-Access and Area-Denial Networks

Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. conventional forces have benefited from the absence of rivals capable of blocking their access to critical regions. Today, the spread of advanced military technologies, such as precision-guided munitions, is enabling a number of countries to construct A2/AD networks that could erode the United States' future ability to project military power into key regions.

Among the countries developing A2/AD networks, China has the most advanced capabilities. Although China is not an enemy of the United States and should not be regarded as one, its military buildup over the past two decades has raised concerns regarding its long-term intentions, both among its immediate neighbors as well as in the United States. Its vast strategic depth coupled with its portfolio of A2/AD capabilities, including precision-guided ballistic and cruise missiles, attack submarines, fast-attack craft, anti-satellite weapons (ASATs), computer-network attack capabilities, advanced fighter aircraft, and integrated air defenses, heighten the military challenge it could pose.[210] The PLA's 2nd Artillery Corps is acquiring medium-range, precision-guided, conventional ballistic missiles capable of severely damaging major U.S. bases in Japan and on Guam.[211] The speed and precision of these missiles make them difficult to defend against and therefore a potent first-strike weapon. Together, these capabilities and initiatives could underwrite a more assertive Chinese foreign policy and increase the PRC's ability to coerce U.S. allies and partners in the Western Pa-

[209] Robert M. Gates, Speech Given at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, February 25, 2011, available online at http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1539.

[210] International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2011* (London: IISS, 2011), pp. 195-200.

[211] Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2010* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2010), p. 31, available at http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/2010_CMPR_Final.pdf.

cific. Ultimately, it could lead to the political "Finlandization" of the region if local states lose confidence in America's continued ability to serve as a security provider by counterbalancing a rising China.[212]

Iran is also investing in capabilities that could be used to restrict the flow of oil and gas from the Persian Gulf region, deny U.S. conventional forces access to the Gulf, or coerce its neighbors. Iran's A2/AD posture is more modest than China's and relies on the natural chokepoint provided by the Strait of Hormuz to restrict freedom of maneuver. Iran, however, couples its limited conventional capabilities with a continued pursuit of nuclear weapons and use of irregular forces like the Quds Force and Hezbollah, as well as growing offensive cyber warfare capabilities.[213] As then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates observed in late 2007, "There can be little doubt that [Iran's] destabilizing foreign policies are a threat to the interests of the United States, to the interests of every country in the Middle East, and to the interests of all countries within the range of the ballistic missiles Iran is developing."[214] Iran's arsenal includes ballistic missiles capable of reaching targets throughout the Middle East and into Southeastern Europe.[215] Iranian leaders have repeatedly threatened to use anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), smart mines, fast-attack craft, and submarines to disrupt shipping transiting the Strait of Hormuz. Absent a revolutionary change to its leadership or strategic ambitions, Iran will likely continue on its current path toward creating an arsenal of advanced weapons and a network of proxy groups to challenge U.S. interests throughout the region.

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212 See Andrew Krepinevich, "China's 'Finlandization' Strategy in the Pacific," *Wall Street Journal,* September 11, 2010, available at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704164904575421753851404076.html?mod=WSJ_topics_obama; and Aaron Friedberg, "Bucking Beijing: An Alternative U.S. China Policy," *Foreign Affairs,* September/October 2012, pp. 48-58.

213 Mark Gunzinger and Chris Dougherty, *Outside-In: Operating From Range to Defeat Iran's Anti-Access and Area-Denial Threats* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2011), pp. 38-40, available at http://www.csbaonline.org/publications/2012/01/outside-in-operating-from-range-to-defeat-irans-anti-access-and-area-denial-threats/; and Nicole Perlroth, "In Cyberattack on Saudi Firm, U.S. Sees Iran Firing Back," *New York Times,* October 23, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/24/business/global/cyberattack-on-saudi-oil-firm-disquiets-us.html?pagewanted=all.

214 Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Remarks Delivered at the Manama Dialogue, Manama, Bahrain, December 9, 2007, available at http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1201.

215 See Gunzinger and Dougherty, *Outside-In,* pp. 33-38 for detailed information on the ballistic missiles in Iran's arsenal.

Operators prepare to conduct a high-altitude, high-opening jump at the Advanced Tactical Infiltration Course. Military free fall parachute drops have long been a means of covert infiltration for SOF, but the spread of advanced air-defense systems could curtail their use by denying over-flight access to non-stealthy aircraft.

The cumulative effect of spreading A2/AD systems is that the land, air, sea, space, and cyberspace domains will be far less permissive for U.S. military operations. Airbases, seaports, airfields, railways, roads, and marshaling yards within range of precision air and missile attacks will all be increasingly vulnerable. Advanced technologies such as integrated air defense systems (IADS); long-range, precision-guided cruise and ballistic missiles; and counter-C4ISR capabilities will limit the ability of conventional forces to fly combat air missions, maneuver at sea, gain lodgments ashore, establish secure forward operating bases, communicate at long ranges, and sustain themselves logistically. The spread of these weapons threatens traditional U.S. power-projection operations, which heretofore have emphasized massing overwhelming combat power on an adversary's border before launching a large, coordinated, combined-arms assault. This could constrain U.S. freedom of action overseas and limit the options available to policymakers.

In the face of growing A2/AD threats, the value of low-signature forces capable of operating independently and far forward in denied areas is likely to increase substantially. Among the most prized capabilities for projecting power into A2/AD environments will be submarines, long-range stealth aircraft, cyberwarfare,

space-based ISR and SOF. These capabilities are emerging as the "crown jewels" of a new American way of war that will continue to project power globally, but will do so by emphasizing speed, stealth, precision, and information dominance over massed high-signature forces. An important characteristic shared by these forces is that they do not require in-theater basing, or are far less reliant on it than are most GPF. Combinations of these relatively access-insensitive forces are therefore likely to be the spearhead of any future campaigns conducted in A2/AD environments. Such combinations have already demonstrated their effectiveness. The pairing of SOF and precision airpower, for example, has proven remarkably lethal against a broad range of conventional and irregular threats during the last decade of war. Going forward, SOF may be crucial to finding and designating mobile targets for air strikes by stealthy, penetrating platforms or standoff munitions. Together, these capabilities can create uncertainty in the minds of potential aggressors, thereby enhancing deterrence.

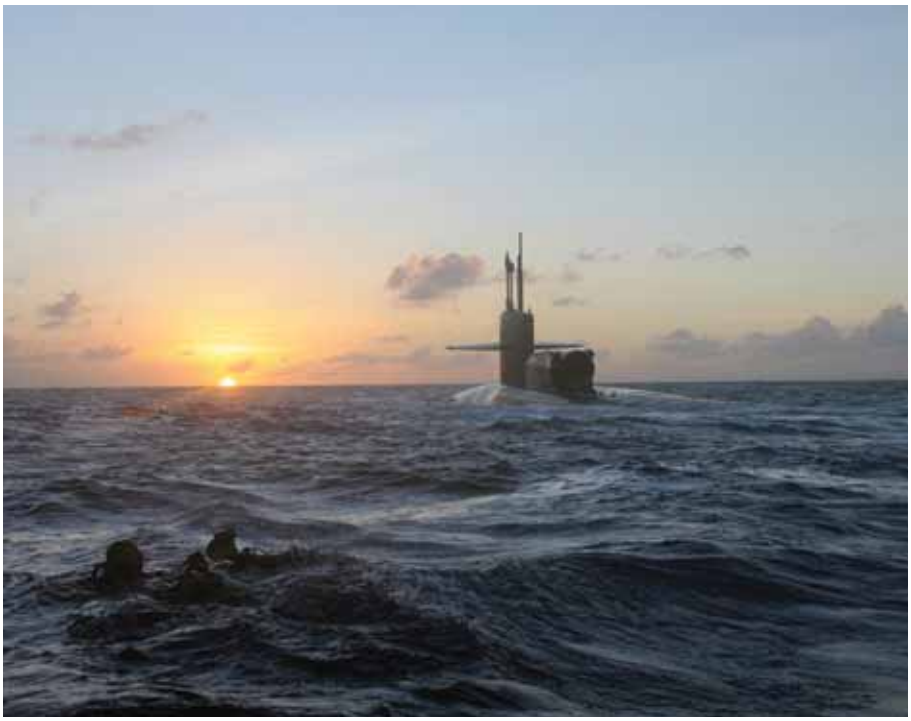
SOF may offer the most viable ground force option in future A2/AD environments, either executing direct action against key targets, or working by, with, and through partner forces to conduct a peripheral campaign (i.e., operations designed to impose costs beyond the territory or reach of the enemy). Prior to hostilities, SOF could carry out preparation of the environment (PE) and SR missions. At the outset of hostilities, SOF might serve as an early-entry force to blind or disrupt enemy C4ISR networks, enabling higher-signature conventional forces to penetrate A2/AD networks.[216] Working in combination with penetrating stealth aircraft, SOF could also attack deeply buried C2 nodes that may be difficult to strike using standoff munitions alone.

SOF may offer the most viable ground force option in future A2/AD environments.

While cyber and electronic warfare would likely have expanded roles in future conflicts, their employment may be limited by the ability to gain access to an enemy's closed computer and communications networks. SOF might therefore have a critical assignment in accessing such networks, for example by locating and tapping into buried fiber-optic cables to enable penetration of closed networks. While SOF might be essential to gain access to or disrupt closed networks, they might be also called on to facilitate the restoration of Internet access or mobile phone service in denied areas where hostile regimes have restricted or blocked communications. Maintaining access to communications and social networks will likely be critical to conducting information operations, developing and maintaining popular support for U.S.-led coalition actions, conducting UW operations, and enabling irregular forces operating within hostile states.

[216] AirSea Battle in particular foresees disruption of enemy C4ISR systems as a principal line of operation. See General Norton A. Schwartz (U.S. Air Force) and Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert (U.S. Navy), "Air-Sea Battle: Promoting Stability in an Era of Uncertainty," *The American Interest,* February 20, 2012, available at http://www.the-american-interest.com/article.cfm?piece=1212.

Whether conducting direct action against high-value targets, performing SR, leading a UW campaign, or enabling cyber warfare, special operations must be better integrated into the operational plans of the GCCs and closely coordinated with information operations and counter-C4ISR lines of operation to achieve maximum effect.



Navy SEALs return to the guided-missile submarine USS *Michigan* during a training exercise. As A2/AD systems render traditional means of infiltration ineffective, undersea delivery may increase in importance.

Inserting or extracting SOF from denied environments, and supporting them once there, will challenge SOF aviation and undersea capabilities. Although AFSOC and the 160th SOAR have long prided themselves on conducting missions in dangerous and hostile environments, flying into a dense, sophisticated IADS will be significantly more difficult than past operations over countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan that possessed more limited air defense systems. AFSOC and ARSOAC will require stealthy fixed- and rotary-wing aviation platforms capable of flying in denied environments.[217] To support operations in complex A2/AD environments, USSOCOM should work with the Air Force to develop a low-observable SOF trans-

[217] Joseph K. Michalek, *The Need for the Next Special Operations Forces' Mobility Aircraft* (Boston, MA: Harvard University, June 2012), p. 24, available at http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/michalek-final-research-paper.pdf.

port with greater range, a larger payload capacity, faster top speed, and a higher service ceiling than those of current MC-130J Commando II aircraft.[218]

Undersea capabilities such as NSW's SEAL Delivery Vehicles (SDVs) offer the ability to conduct covert littoral insertion and extraction of SEALs, but this capability is inherently limited. SDVs are small, short-ranged, and "wet" submersibles that expose operators to the harsh undersea environment, making them less than ideal for inserting SOF into contested areas at extended ranges. The Advanced Seal Delivery System (ASDS) and its follow-on, the Joint Multi-Mission Submersible (JMMS), were designed in part to fill this operational gap providing a "dry" delivery system capable of longer duration missions, but were canceled due to technical difficulties and cost overruns.[219] NSW is pursuing the future Dry Combat Submersible-Medium (DCS-M) to insert SEALs through extreme water temperatures over extended ranges into denied areas.[220] Finally, operating forward in denied areas will require covert communications networks to link SOF with stealthy aircraft. The next generation of special communications systems will be a critical enabler for all forces operating in the contested environments of the future.

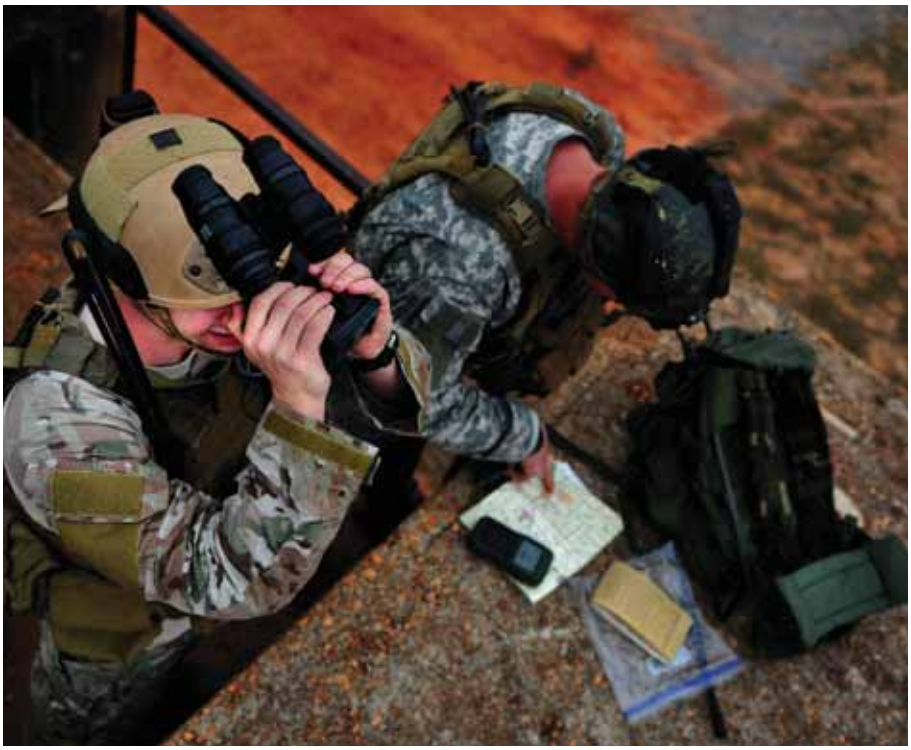
Beyond SR and direct-action missions in contested A2/AD environments, SOF could conduct UW either within, or more likely along, the periphery of a target state. These operations could involve fomenting insurrection in disaffected minority groups, conducting cross-border raids, and harassing or interdicting lines of communication (LOCs), electricity grids, and energy pipelines. In concert with maritime blockade operations, this could constrict a target nation's economy and cause it to dedicate significant forces to defend its territorial integrity and critical infrastructure, thereby diverting those resources from other objectives. Airpower is likely to remain a critical force-multiplier for UW operations; AFSOC and ARSOAC may therefore need to develop specialized platforms (likely clandestine or unmanned), communications capabilities, and operators to support far-forward UW operations in denied environments. ST and JTAC-qualified personnel, perennially in short supply, would be central to facilitating a marriage of partner

218 The Air Force recently changed the popular name of the MC-130J from Combat Shadow II to Commando II. Ashley M. Wright, "Air Force changes name of MC-130J," U.S. Air Force, March 19, 2012, available at http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123294461. This aircraft has a top speed of 362 knots air speed at 22,000 feet (approximately 385 mph), a ceiling of 28,000 feet (with 42,000-pound payload), and an unrefueled ferry range of 3,000 miles. All numbers per "MC-130J Commando II Factsheet," *U.S. Air Force Factsheets,* March 22, 2012, available at http://www.af.mil/information/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=18764; and USSOCOM, USSOCOM Fact Book 2013, p. 27. See also Robert Martinage, *Special Operations Forces: Future Challenges and Opportunities* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2008), p. 65, available at http://www.csbaonline.org/publications/2008/11/special-operation-forces-future-challenges-and-opportunities/.

219 See U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 Report," 112th Congress, 1st Session, Report 112-26, p. 16, available at http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&sid=cp112TtjuH&r_n=sr026.112&dbname=cp112&&sel=TOC_185452&.

220 Naval Special Warfare Command, "NSW Surface Roadmap," PowerPoint Briefing, March 2012.

ground forces with U.S. airpower, and may therefore need to see an increase in their numbers. CA and MISO teams would also be central to maintaining partner support by working closely with local civilian authorities and providing truthful information to local populations about the nature of the threats they face. The use of social networking also represents an opportunity for UW, exploiting the potential of social media to function as a command, control, and communication tool to foment protests and prompt other irregular activities in denied or politically sensitive areas. As Lieutenant Colonel Brian Petit (U.S. Army) has observed, "Success in future UW campaigns will likely blend the understanding of social networking with the application of SF advisors and U.S. joint firepower in support of a resistance movement or insurgency."[221]



An Army Special Forces soldier calls for an air strike with the assistance of a JTAC-qualified Air Force Combat Controller during a training exercise. JTAC-qualified personnel have been a crucial link between SOF ground elements and precision airpower.

[221] See Lieutenant Colonel Brian Petit (U.S. Army), "Social Media and UW," *Special Warfare,* 25, Issue 2, April-June 2012, p. 26, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/10170.

The ability to conduct UW operations against a sophisticated opponent could require years, if not decades, of preparatory action. SOF must begin to lay the groundwork—for example, by building relationships with local partners, scouting locations for safehouses, and pre-positioning equipment—well in advance to provide an array of policy options available if and when they are needed. The United States must also assume that competitors and potential adversaries will engage in their own UW operations against states that choose to partner with the United States. Therefore, SOF may also need to conduct FID and SFA in these countries preventively, with a particular focus on training partner SOF, to increase partner nations' abilities to withstand subversion or intimidation by hostile states.

The ability to conduct UW operations against a sophisticated opponent could require years, if not decades, of preparatory action.

Adversaries may also coerce U.S. allies and partners through the threat of cross-border ground invasions. Consequently, SOF may also need to conduct *foreign external defense* (FED) missions in these states to build their capacity to resist conventional invasion.[222] This could entail helping partners to create their own versions of A2/AD networks. For states lacking the ability or will to develop or acquire robust A2/AD defenses, SOF may assist them in adopting a "hybrid warfare" approach marrying guerrilla tactics with advanced guided weaponry.[223] Conducted persistently, FID, FED, and SFA missions will increase partner capacity and help develop close relationships between U.S. SOF and partner forces. Over time, this should increase the partner country's willingness to support U.S. operations.

Waging Influence Competitions and Proxy Wars

The spread of WMD and A2/AD capabilities will erode the conventional power-projection capability of not only the United States, but of other countries as well. In the future, states may therefore avoid direct confrontations and be more inclined to use unconventional methods and other measures short of war to gain influence and achieve their foreign policy goals. In seeking to subvert A2/AD networks and avoid potential retaliation with WMD, states may increasingly turn to third-party proxies to maintain plausible deniability for their actions. States could engage in proxy competitions to achieve objectives such as:

- Imposing costs on major competitors;
- Foreclosing opportunities for other countries or non-state actors to gain a foothold in a region;
- "Peeling away" allies or partners from competitors;
- Diverting the attention and resources of competitors (misdirection);

222 This is also covered via SFA activities.

223 This approach may be modeled on Hezbollah's employment of large numbers of unguided rockets, artillery mortars, and missiles in the 2006 Second Lebanon War to defend successfully against a far stronger Israeli force. See Greg Grant, "Hezbollah on Steroids," *DoD Buzz,* July 1, 2009, available at http://www.dodbuzz.com/2009/07/01/hezbollah-on-steroids/.

- Conducting cross-border operations against a rival power with plausible deniability and a reduced risk of direct confrontation; or
- Controlling (or denying) critical resources and trade routes.

Great powers will jockey for favorable positions using proxies and conduct influence campaigns not only in their own regions, but also in distant, peripheral theaters. Just as the United States is placing greater emphasis on indirect approaches, i.e., working by, with, and through foreign partners to achieve shared objectives or confront threats of mutual concern, other major powers are pursuing similar courses and developing their own networks of partners, clients, and proxy forces. While the United States has had little competition in the security cooperation sphere since the demise of the Soviet Union, that is likely to change. Countries with deep pockets such as China are poised to fill any void that may be created should the United States scale back its security commitments around the world as a consequence of its fiscal situation. [224] As the United States and its allies are more fiscally constrained, and perhaps become more selective about the character of the regimes they are willing to support, the environment could create openings for revisionist powers to expand their influence in their own regions and beyond.

A future geopolitical rivalry among major powers including the United States, Russia, Iran, India, and China could echo the "Great Game," the 19th century competition for regional influence in Central Asia between Russia and Great Britain, albeit on a global, rather than regional, scale.[225] In such a competition, rivals will compete for security partners, basing access, transit and over-flight rights, and resource extraction concessions. There are four areas in particular where great-power competitions and proxy wars are likely to demand the attention of the United States over the next several decades: the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In all of these cases, SOF will be a preferred instrument of power to protect or advance U.S. interests.

Throughout the greater Middle East, volatility in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring" revolutions has intensified the long-simmering Sunni-Shia competition. The conflict between the Sunni and Shia branches of Islam has spanned well over a millennium, but developments over the last decade have destabilized the balance of power between Sunni and Shia groups, thereby creating a new impetus for violent conflict. The U.S. invasion of Iraq and the subsequent democratic election of a Shia-led Iraqi government was the first major disturbance.

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[224] In 2011, the United States accounted for 77.7 percent of all arms transfer agreements worldwide. See Richard F. Grimmett and Paul Kerr, *Conventional Arms Transfer to Developing Nations, 2004-2011* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 24, 2012), p. Summary, available at http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/R42678.pdf.

[225] Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha America, Inc., 1992).

The revolutions that began in 2011 and the sectarian civil war taking place in Syria have also exacerbated the Sunni-Shia schism. Sunni Gulf states, along with Turkey, have increased their support to Sunni groups in both Iraq and Syria, including extremists affiliated with al Qaeda.[226] At the same time, Iran has intensified its relationship with the Shia-led Iraqi government of Nouri al-Maliki and sent Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Quds Force advisers to Syria to assist the Alawite regime of Bashar al-Assad in countering the Sunni-led insurgency that is fighting to overthrow it.[227] The net result is a zone of volatility stretching from the Mediterranean coast of Lebanon to Baghdad characterized by governments with a precarious hold on power, inflows of foreign fighters, and proliferation of weaponry. Within this volatile situation, regional actors like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran, as well as outside powers like Russia, are all seeking to maximize their power and influence. The potential for proxy wars in the Middle East is not limited to this chaotic area. In the future, Iran could exploit upheaval in Gulf States such as Sunni-ruled but majority-Shia Bahrain to destabilize or topple one or more Arab regimes. Reciprocally, the Gulf States might be emboldened to support internal opposition groups in Iran.

The coming drawdown of U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces from Afghanistan, coupled with continuing instability in Pakistan, sets the conditions for a return of great-power competition in Central Asia. A number of authoritarian regimes in the region face continuing threats from Islamist insurgencies and will look to outside powers for security assistance. At the same time, larger powers will seek to fill any power vacuum that emerges as a result of the withdrawal of NATO forces. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), led by Russia and China,[228] was established in 2001, a few months before the 9/11 attacks. Its purpose was to counter what those countries already perceived as growing American influence in the region through NATO's Partnership for Peace, as well as to provide a mechanism for increasing CT efforts against common Islamist militants.

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226 Stephen Crittenden, "The Clash Within Civilisations: How The Sunni-Shiite Divide Cleaves The Middle East," *The Global Mail,* August 22, 2012, available at http://www.theglobalmail.org/feature/the-clash-within-civilisations-how-the-sunni-shiite-divide-cleaves-the-middle-east/349/.

227 According to Crittenden, the Alawites are a "syncretic" sect of Shiism that "borrow[s] from non-Islamic traditions including Phoenician paganism, Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and Christianity. They celebrate Christmas and Easter, and have a rite that resembles Mass, during which bread and wine are consecrated to symbolise the body and blood of the murdered first Shiite Imam, Ali, from whom they take their name." Crittenden, "The Clash Within Civilisations." Also see Michael R. Gordon, Eric Schmitt, and Tim Arango, "Flow of Arms to Syria Through Iraq Persists, to U.S. Dismay," *New York Times,* December 1, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/02/world/middleeast/us-is-stumbling-in-effort-to-cut-syria-arms-flow.html?pagewanted=all.

228 The SCO also includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

As America's conventional military presence in the region recedes, it may present opportunities for Russia and China, as well as Iran, India, and Pakistan, to gain competitive advantage. Power alignments in Central Asia are likely to become more fluid in the coming decades. The interests of Russia and China may diverge over time, given Russia's continuing weakness and China's growing economic and military strength. The United States may find itself partnering with China and/or Russia to help Central Asian states improve their border security, while creating future UW options that it could exercise to prevent hostilities or prevail in the event of a conflict.[229]

An Army Special Forces soldier operating under the Joint Special Operations Task Force–Trans Sahara observes soldiers in a Malian CT unit as they fire a machine gun. In future, SOF partner capacity building missions will need to expand beyond their current focus on combating violent extremist networks.

[229] Colonel Michael Lwin (U.S. Army), "The Challenges of China and ARSOF's Role," *Special Warfare,* 25, Issue 3, July-September 2012, pp. 18-20, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/10629.

Today, U.S. military operations in Africa largely focus on countering terrorism and the spread of VENs. There are signs, however, that Africa may in future return to its Cold War status as a proxy battlefield. Whereas Cold War proxy conflicts were largely ideological in nature, future clashes will likely grow out of competition over access to resources. As Jonathan Holslag, head of research at the Brussels Institute of Contemporary China Studies, has argued:

> Throughout history, most external powers for whom Africa's mineral wealth became indispensable to their industrial growth backed up their economic forays with a projection of military might, to suppress local resistance in their dominions or defend their realms from imperialist competitors.[230]

Countries may wish to protect their economic interests in Africa through proxies or direct intervention, thereby presenting their competitors with an opportunity to impose costs through proxy warfare. Though this process is taking place across Africa, Greater Sudan[231] and Angola stand out as two areas where political instability and access to a critical resource, in this case oil and natural gas, may encourage competition by great powers and potentially lead to proxy conflicts.

China has been investing in Sudanese oil production since the late 1990s while also serving as the primary arms supplier to the Khartoum government in its civil war against what is now the independent nation of South Sudan.[232] When South Sudan officially seceded in 2011, it took with it 75 percent of Sudan's oil production, which represented 5 to 6 percent of China's total oil imports.[233] Since that time, China has been attempting to balance its longstanding ties with Khartoum against its significant economic interest in the oil production capacity of South Sudan.[234] This fundamental conflict of interest makes Greater Sudan fertile ground for potential proxy conflicts and influence competitions. Similarly, Angola is no stranger to proxy conflicts, having endured over twenty-five years of civil war. The war has been over for more than a decade, and today Angola is the third-largest oil producer in Africa, after Nigeria and Algeria.[235] As

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230 Jonathan Holslag, "China's New Security Strategy for Africa," *Parameters,* Summer 2009, p. 23, available at http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/Articles/09summer/holslag.pdf.

231 The larger area formed by Sudan and the newly founded state of South Sudan.

232 David H. Shinn, "China's Deft Sudan Diplomacy," *The Diplomat: China Power,* September 19, 2012, available at http://thediplomat.com/china-power/chinas-deft-sudan-diplomacy/?print=yes.

233 Ibid.

234 Ibid.; Holslag, "China's New Security Strategy for Africa," pp. 25-26; and Jared Ferrie, "Sudan's Use of Chinese Arms Shows Beijing's Balancing Act," *Bloomberg,* April 30, 2012, available at http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-04-30/sudan-s-use-of-chinese-arms-shows-beijing-s-balancing-act.html.

235 U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Total Oil Supply (Thousand Barrels Per Day)," U.S. Energy Information Administration, available at http://www.eia.gov/cfapps/ipdbproject/iedindex3.cfm?tid=5&pid=53&aid=1&cid=r6,&syid=2007&eyid=2012&unit=TBPD.

such, it has drawn diplomatic interest and investment from a number of countries. "Between 2004 and 2008…China provided more military assistance to Angola than to Sudan, even though the security challenges in the latter were much greater," according to Jonathan Holslag.[236]

In Latin America, the growing ties between Iran and Venezuela, coupled with partnerships between Hezbollah and Andean narcotics cartels, present an opportunity for rivals to impose costs on the United States in its own hemisphere. Over the past decade, Iran and Venezuela signed over two hundred-seventy economic cooperation agreements and this cooperation has extended into the military realm.[237] Hezbollah, an Iranian proxy force, has also strengthened its relationship with Venezuela, as demonstrated by the 2008 Office of Foreign Assets Control's designation of senior Venezuelan diplomats as terrorist financiers.[238] With Venezuelan assistance, Iran could use Hezbollah operatives in Latin America to threaten U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere and divert its attention from overseas.

SOF units conducting special-warfare operations provide a means to navigate and prevail in competitions for regional influence or in proxy wars.

SOF units conducting special-warfare operations provide a means to navigate and prevail in competitions for regional influence or in proxy wars. Developed properly over time, influence campaigns and enhanced partner relationships could raise "barriers to entry" for rival powers in a given country, thereby foreclosing their ability to gain or maintain a foothold at an acceptable cost. Such efforts would place a heavy emphasis on coordinated, synergistic special-warfare activities such as UW, FID, CA, and MISO. To be successful, partner relationships must be developed long before they are needed for influence campaigns or proxy wars. SOF will be a central component of U.S. influence efforts, but their operations must be coordinated with the interagency for maximum effect using the so-called "3D" model: defense, diplomacy, and development.[239] Given the sensitivity of some of these activities, they will frequently have to be conducted under the authorities of the CIA, and rely on that agency's extensive clandestine network and infrastructure.

Ideally, SOF conducting persistent influence campaigns would have exquisite, locally specific expertise and language skills, along with deep, longstanding relationships with key local actors built over time by living with foreign partner forces. Though SOF already operate in smaller units than GPF, the breadth, specificity,

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236 Holslag, "China's New Security Strategy for Africa," p. 29.

237 Mark Sullivan, *Latin America: Terrorism Issues* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, March 2, 2012), p. 12, available at http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RS21049.pdf.

238 Douglas Farah, Senior Fellow, International Assessment and Strategy Center, testimony before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, and Global Narcotics Affairs, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *Iran's Influence and Activity in Latin America,* February 16, 2012, p. 17, available at http://www.strategycenter.net/docLib/20120218_Testimony_Farah_Iran-LA_021612.pdf.

239 For more on the "3D Model," see Captain Nathan Finney (U.S. Army), "A Culture of Inclusion: Defense, Diplomacy, and Development as a Modern American Foreign Policy," *Small Wars Journal,* September 26, 2010, available at http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/a-culture-of-inclusion.

and need to minimize the visibility of these operations will place a greater emphasis on smaller teams and single operators as units of action. In semi-permissive countries where the United States has diplomatic relations, these operators could be integrated into U.S. embassy country teams and operate under the direction of the ambassador, or could be embedded into foreign SOF units. The sensitivity of these operations will require the utmost judgment, political savvy, and ability to operate independently. These small teams and single operators are therefore likely to be officer-intensive, drawing heavily on field-grade officers (O-4/5/6s). In many cases, the best option to maintain persistent presence over long durations will be PCS assignments of small teams and single operators in their target country, rather than temporary deployments as is the norm today.

Conclusion

These four security challenges—set against the backdrop of fiscal austerity in the United States and global economic uncertainty—are likely to dominate the national security agenda for decades to come. These challenges are not mutually exclusive, and in almost every case, they are intertwined with opportunities for SOF to impose costs on U.S. adversaries. These threats also cut across the seams of the GCCs, thereby demanding global approaches. Given their global nature, and recognizing the interrelationship among the various challenges and opportunities, SOF are uniquely suited to address them asymmetrically. The next chapter will take up specific measures that would improve SOF's ability to meet these future challenges and exploit the nascent opportunities within them.

A Fire Support Officer from the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment identifies targets for air strikes using a laser rangefinder during a training exercise.

CHAPTER 4 > **RESHAPING SOF IN THE NEXT QDR**

Given the demands of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the global campaign against al Qaeda and other VENs, it is not surprising that the last two QDRs focused on *sizing* SOF: growing the force as well as their organic and Service-provided enablers. As combat operations in Afghanistan wind down, the next QDR offers an opportunity for *reshaping* SOF to meet a wider range of challenges. Leveraging SOF to expand the nation's option set will necessitate preparing them to confront a future that does not simply mirror the last decade. SOF will increasingly conduct operations short of war that are more indirect and less kinetic to confront a variety of interconnected, cross-border challenges to include: localizing and defeating VENs across a number of continents, waging long-duration influence campaigns and proxy competitions in multiple regions and key states, and interdicting WMD. These forward-leaning operations will require developing lasting relationships with state and non-state partners. At the same time, SOF will need to regain their readiness for major wars. In particular, this will require redoubling efforts to address challenges like countering WMD and disrupting A2/AD networks, in which SOF are likely to play central roles. This chapter recommends a series of interconnected measures that would improve the effectiveness of SOF in meeting these challenges.

Maximizing Value from SOF's Expanded Capacity

The number of SOF that will be required in Afghanistan over the next several years remains uncertain. At the same time, more SOF will be needed to improve manning for the TSOCs and source other new requirements. Given these demands on an already-fraying force, it would be imprudent to reduce SOF in the coming QDR. The fact that planned growth from the 2006 QDR will ultimately take more than ten years to realize should give any secretary of defense pause before con-

sidering reductions in the force. Moreover, a large number of requests for SOF outside of designated war zones continues to go unmet.[240] Finally, continuing to grow the force to the mandated 71,000 (along with the eventual drawdown of SOF from Afghanistan) is necessary to return all SOF units to a sustainable PERSTEMPO—no more than 25 percent of a unit's time spent away from its home station. Achieving that steady-state PERSTEMPO target is perhaps the single most important measure that can be taken to improve the predictability of deployments for SOF and their families, thereby improving retention and readiness, which in turn are key to preserving the force.

At the same time, it would also be difficult to grow SOF much beyond 71,000 without sacrificing quality. Some USSOCOM Components have already reported problems filling current end strength authorizations. For example, in FY 2011, the SEAL officer community fell almost 30 percent short of its approved strength of 216 officers.[241] MARSOC has been unable to fully man its deploying units. Such problems could worsen as conventional forces reduce their end strength. The smaller the size of the conventional force, the smaller the recruitment pool from which to select qualified volunteers. Leaner GPF would also be less capable of providing critical logistical and sustainment support to SOF units.

Looking beyond Afghanistan, future demand for SOF might still require a steady-state posture of more than 10,000 forward-deployed SOF, according to USSOCOM.[242] Maintaining 10,000 forward-deployed SOF, in turn, would require a rotation base of 40,000 deployable SOF in total (assuming a rotation ratio of three units back for every one unit forward). Surging SOF for major wars could require an additional 15,000-20,000 operators, although these additional operators would not necessarily require a rotation base and some forward-deployed SOF could be redeployed from lower-priority missions. In total, a pool of more than 50,000 operators would be required to meet both normal, steady-state deployments as well as to surge for major wars. Such a pool of 50,000 deployable SOF would be slightly more than the number of deployable SOF in USSOCOM's programmed 71,000 force.

240 According to USASOC, it can only source 63 percent of requested missions even after doubling the size of its forces. Interview by the authors with senior SOF commanders, March 2012.

241 Letter from USSOCOM Commander to the secretary of defense transmitting USSOCOM's "2011 Personnel Readiness Assessment," Executive Summary, May 11, 2012, pp. 4-5.

242 Admiral William H. McRaven (USN), *Posture Statement*, p. 11.

While the size of USSOCOM's programmed force is roughly appropriate, the expanded force will need to be reshaped, repurposed, and realigned to support persistent engagement and building partner capacity (BPC) on a global scale, as well as to maximize the value of every operator in the expanded force. Reshaping SOF in the QDR should focus on five initiatives:

- Enhancing the Global SOF Network;
- Disaggregating SOF for persistent engagement;
- Improving SOF language proficiency;
- Updating authorities for preventive action; and
- Developing new capabilities to address emerging challenges.

Enhancing the Global SOF Network

> USSOCOM is enhancing its global network of SOF to support our interagency and international partners in order to gain expanded situational awareness of emerging threats and opportunities. The network enables small, persistent presence in critical locations, and facilitates engagement where necessary or appropriate—all under the authority of the GCC and [Chief of Mission]. [243]
>
> –Admiral William H. McRaven
> Commander, USSOCOM

To counter al Qaeda and its network of affiliates, SOF have had to create their own human network. This global network has brought together both U.S. national and theater SOF, as well as their foreign counterparts. It also includes interagency partners from the intelligence, law enforcement, diplomatic and development communities. Capitalizing on what Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom have called the "network effect," which they define as "the increase in the overall value of the network with the addition of each new member," SOF have incorporated globally dispersed operators into an integrated global system intended to maximize information sharing and collaboration.[244] Now SOF must enhance their network and leverage it to address the wider range of challenges described in the previous chapter. These challenges will often cut across GCC boundaries, demanding integrated global approaches. Operations outside designated war zones, moreover, will necessitate greater collaboration with foreign forces, particularly foreign SOF. These operations will often require U.S. SOF to empower foreign SOF to solve their local problems with less dependence on the United States. They will also re-

[243] Admiral William H. McRaven (USN), *Posture Statement*, p. 4.

[244] Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 202.

quire shifting the balance of action between military and non-military measures; therefore, future special operations will frequently be executed under the authorities of other agencies.

As the Global SOF Network matures, its main effects would be three-fold. First, it would facilitate integrated actions across the GCCs' AOR boundary lines, reducing the potential for adversaries to exploit U.S. organizational seams. Second, as the network grows and incorporates new members it should confer "increasing returns to scale" in which the marginal gain of an additional member vastly outweighs any costs, while greatly increasing the network's attractiveness to others seeking to join.[245] Third, the bigger the network grows, the greater its effects in weakening or sowing chaos within hostile state or non-state networks. Enhancing the Global SOF Network will require three key initiatives: strengthening the TSOCs, deepening ties with partner SOF around the world, and extending the practice of close collaboration with interagency partners that has emerged over the past decade to address a wider array of security challenges beyond CT.

Future special operations will frequently be executed under the authorities of other agencies.

Navy SEALs assigned to Special Operations Command–Europe train with members of Poland's Operational Maneuver Response Group, more commonly known as GROM. Combined exercises such as these are one way that strengthened TSOCs can build a stronger Global SOF Network and contribute to a more preventive security strategy.

245 M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity: the Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 18.

Strengthening the Theater Special Operations Commands

Prior to the last QDR, there were calls for creating a new UW command within USSOCOM to place "by, with, and through" activities for enabling partners on par organizationally with national direct-action SOF.[246] The case for establishing such a command, however, is weaker today than it was four years ago. Theater SOF, with their emphasis on indirect, less kinetic, special-warfare activities, remain under-resourced within USSOCOM relative to surgical-strike national SOF. A major lesson of the past four years, however, is the importance of *integrating* theater and national SOF rather than perpetuating their distinctions. Such integration is already playing out in Afghanistan, where the newly established SOJTF-A has brought national, theater, and coalition SOF together under the unified command of a two-star general.[247] A logical next step would be to blend national, theater, and coalition SOF outside war zones across all the GCCs at the TSOC level.

Each GCC exercises operational control of SOF in its theater through its TSOC, a subordinate unified, joint command.[248] Historically, though, TSOCs have rarely operated as they were intended to and actually assumed command of major special operations in their theaters. TSOCs have typically been neither organized nor manned to provide C2 for complex SOF operations.[249] For example, separate, ad hoc commands were established to provide C2 for SOF in Iraq and Afghanistan instead of using Special Operations Command Central Command (SOCCENT). Under the Combatant Command (COCOM) of the GCC, TSOCs have historically been understaffed, and the majority of their personnel are not qualified SOF. Moreover, because they work for the GCCs, TSOC staffs have tended to adopt the regional priorities of their GCCs, and been less attuned to trans-regional threats that would require coordinating responses horizontally across GCC boundaries and vertically with national SOF or other government agencies. Often, the TSOCs have lacked sufficient expertise to develop comprehensive peacetime engagement plans, or integrate SOF into the broader strategic plans of the GCCs. This situation has been exacerbated by some GCCs' tendency to divert SOF personnel from TSOCs to other assignments within the COCOM.[250]

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246 See Martinage, *Special Operations Forces;* and Christopher Lamb and David Tucker, *United States Special Operations Forces* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

247 USSOCOM,*USSOCOM Fact Book 2013,* p. 29.

248 U.S. Northern Command is in the process of standing up a TSOC. U.S. Forces; Korea also possess a TSOC (Special Operations Command, Korea).

249 Sandra I. Erwin, "Special Operations Command Seeks Bigger Role in Conflict Prevention," *National Defense Magazine,* November 29, 2012, available at: http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=983.

250 USSOCOM, "2011 Personnel Readiness Assessment," p. 6; and interviews with USSOCOM personnel.

To address these issues, former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta approved a plan in February 2013 for USSOCOM to assume COCOM of the TSOCs. Under this new command arrangement, USSOCOM will train, organize, and equip the TSOCs and release their personnel to the operational control (OPCON) of the GCCs.[251] In practice, this will provide the GCCs with far more capable SOF planning cells, and it will allow USSOCOM to ensure the optimization of scarce SOF. As the TSOCs assume C2 over all special operations in each GCC and become more central to the GCCs' theater engagement and planning, the next QDR should consider steps to increase their effectiveness, including:

- *Improving the quantitative and qualitative manning of the TSOCs*. USSOCOM has identified strengthening the TSOCs as a top priority and estimates the need for an additional eight hundred SOF to the TSOCs. [252] The QDR should support USSOCOM's assumption of COCOM of the TSOCs and increase their manning with qualified SOF, as well as increase the TSOCs' organic enablers such as transport aircraft.
- *Unifying both national and theater SOF under the TSOCs.* Following the example of SOJTF-A, all SOF within a GCC's AOR should be placed under the operational control of the TSOC. TSOC staff should also include personnel with both national and theater SOF backgrounds to ensure a full spectrum of resident SOF capability.
- *Linking the TSOCs together as an integrated, global network to address trans-regional threats.* While GCCs still need to exercise OPCON over the vast majority of special operations, there is a need to link the TSOCs globally to address trans-regional security problems. USSOCOM needs the authority to move theater-level assets rapidly across GCC AORs, not only to support CT operations, but to address a wider range of global security challenges for which SOF are uniquely suited.

Deepening Ties with Partner SOF

Deepening ties with partner SOF would complement efforts to strengthen the TSOCs. Such relationships can be significant force-multipliers, provided they are properly maintained and cultivated. As SOF missions move away from their present focus on CT and their geographical concentration in Afghanistan, SOF will need to develop new relationships to meet future challenges and exploit emerging opportunities. Just as the Navy envisioned creating a "thousand-ship navy" based

[251] For more on the differences between COCOM and OPCON, see Charles T. Berry, Jr., "Understanding OPCON," *Joint Force Quarterly,* 2nd Quarter, 2010, pp. 63-65, available at: http://www.ndu.edu/press/lib/images/jfq-57/berry.pdf.

[252] Interviews with TSOC personnel, June 2012.

on cooperation between U.S. and partner navies to solve shared problems, so too could U.S. SOF deepen its ties with their foreign counterparts to develop a "hundred-thousand-man SOF partnership."

An Army Special Forces soldier joins a "stack" of Hungarian SOF during close-quarters battle training. Training closely with partner SOF can develop expeditionary capabilities to support future operations.

Partner SOF typically fall into one of two categories. The first category includes partner SOF focused almost exclusively on internal security activities within their countries, such as countering terrorist, insurgent, or proxy threats. Units such as the Iraqi Commando Battalions or the Afghan National Army Commando Kandaks fall into this category. The second category is far smaller and includes expeditionary SOF that are presently, or could become, regional or global security exporters capable of acting alongside U.S. SOF or independently. NATO SOF participating in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan fall into this latter category. This category also includes SOF from longstanding non-NATO allies such as Australia and South Korea, as well as SOF from "newer" partners like Colombia and the United Arab Emirates. In much the same way that SOF have emerged as a key instrument of U.S. security after 9/11, these foreign SOF are increasingly emerging as the "crown jewels" of their respective militaries.

Over time, it may be possible for some partner SOF to graduate from the first category into the second, growing from an internal focus to become regional security exporters. Colombia's SOF provide a good example of how

this transition might work. For more than half a century, Colombia has been plagued by insurgencies and internal security threats that have killed and displaced thousands of civilians, provided a haven for illicit activities, and undermined the stability of Colombia and its neighbors. By the late 1990s, the leftist guerilla Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), right-wing paramilitary groups, and drug cartels controlled roughly one-third of the country.[253] The United States agreed in 2000 to support Colombia's multi-year "Plan Colombia," aimed at improving security and the rule of law. U.S. SOF, including Army SF, CA, and MISO teams; Navy SEALs and Combatant-craft Crewmen; AFSOC aircraft and operators; and, more recently, Marine CSOs, have provided Colombian SOF with specialized training and advice to conduct counternarcotics (CN) and COIN operations.

Aided by their U.S. counterparts, Colombian SOF have led operations that have decimated the FARC, demobilized paramilitary groups, and reestablished a government presence in every Colombian municipality for the first time in decades.[254] One of their most spectacular tactical successes came in July 2008, when in a coup de main, Colombian commandos bloodlessly liberated fifteen FARC hostages, including former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt and three Americans who had been held captive for more than five years. Despite teetering on the brink of state failure only a decade earlier, Colombia today is safer and more stable that it has been in generations. Although internal security issues remain, Colombia is now a "net security exporter," providing CN training to numerous countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, and West Africa. Colombian forces are also contributing air and naval assets in a multinational effort to interdict smuggling along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of Central America.[255] These achievements illustrate how a country's SOF can mature in a little over a decade to become an important node in the Global SOF Network.

USSOCOM has called for establishing Regional SOF Coordination Centers (RSCCs) to deepen ties between U.S. and foreign SOF. The RSCCs would be physically located in overseas theaters to coordinate doctrine, training, tactics, and education. Each RSCC would also serve as a forum in which SOF could discuss solutions to security problems plaguing their region. An RSCC in U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), for example, would likely focus on combating narcotics trafficking. Like the Navy's "Global Fleet Station" concept, which sought to bring partner navies together to build foreign maritime capacity and thereby reduce demand for scarce

253 Over time, the divisions among these groups blurred as both the FARC and the right-wing paramilitaries engaged in narcotics trafficking.

254 Janice Burton, "ARSOF in Colombia: 50 years of Persistent Engagement," *Special Warfare,* 25, Issue 4, October-December 2012, p. 26, available at http://www.soc.mil/swcS/SWmag/archive/SW2504/SW2504ARSOFInColombia.html.

255 Anna Lukacs, "Colombian Security Aid Expands in the Western Hemisphere," *CSIS Hemisphere Insider,* 2, No. 30, November 2012.

U.S. assets, the RSCC concept would help build the SOF capacity of like-minded partner nations and facilitate regional solutions to regional problems.

NATO offers a model for creating RSCCs and building more durable SOF relationships in other theaters. Established in 2007, the NATO SOF Coordination Center (NSCC) aimed to create a NATO SOF network and enhance allied SOF force-generation through subject matter expertise, coordinated policy, training, and exercise support. NSCC's initial successes led to the creation of the three-star NATO SOF Headquarters (NSHQ) in 2010, which has the mission to provide development, direction, and coordination for all NATO SOF. Located in Mons, Belgium with an international staff of several hundred personnel, NSHQ has focused on advising NATO leaders on SOF-related matters, coordinating NATO members' SOF development, and increasing interoperability through both the standardization of NATO SOF training and the creation and maintenance of BICES, a secure communications network that SOF from all NATO forces can use to communicate and share data.[256] Its success can be seen in the growth of NATO SOF capability in Afghanistan, where roughly 1,700 NATO SOF are making critical contributions to the ISAF mission.[257]

Especially in a time of declining defense budgets, the NSHQ model offers a potential approach to enhance coordination and facilitate defense burden-sharing.

Especially in a time of declining defense budgets, the NSHQ model offers a potential approach to enhance coordination and facilitate defense burden-sharing. Other theaters, however, may require tailored and differentiated approaches. An alternative model has emerged in Jordan, where a disused rock quarry has been transformed into one of the most sophisticated special operations training areas in the world. Opened in 2009, the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC, *kah-sah-tic*) is owned and operated by the Jordanian government with U.S. assistance to foster cooperation, training, and interoperability among international SOF. KASOTC's program is optimized for SOF missions in the Middle East and Africa. Its state-of-the-art training facilities are on par with the best available in the United States and superior to those possessed by most other countries.[258] The center contains indoor and outdoor shooting ranges; a large and sophisticated urban training area; a five-story live-fire shoot house; on- and off-road driving tracks; and a full-size Airbus A300 aircraft for use in hostage rescue training wired with remotely controlled targets, special effects, and over three hundred video cameras that enable real-time observation and playback

256 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ), *Framework Nation Primer* (Mons, Belgium: NATO, 2009).

257 "Q&A with Admiral William H. McRaven," p. 11.

258 Jeff McKaughan, "King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center," *Special Operations Technology,* 10, No. 5, July 2012, available at http://www.kmimediagroup.com/sotech-home/416-sotech-2012-volume-10-issue-5-july/5680-king-abdullah-ii-special-operations-training-center.html.

during after-action reviews.[259] Like the NSHQ, KASOTC's state-of-the-art facilities were constructed with a firm belief that "if you build it, they will come." As intended, KASOTC's facilities have drawn SOF from across the region and around the world to train alongside their Jordanian and U.S. counterparts in conducting house-to-house searches, storming hijacked airplanes, defending embassies, and other critical CT missions. KASOTC's annual Warrior Competition, an international skills competition that began between American and Jordanian SOF, last year brought together thirty-three SOF units from sixteen countries as distant as Uganda and Brunei.[260] Perhaps most significantly, KASOTC served in May 2012 as the headquarters and hub for the SOF-centric training exercise Eager Lion, involving 12,000 troops from the United States, Jordan, and seventeen other countries. KASOTC has provided U.S. and partner SOF with not only a Middle Eastern venue for world-class tactical training, but also a place to engage and build rapport and relationships with counterparts from around the world. This interaction has turned KASOTC into a true center for special operations training and a critical Middle Eastern node in the Global SOF Network.

259 Lieutenant Colonel Rod Aleandre (U.S. Army) and Sergeant Major David Lanham (U.S. Army), "King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC) Provides Capabilities for Coalition Forces," *Army AL&T,* October-December 2009.

260 The participating countries in 2012 were Uganda, Austria, France, Germany (whose border security CT unit was the 2012 champion), Italy, Spain, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, China, Brunei, and the United States. In past years, Australia, Tanzania, Iraq, and the Netherlands have also participated. See "5th Annual Warrior Competition," King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center and the Jordan Armed Forces, available at www.warriorcompetition.com.

U.S. and Jordanian SOF practice operations in urban terrain at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center during Exercise Eager Lion 12. The center's state-of-the-art facilities have made it a hub for SOF interoperability training.

Faced with an array of security threats within the region, declining resources, and the need to rebalance its forces and attention to the Asia-Pacific, the United States will likely grow more reliant on its partners and allies to bear the burden of maintaining security and stability in the Middle East. In the upcoming QDR, the secretary of defense should direct USSOCOM, in concert with the GCCs, to develop comparable centers to NSHQ and KASOTC in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to expand SOF multilateral relations in those theaters.

Extending Collaboration with Interagency Partners

Future security challenges short of war will likely see military forces, including SOF, shifting from a *supported* to a *supporting* role.

Over a decade of continuous operations, SOF have forged close relationships with a variety of interagency partners, including DoS, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement bureaus. Prior to 9/11, close cooperation had not been a hallmark of interagency interaction. Improved relationships have been the result of wartime expediency and a desire to solve a discrete set of problems. Within that limited problem-solving context, these strengthened relationships served as force-multipliers for both SOF and the interagency partners. Looking beyond combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, future security challenges short of war will likely see military forces, including SOF, shifting from a *supported* to a *supporting* role. The State Department, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement bureaus are

likely to take the operational lead outside of war zones to deal with violent extremism, prevent WMD proliferation, and wage influence campaigns or proxy wars. The array of global, networked challenges the United States is likely to face over the next decade and beyond will require institutionalizing and building on the interagency partnerships that emerged on an ad hoc basis over the last decade.

The next QDR can help SOF and GPF preserve and even expand the interagency collaboration that grew out of the exigencies of war. If anything, this cooperation will need to increase for SOF, as their missions increasingly occur outside of theaters of armed conflict and will therefore require close coordination with government agencies such as DoS and CIA. Although national SOF have traditionally had closer relationships with intelligence agencies, theater SOF will have to increase their comfort level working with a wider range of interagency partners.

DoD could take a number of steps to sustain the high levels of interagency cooperation that eventually emerged in Iraq and Afghanistan. First, DoD could increase the number of permanent SOF liaison billets at intelligence agencies, law enforcement bureaus, DoS, USAID, the National Security Staff, and other government departments and agencies. Likewise other agencies might consider increasing their liaison presence at USSOCOM, its Components, and the TSOCs. While liaisons are helpful conduits of information and can help breed familiarity on an individual level, SOF and its interagency partners must also become habituated to operating together at the institutional level and should extend this familiarity into peacetime. To that end, DoD, SOF, and interagency partners should conduct regular "interagency task force (IATF) exercises" that would get SOF and partners from diverse government agencies accustomed to operating with each other in a fluid, networked fashion during contingencies. Over time, these exercises could help build shared interagency tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to help personnel from different departments and agencies work together with minimal friction in IATF settings.

As SOF missions move away from theaters of armed conflict they will inherently take on a greater interagency tinge. SOF will likely operate under Title 50 authorities or under the authority of DoS. Operations that are presently commanded by Joint Special Operations Task Forces (JSOTFs) may increasingly become IATFs led by non-DoD agencies such as CIA, DoS, or the Department of Homeland Security. The post-2014 CT mission in Afghanistan, for example, may evolve toward a CIA-led IATF, with SOF as a supporting element.

Disaggregating SOF for Persistent Engagement

Conducting preventive operations in areas of potential instability and creating security options that could be exercised in the future will also require a greater emphasis on persistent engagement in a larger number of countries around the world. Rather than dispatching SOF after crises erupt, persistent engagement calls for establishing durable relationships with state and non-state partners long

before a critical need emerges. A key challenge for SOF will be in reshaping the force to conduct persistent engagement activities, in particular by embracing non-standard career paths for operators.

Throughout their modern history, SOF have always worked at the hinge of the military and the paramilitary activities of the CIA's National Clandestine Service (NCS). Both the NCS and SOF trace their roots to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which was established in World War II to conduct a wide range of espionage, direct action, and UW activities. Since the Cold War, the organizational personalities of SOF and the NCS have diverged. SOF, as part of a larger joint military organization and culture, have been trained, organized, and equipped in ways that are more similar to conventional forces. Similarly, the key to promotions for SOF officers—whose promotion boards are run by their parent Services and not by USSOCOM—has been to assume command of progressively larger units (e.g., SF ODAs to companies to battalions to groups) over the course of their careers and to be generalist "decathletes" rather than specialists focused on a specific country or problem. The NCS, on the other hand, has a flatter hierarchy in which stations are its principal field units and vary considerably in size; some might be manned by only a case officer, while a large station might have several hundred case officers permanently attached or as transients. And unlike their SOF counterparts, case officers are promoted on the basis of their potential for extremely sensitive assignments in trouble spots around the world rather than the sheer size of the organization they lead.

Covering a wider range of security challenges… will necessitate SOF operating in far more disaggregated small teams and even as single operators around the globe.

As combat operations in designated war zones wind down, SOF will need to work more closely with the NCS and become more NCS-like in their organization in the field and their talent management. Covering the wider range of challenges described in the previous chapter will necessitate SOF operating in far more disaggregated small teams and even as single operators around the globe. This emphasis on small, highly dispersed operations represents somewhat of a departure after a decade in which most SOF have operated under large military C2 structures in war zones. Operating outside designated war zones will push SOF to adopt lower-visibility and clandestine approaches that are far more attuned to the local political climate. In many cases, foreign leaders will predicate their willingness to work with SOF on the condition that such support will be unobtrusive or "invisible."

Developing a New Breed of SOF

Increasing the number of "nodes" in the Global SOF Network by placing greater emphasis on deploying as small teams and single operators would increase the network's ability to provide granular local coverage on a global scale. These personnel would act as a persistent, distributed early warning system, as well as on-scene operational cells in a multitude of locations around the world.

SOF with not just regional expertise, but in-depth, *country-specific* expertise will be needed to perform the following functions:

- *Advising* foreign SOF and other security forces, often by embedding in their ranks;
- *Liaising* with foreign militaries or U.S. country teams to represent USSOCOM and coordinate special operations with the activities of other agencies;
- *Shaping* the local information environment to counter extremist ideologies or promote the legitimacy of partner governments through CA and MISO; and
- *Preparing* the environment for future operations, building relationships, and collecting intelligence to gain situational awareness in politically sensitive or denied areas.[261]

Creating a cadre of personnel to staff this network will place a premium on operators possessing far deeper and more specific linguistic and cultural skill sets. Such operators will need to gain a high level of language proficiency achievable only by living in a specific country over a long period of time. To build and maintain this extremely specific expertise, these personnel would ideally return to the same country multiple times over the course of a career in forward-based PCS assignments. Repetitive, long-term rotations to a single country could also foster long-lasting "first-name basis" relationships with foreign leaders. Along these lines, Brigadier General Eric Wendt (U.S. Army) has recommended establishing a cadre within SF of what he calls "Volckmann operators."[262] These operators would be:

> [S]teeped in select languages and cultures…in support of a persistent-presence approach. Volckmann operators would embed in key host-country units using the authorities of the Title I Partnership Exchange Program, or PEP, and while operating as a part of those units would enjoy an insider perspective that would allow them to identify units' shortfalls in equipment, schooling, training and operational capability.[263]

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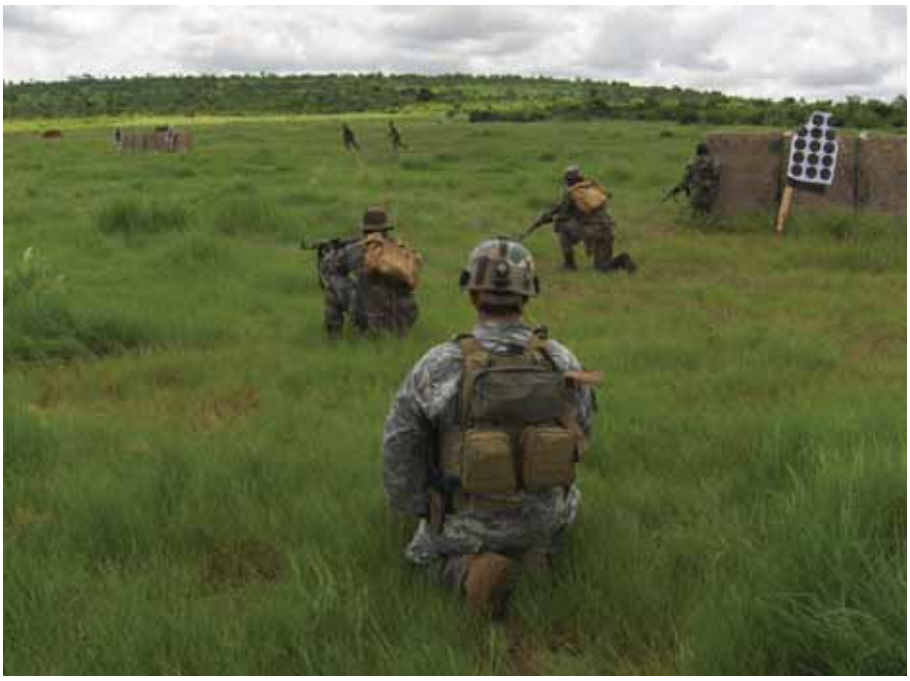
[261] Today, a panoply of programs conducts these functions, including: Special Operations Liaison Officers (SOLO), SOF Liaison Elements, NSW Anchor Teams, MIST, Civil-Military Support Elements (CMSEs), and SOF assigned as case officers in the Defense Clandestine Service or detailed to other agencies.

[262] Wendt named this program after Captain Russell W. Volckmann (U.S. Army), who served as an embedded advisor with the Philippine Army prior to World War II. After the Japanese invasion of the Philippines, Captain Volckmann refused to surrender and instead led a guerilla force of over 20,000 men that carried out operations against the Japanese occupying forces through the end of the war. Later, Volckmann was involved with the formation of SF. See Colonel Eric P. Wendt (U.S. Army), "The Green Beret Volckmann Program: Maximizing the Prevent Strategy," *Special Warfare,* 24, Issue 3, July-August-September 2011, p. 11, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/8888.

[263] Ibid., p. 13.



A French-speaking Army Special Forces soldier with the Joint Special Operations Task Force–Trans Sahara watches as Malian CT forces conduct live-fire training as part of the State Department's Trans-Sahara CT partnership. Future Volckmann-like SOF would use their deep cultural and linguistic experience to embed with partner forces.

Wendt outlines a radically different career path for such operators in which they would undertake three-year PCS assignments—ideally accompanied by their families—to their chosen country, followed by an assignment to a TSOC or an SF group, before returning for another three-year tour to the same country. In this manner, Volckmann operators would further build their country knowledge and relationships.[264] His concept could be expanded beyond SF; all of the Components in USSOCOM could make vital contributions to enhance persistent engagement.

There are several obstacles to creating a cadre of Volckmann-like SOF. First, the personnel policies of the Services tend to view personnel of the same rank and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) to be somewhat interchangeable. While this gives the Services the flexibility required to staff an enormous number of billets, the number of Volckmann-like SOF with proficiency in a particular language and country-focus is extremely limited, and operators with niche language skills and country expertise are far from interchangeable. Second, developing in-depth, country-specific expertise also tends to be career-limiting in today's force. Long-term assignments in a particular country translate into less time in the key staff and command assignments that are typically viewed more favorably by Ser-

[264] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

vice-controlled selection boards.[265] Moreover, Service selection and promotion boards do not value language skills nearly as much as combat skills. Finally, the pool of SOF to support such assignments would draw extensively from mid-grade and senior officers, as their seniority would be needed to interact effectively with high-ranking interagency and foreign interlocutors. These officers, however, are already in short supply and the most capable among them are rarely available for long-duration PCS assignments overseas.

To address these and related issues, Admiral McRaven has established the aforementioned Directorate for Force Management and Development under Major General Sacolick and directed it to make talent management its top priority.[266] Creating specialized SOF like Brigadier General Wendt's Volckmann operators would necessitate selecting candidates early in their careers and establishing non-traditional career tracks that would allow them to return again and again to the same country over a career while retaining the possibility of career advancement. USSOCOM is seeking the support of the Services to "channel" SOF into alternative career tracks and make these tracks more attractive to "entice SOF officers to hone non-traditional skills outside the 'leadership track.'"[267] Service selection and promotion boards would need alternative criteria by which to evaluate such operators, especially as they reach the more senior ranks of O-5/6 where they might otherwise be at a disadvantage against other candidates with greater command or staff experience. USSOCOM should also work with the Services to create a larger pool of field-grade SOF from which to draw officers for sensitive single operator assignments. Again, this may be a tough sell to the Services at a time when some SOF officer ranks are already over their quotas and the Services are seeing their conventional forces contract.

In the upcoming QDR, DoD should direct USSOCOM and the Services to establish a "floating" talent pool to support roughly 500-1,000 additional SOF assignments (in addition to the approximately 1,700 current SOF conducting non-CT missions) for single operator and small team missions. This cadre should be established within USSOCOM's programmed force of 71,000, with the initial manning to be achieved by reallocating billets from reductions in headquarters staffing. In the future, as combat operations in Afghanistan wind down, additional SOF could be added to the pool. Out of the larger pool, roughly two hundred to three hundred operators might serve as forward-based advisors and liaisons in key engagement countries. Another two hundred-fifty could serve as case officers with the nascent Defense Clandestine Service or be detailed to the NCS. The remainder of the pool would comprise SOF slated for long-term assignments to

DoD should direct USSOCOM and the Services to establish a "floating" talent pool to support roughly 500-1,000 additional SOF assignments… for single operator and small team missions.

265 USSOCOM, "2011 Personnel Readiness Assessment," p. 11.

266 U.S. Special Operations Command, Directorate of Force Management and Development, Interdisciplinary Team, PowerPoint Briefing, June-August 2012.

267 USSOCOM, "2011 Personnel Readiness Assessment," p. 11.

advanced educational programs and training schools. Increasingly, SOF's professional military education should emphasize attending foreign educational institutions. This would not only benefit operators educationally, but would also help them gain a deeper understanding of a particular country's military culture and establish lifelong relationships with their foreign counterparts. Finally, the pool should include operators in the advanced language-training pipeline to support all of the above assignments.

Distributed Command and Control

Placing greater emphasis on small teams and single operator missions will also require novel concepts of employment and distributed C2 to oversee and direct far-flung operations and develop country-specific engagement and influence campaign plans. In the past, the C2 of SOF elements in a particular country has been ad hoc and idiosyncratic. JCETs, civil-military engagement teams (CMETs), and MISTs all vied for the attention of the TSOCs, who command every theater SOF mission across all the countries of very large AORs. SOF teams also had no real representation in the country team led by the U.S. ambassador. Consequently, SOF activities were not well integrated with the activities of other agencies and SOF were viewed with suspicion by chiefs of mission who did not sufficiently understand their purpose and sometimes harbored concerns that their activities might jeopardize relations with the host country.

One model for future distributed C2 are sub-regional Special Operations Commands-Forward (SOC FWDs) under the operational control of the TSOCs. Special Operations Command–South (SOCSOUTH) pioneered the concept of the distributed C2 and establishment of SOC FWDs in 2006 to bring additional focus and coherence to address the sub-regional challenges in its AOR.[268] Since that time, SOC FWDs have been extended to other theaters and established in a number of key countries around the world, including Colombia, Yemen, Lebanon, and Pakistan.

SOC FWDs would provide the needed C2 arrangements for persistent engagement. Permanent SOC FWDs would have operational control over all SOF elements within a particular country, unifying both national and theater SOF missions under a single command. While they would be under the operational control of the TSOCs, SOC FWDs would also be part of the U.S. chief of mission's country team to foster collaboration and information sharing while ensuring that SOF activities are nested inside a broader, whole-of-government strategy.

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[268] See Christian M. Averett, Louis A. Cervantes, and Patrick O'Hara, "An Analysis of Special Operations Command – South's Distributive Command and Control Concept," Master of Science in Defense Analysis Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, December 2007, available at http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a475840.pdf.

Each SOC FWD would need to be tailored to the unique needs of a particular country. They could range in size from a handful of operators to several hundred and have different mission emphases.[269] In many respects, SOC FWDs would resemble NCS stations in their scalability and configurability. Like NCS stations, their personnel would include both forward-stationed SOF serving as liaisons, advisers, and case officers, as well as transient SOF operators and teams participating in periodic Civil-Military Support Elements (CMSEs), MISTs, and JCETs.

Improving Language Proficiency

Increasing the emphasis on dispersed long-duration missions conducted by small teams and single operators will place a premium on language proficiency. To establish deep relationships in priority countries with foreign SOF and other military forces, as well as to gain trust and influence, a deep and nuanced faculty with local languages and dialects will be essential. SOF, however, have a long way to go to reach their language objectives. While SOF are often touted for their language skills and regional expertise, the reality is that fewer than 10 percent of today's SOF have even an elementary level of tested language proficiency.[270] There has, however, been significant growth in the number of SOF with recognized language proficiency over the last decade. In FY 2003, there were only about seven hundred SOF who tested at least elementary proficiency in a foreign language. By FY 2013, the number had grown to more than 5,900, vastly out-pacing the doubling of SOF in this same time period.[271] Despite steady progress over the past decade, SOF will have to redouble their efforts in the years ahead to improve language proficiency across the force.

Admiral McRaven has expressed his concern over the lack of language proficiency across the SOF community and has identified key obstacles retarding progress to improve SOF language proficiency.[272] Above all, high PERSTEMPO and repeated deployments have crowded out time for language training and testing. Despite almost continuous operations in the Middle East and South Asia over the past decade, language proficiency for even Arabic and Pashto have deteriorated as SOF reliance on contract interpreters in war zones has increased. Service personnel management policies have also affected language proficiency. Service-run promotion boards tend to place greater weight on traditional warfighting skills rather than language proficiency, creating disincentives for operators to invest

Service-run promotion boards tend to place greater weight on traditional warfighting skills rather than language proficiency.

269 For more on SOC FWDs, see Colonel Jack J. Jensen, "Special Operations Command (Forward)-Lebanon: SOF Campaigning 'Left of the Line,'" *Special Warfare,* 25, Issue 2, April-May-June 2012, pp. 29-30, available at http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/10170.

270 According to USSOCOM, 5,935 SOF out of a total force of 63,000 had at least an elementary level of language proficiency in FY 2013. See U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Directorate of Force Management and Development, "SOCOM DMDC All Languages FY12."

271 Ibid.

272 USSOCOM, "2011 Personnel Readiness Assessment," p. 14.

sufficient time to achieve proficiency.[273] While one of the best ways to improve proficiency in a foreign language often comes from time spent in a given country using the language, promotion boards rarely reward long-term assignments in specific countries instead of time in SOF units or headquarters.

The upcoming QDR offers an opportunity to address these concerns. There are four main areas in which improvements could most help to increase SOF language proficiency:

- *Increase the time available to study languages*. Moving toward a more sustainable PERSTEMPO with predictable deployments would allow operators to insert language training into their home-station time.
- *Create new incentives for gaining language proficiency*. With the Services, USSOCOM should work to establish minimal language requirements for SOF officers, with required retesting throughout their careers. The CIA established language requirements for its Senior Intelligence Service promotion boards; USSOCOM and the Services should consider devising a similar program to accelerate language proficiency across the force.
- *Increase the resources devoted to language training*. USSOCOM should consider providing operators who desire language training with commercially available off-the-shelf language software programs to continue language study on their own. USSOCOM and its Components should also increase the number of evaluators and locations where SOF could be tested for language proficiency.
- *Expand recruiting efforts focused on native speakers*. The Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) program aims to recruit legal immigrants (non-citizens) possessing uncommon foreign language, cultural, and regional skills that would benefit SOF, while expediting the naturalization process for them to become U.S. citizens. This program was suspended in 2010 pending a security review, but restarted in 2012.[274] USSOCOM and the Services should consider further expanding the programs and intensifying their recruiting efforts in future years to expand the diversity within SOF, language proficiency in less familiar and more difficult languages (i.e., non-Romance languages), and regional and cultural expertise.

Aligning Authorities to Meet Future Challenges

The authorities under which SOF operate must also be adapted and made more flexible to support a preventive strategic approach and address a wider range of

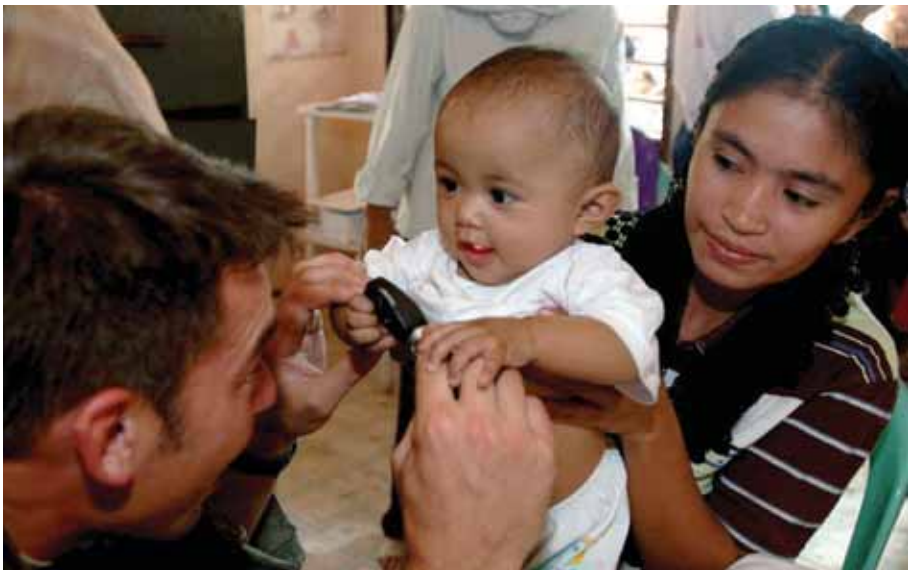
[273] Ibid.

[274] Julia Preston, "Pentagon Reopens Program Allowing Immigrants With Special Skills to Enlist," *New York Times,* October 27, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/28/us/pentagon-reopens-program-allowing-immigrants-with-special-skills-to-enlist.html.

challenges. In an ideal world, Congress, DoD, DoS, and other government departments and agencies would work to create "blanket" authorities for SOF to conduct a wide array of preventive operations such as CT, counter-WMD, SR, and PE across a broad range of theaters. Given concerns regarding oversight and the maintenance of positive control over covert and clandestine operations, Congress is unlikely to grant SOF such blanket authorities. Nevertheless, their authorities should be made more agile, more flexible, and less CT-specific.

Authorities aimed at BPC need to be more agile to support more persistent engagement rather than episodic training missions. JCET authorities, for example, are only granted a year at a time. Ideally, JCET authorities should support multiyear engagements. This campaign approach would enable initial JCETs assessments of foreign forces to determine follow-on BPC training specifically tailored to a country. There is also a need to accept that more of the benefit of JCETs will accrue to the host nation rather than to the SOF that conduct the training, contrary to what the law requires today. The authorities that underpin JCETs stipulate that the principal training benefit should accrue to U.S. SOF rather than the foreign partner security force, thereby limiting its value for BPC. In some regions, for example, more flexible authorities that would allow SOF to shift seamlessly—but still with oversight from DoD, DoS, and Congress—among conducting CT, BPC, and "Phase Zero" operational PE by, with, and through partners would be extremely beneficial. Such BPC activities would help SOF establish a beachhead in critical regions from which they could build strategic relationships and gain access to address a wider range of challenges.

Authorities aimed at BPC need to be more agile to support more persistent engagement rather than episodic training missions.



An Army Special Forces Medical Sergeant attached to the Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines examines a baby as part of a medical civic action project. Non-kinetic, special-warfare missions such as these have been crucial to building deeper trust with local populations and the Philippine government.

Expanding the SOF CT network to increase efforts aimed at preventing the illicit transfer, covert development, or use of WMD will also require new authorities.

BPC authorities should also be widened beyond the narrow prism of CT operations. Since 2001, a number of new authorities have been created to build up the capacity of foreign security forces battling VENs. For example, Section 1204 (formerly Section 1206) of the FY 2012 NDAA authorized and appropriated approximately $350 million per year for training, equipping, and advising foreign military forces for countering terrorism and conducting stability operations. This dual-key authority, however, which requires the concurrence of the DoS, cannot be used for missions such as countering WMD or laying the groundwork for future UW campaigns. Congress authorized the GSCF to address some of the limitations with Sections 1206/1204 and 1208/1203, but did not appropriate funding to support these activities. Instead, DoD and DoS must reprogram money from other accounts to fund operations under this authority. Carving these funds out of the topline budget could become problematic as OCO funding decreases over the next several years and budget cutbacks spur DoD to trim spending wherever it can.

A wide range of future SOF activities including, but not limited to, CT will place greater emphasis on operations in countries with which the United States is not at war to either preclude the possibility of war or set conditions for military success should conflict erupt. Such operations will increasingly take place in the gray areas between peace and war. This shift will push SOF toward covert action, which will necessitate operating under Title 50 authorities. In addition to expanded authorities, these "gray ops" could benefit from more flexible detailing of personnel between the NCS and SOF.

Finally, expanding the SOF CT network to increase efforts aimed at preventing the illicit transfer, covert development, or use of WMD will also require new authorities. Such authorities should be designed to help SOF anticipate future problems and disrupt WMD programs in their early stages. The Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program has the authorities and flexible funding to build partner counter-WMD capacity on a large scale. But CTR has several limitations. For regions, states, or activities for which CTR does not have existing authorities, the approval process is too slow to respond effectively to fast-breaking crises or diffused preventive efforts. As its name implies, the program is grounded in the cooperation of the host nation, but this feature can further complicate the approval process and can increase the challenge of moving personnel and/or equipment into a particular area. CTR relies on civilians and contractors for manpower, which cannot be deployed into high-risk areas or in the immediate aftermath of conflict; yet, this is where they may be needed most to secure WMD and associated materials. Such a scenario may be unfolding in Syria. While SOF can presently operate under GSCF authority to conduct limited, short-notice CT activities, the lack of a similar dedicated counter-WMD authority means that SOF cannot meet emerging requirements in a timely way. A SOF counter-WMD network would benefit from a flexible contingency response capability that can mobilize at the

pace of GSCF but with the proper authorities, WMD expertise, and foundation in partnership that CTR offers.

Addressing Critical SOF Capability Needs

USSOCOM should prioritize developing future capabilities for countering WMD and A2/AD networks.

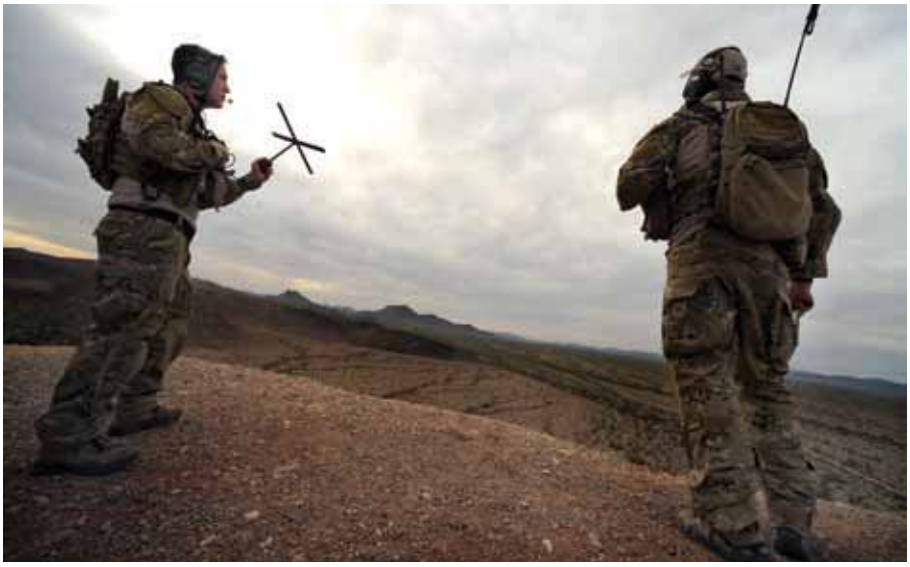
Although "humans are more important than hardware," SOF have traditionally relied on specialized equipment that is not generally available to GPF. Over the past decade, however, the gap between the highly specialized equipment of SOF and that of the conventional forces has narrowed considerably. In many areas, the conventional force is arguably leading the pursuit for new, "game-changing" capabilities. As one senior SOF Component commander explained, "there's no new magic in the pipeline."[275] As SOF move beyond wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is a need for SOF to focus its precious MFP-11 "SOF-peculiar" funding on research and development (R&D) efforts aimed at addressing the challenges described in the previous chapter. In particular, USSOCOM should prioritize developing future capabilities for countering WMD and A2/AD networks, as these are likely to be the most demanding future challenges from a technological standpoint. High-priority capability investments to meet these challenges include:

- *Stealthy Air Transport*. Over the last ten years, SOF have primarily faced adversaries lacking any means to contest the air domain and have therefore benefited from total U.S. air dominance. Future SOF missions, such as supporting major combat operations against an A2/AD opponent, conducting high-risk WMD elimination, and executing UW in a denied environment will likely require new, stealthy air-insertion capabilities. AFSOC's venerable C-130 variants have remained relevant through constant upgrades, sophisticated countermeasures, and advanced tactics. In the future, however, the inherently high signatures of the C-130 platform will render it extremely vulnerable in the face of adversaries with functioning IADS. To fill this capability gap, USSOCOM will need to work with the Services, and particularly the Air Force, to develop a mix of stealthy airlifters and non-standard clandestine aircraft capable of "hiding in plain sight." A modified variant of the Air Force's Long-Range Strike bomber in which the cargo bay is outfitted with a SOF support module might be one means of providing SOF with a stealthy transport capability.
- *Long-Endurance Dry Submersibles*. The undersea domain, much like the air domain, will become less permissive in the future. The proliferation of long-endurance maritime patrol UAVs and affordable commercial off-the-shelf undersea sensor networks could make the future surface and undersea environments far more transparent, thereby putting littoral SOF insertion at risk. In particular, states like Iran and China are likely to maintain

[275] Interview by the authors with a senior SOF commander, March 2012.

close surveillance of their shorelines to deny access. Such anti-access technologies will likely push launch points for undersea SEAL delivery farther out to sea and away from the shore. Consequently, SOF will need quiet, longer-range, dry submersibles to protect them during long transits into and out of A2/AD environments.

- *Special Communications*. To conduct missions in denied environments, SOF will also require new methods of communication that are more difficult to detect or intercept. The key attributes for future SOF communications include range, bandwidth, wide-area coverage, low probability of detection and interception, and resistance to jamming. SATCOM systems are ideal for SOF because they provide global coverage and the ability to operate in remote regions where the United States may have no existing communications infrastructure. Protected SATCOM is particularly well suited for SOF because it uses frequency hopping, spread-spectrum technology in the extremely high frequency (EHF) band, which is difficult to detect, highly secure, and resistant to jamming. In addition to SATCOM, SOF will require covert means to communicate with penetrating aircraft. At present, SOF use ultra-high frequency (UHF) radios such as the AN/PRC-117G to communicate with overhead aircraft. In the future, SOF may require radios that allow them to communicate via stealthy, narrow-beam data links such as the Multi-Function Advanced Data Link (MADL) system currently being outfitted on B-2 and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft.



Combat Controllers from the Air Force's 22nd Special Tactics Squadron communicate with aircraft during a training exercise. Future operations in denied environments will require SOF to develop radios that are more resistant to interception or jamming, and are capable of communicating with penetrating aircraft using stealthy data links.

- *Logistic Support for Remote/Austere Environments.* SOF's small unit sizes and ability to live off the local economy have traditionally made them an inherently small-footprint force. Over the last ten years, however, SOF have become accustomed to a remarkable amount of GPF logistical support in theaters of armed conflict, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. Future operations outside of theaters of armed conflict or in more austere environments may require SOF to reembrace small-footprint, local approaches to combat logistics. While "living off the land" can reduce logistics requirements, it cannot provide everything SOF require, particularly in terms of energy, fuel, and items like munitions and batteries. SOF would benefit from advanced technologies to reduce their logistics demands for these key items. Greater use of solar, wind, and biomass fuel cells could decrease demand for petroleum-based fuel for electrical generators. Advanced battery technologies with greater power density, such as sodium-ion batteries, could likewise decrease strain on logistical support.[276] Keeping SOF supplied with key perishable items in austere forward locations could also require greater use of unmanned supply aircraft and precision air-dropped resupply.

Coalition SOF receive aerial resupply in Afghanistan. Future operations in austere or denied environments will require novel means of logistical support.

[276] Keith Bullis, "Sodium-Ion Cells for Cheap Energy Storage," *Technology Review,* December 2, 2009, available at http://www.technologyreview.com/energy/24043/page1/.

- *Identity Masking*. The war on terror has prompted rapid development and proliferation of biometric technologies such as digital fingerprint and iris scanners. Together with advanced digital networks and interconnected databases, biometric technologies have enabled U.S. forces, and SOF in particular, to better track and identify persons of interest. Unfortunately, the proliferation of this technology designed to prevent terrorists and insurgents from hiding in plain sight has also hampered SOF's ability to operate clandestinely. "Cover" identities and disguises are unable to deceive advanced biometric capabilities. SOF operating clandestinely will therefore require counter-biometrics capabilities to disguise their signatures or deceive biometric sensors.
- *Novel Weapons Systems*. Future special operations could require an array of novel weapons systems. Counter-WMD missions, in particular, may necessitate development of non-lethal weapons designed to cordon off WMD facilities or temporarily incapacitate hostile forces. As one senior SOF commander remarked, "In some cases, you only want to 'kill' an individual for 10 minutes, not eternity."[277] Directed-energy capabilities such as high-power microwave (HPM) emitters could enable SOF to render an adversary "deaf, dumb, and blind" by disabling or degrading electronic equipment such as sensors, computer terminals, or networks.[278] HPM weapons could support focused SOF missions or be used as a piece in a larger "blinding campaign" against an A2/AD adversary. More distributed operations in remote or denied environments may limit SOF's access to persistent, on-call air support. To mitigate this potential shortfall, USSOCOM and the Services should continue developing miniaturized precision-strike capabilities, such as the Advance Precision Kill Weapons System and Viper Strike-based Special Operations Precision Guided Munition (SOPGM) system, and integrate these systems onto both C-130 variants and UAVs.[279]
- *High-Low Mix of UAS*. SOF will need a mix of high- and low-end unmanned aviation capabilities to meet future challenges. This high-low mix should include both non-stealthy, short-range systems for uncontested air environments with adequate basing and stealthy, long-range systems to operate in denied airspace where regional basing is unavailable. The creation of sizeable Predator and Reaper fleets over the past decade, both within AFSOC as well as in the general-purpose Air Force, provides reasonably

277 Interview by the authors with a senior SOF commander, September 2010.

278 See Mark Gunzinger and Chris Dougherty, *Changing the Game: the Promise of Directed-Energy Weapons* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2012), pp. 19-20.

279 For more information on Viper Strike and SOPGM, see "GBU-44 Viper Strike: Death From Above," *Defense Industry Daily,* September 13, 2012, available at http://www.defenseindustry-daily.com/gbu44-viper-strike-death-from-above-03127/.

sufficient UAS coverage for uncontested operations in areas such as Africa. Less permissive air environments in the future, as well as the potential lack of close-in launch and recovery sites in future operating environments, will oblige SOF to place greater emphasis on acquiring stealthy, longer-range systems launched from more distant land-bases, aircraft carriers, or other ships. UAS sensor technologies will also need to be upgraded to meet future demands. In particular, SOF will need high-definition, full-motion video and foliage-penetrating ISR systems to locate and track high-value targets operating in urban areas or jungle environments.

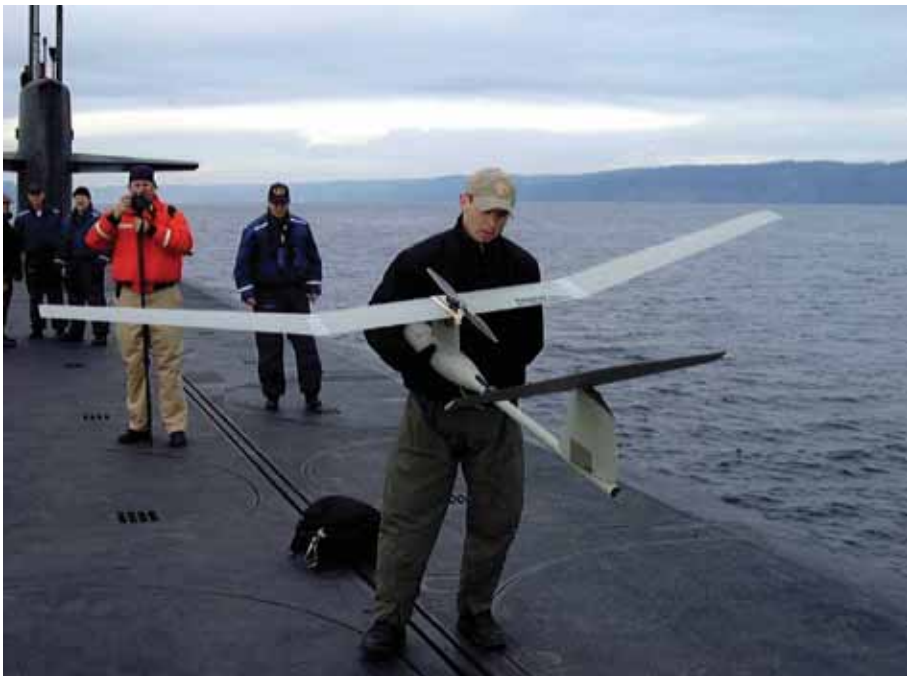
- *Next-Generation Gunship*. By 2018, AC-130 gunships will have been providing close air support to special operations for fifty years. They remain in high demand, with so many forward deployed that they are frequently unavailable for joint exercises in CONUS. Gunships have remained relevant through constant upgrades to their weaponry, sensor packages, and countermeasures, as well as modifications to their TTPs. Recently, new technologies, such as improved range for sensors and precision-strike weapons, have enabled AC-130s to fly daylight missions over Afghanistan.[280] Nevertheless, their high signatures and low airspeeds make AC-130s extremely vulnerable in anything other than extremely permissive environments. Given that SOF will continue to demand armed aerial overwatch and close air support firepower, USSOCOM, AFSOC, and the Air Force should work together to develop a mix of future capabilities capable of operating within denied environments. Such a mix could include cheap, "disposable" UAVs and stealthy, persistent, strike platforms.

To acquire these capabilities, USSOCOM will need to expand its R&D efforts. Funding for SOF-peculiar R&D has actually declined in recent years.[281] R&D should be a major priority for USSOCOM in the years ahead to ensure SOF will have "new magic" and specialized equipment to help keep SOF "special." The benefits of this R&D spending would not just accrue to SOF; in many cases, state-of-the-art technologies are first used by SOF and then migrate to GPF. USSOCOM would also benefit from greater acquisition agility and the ability to reprogram money across accounts to meet critical capability needs. Finally, USSOCOM could offer Services a "test-bed" for new technologies that can then be developed further and procured in large quantities for GPF. This is a potential opportunity for Services to leverage SOF, especially in an age of austerity, for rapid prototyping and testing.

R&D should be a major priority for USSOCOM in the years ahead to ensure SOF will have "new magic" and specialized equipment to help keep SOF "special."

[280] David Axe, "New Tech Lets Special Ops Gunships Hunt All Day," *Wired Danger Room,* November 14, 2012, available at http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/11/gunships-daytime.

[281] USSOCOM's Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) funding has declined from $448 million (actual) to $339.9 million (requested) from FY 2011 to FY 2013. USSOCOM, "USSOCOM FY 2013 Budget Highlights," p. 22.



An Air Force Special Tactics operator prepares to test-launch a small unmanned aerial vehicle from the deck of the guided missile submarine USS *Alabama*. SOF must continue to develop new technologies and novel concepts of operation.

CHAPTER 5 > **CONCLUSION**

Defense planning is difficult in the best circumstances. The future rarely cooperates with attempts at long-range planning. Given the size, complexity, and longevity of U.S. force structure and weapons programs, planning decisions taken today may not bear fruit for many years. In the aftermath of the Cold War, both the 1993 Bottom-Up Review and 1997 QDR shaped and sized the force to fight two nearly simultaneous wars akin to the 1991 Gulf War. And yet, the U.S. military throughout the 1990s found itself embroiled in a series of peacekeeping operations and "operations other than war." President George W. Bush came into office in 2001 determined to avoid "nation-building," only to find his administration consumed by such activities in Iraq and Afghanistan. Similarly, the Pentagon embraced stability operations in the 2006 and 2010 QDRs, only to reverse course with the 2012 DSG, which concluded that "U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations" and instead called for "rebalancing" toward the Asia-Pacific region.[282] These changes in the direction of defense show how events conspire again and again against the best-laid plans.

Historically, the Pentagon's answer to such uncertainty has been to hedge its bets by keeping all manner of forces at the ready to cope with strategic surprise. Tightening defense budgets, however, may limit the range of hedges DoD is able to maintain. For less than the cost of a single aircraft carrier, SOF confer the ultimate hedge capability, expanding the president's options to deal with the unforeseeable with broader applicability than any other force across the widest range of contingencies.[283]

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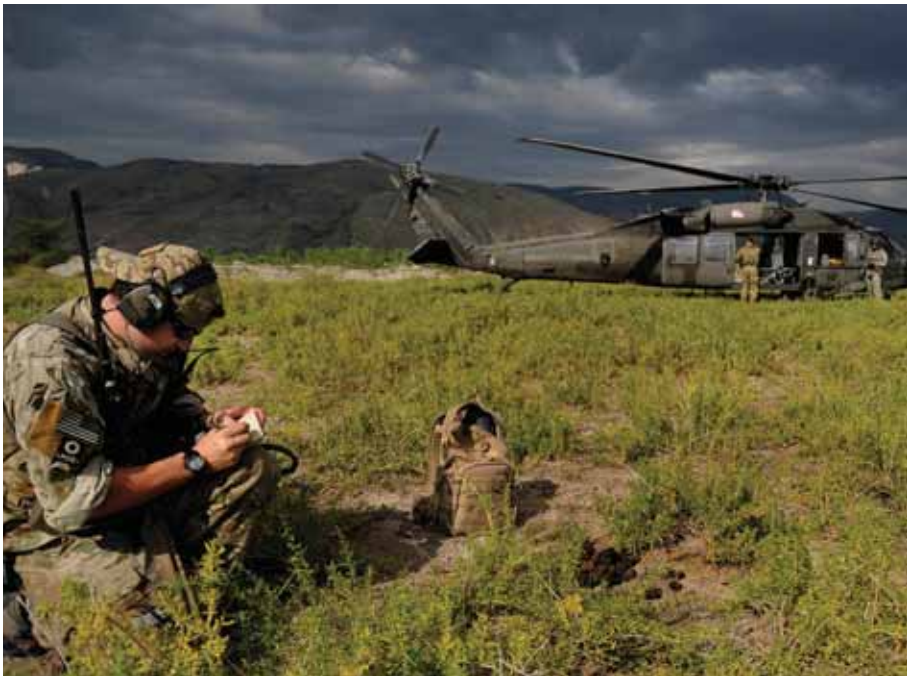
[282] U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2012), p. 6.

[283] The first-in-class *Gerald Ford* will cost roughly $12.3 billion according to the Navy's FY 2013 estimates, while the second-in-class *John F. Kennedy* will cost approximately $11.4 billion. See Dan Parsons, "Budget Crunch Could Jeopardize New Carrier Procurement," *National Defense,* September 2012, available at http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/archive/2012/september/Pages/BudgetCrunchCouldJeopardizeNewCarrierProcurement.aspx.

SOF have amply demonstrated their ability to adapt through their operational successes and institutional changes over the past decade. The raid that killed Osama bin Laden demonstrated the unique "eyes-on" surgical-strike capability in denied environments that only SOF can provide. But ultimately, it is their ability to conduct special operations by, with, and through partners that truly allows SOF to punch above their strategic weight. SOF's ability to form agile networks, build partner capacity, and conduct operations that localize problems and prevent them from escalating should only increase their value as a hedge force in the years ahead.

The 20th century "American Way of War," which emphasized long-range conventional power projection, forward basing, mass, and attrition may be yielding to a new pattern of operations characterized by dispersion, stealth, non-kinetic actions, and enabling partners.[284] It would place a premium on low-signature forces with light logistics footprints capable of operating far forward independently across the continuum of military operations from peace to war. Such forces offer the most viable options for future power projection.



An Air Force Special Tactics operator surveys a landing zone during Operation Unified Response. SOF's ability to operate beyond the ramparts in both peace and war will remain in high demand well into the future.

[284] Russell Weigley first coined the term "the American Way of War." See Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington, IL: Indiana University Press, 1973).

Throughout history, states have needed forces capable of operating "beyond the ramparts" in both peace and war. Long before the United States was a nation, units such as Rogers' Rangers conducted UW working by, with, and through Native American tribes against the French and their tribal allies. Since that time, the U.S. military's development of unconventional, irregular, and "special" operating forces has followed a remarkably consistent pattern: rapid growth to meet the exigencies of war, followed by precipitous post-war demobilizations, and then hurried attempts to rebuild forces in response to the next crisis.[285] The end of World War II saw the elimination of the OSS and the Ranger Battalions, only to be followed by the creation of the CIA and SF as the Cold War intensified. Vietnam saw massive increases in SOF capacity, a quick post-war drawdown, and disorganized attempts to rebuild SOF capacity in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The failure of Operation Eagle Claw in Iran (1980) and the continuing coordination issues during Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada (1983) led to the creation of USSOCOM in 1987 for the purposes of organizing and sustaining the development of SOF for the long term. Similarly, SOF suffered reductions in their numbers following the end of the Cold War along with their conventional counterparts.

Throughout history, states have needed forces capable of operating "beyond the ramparts" in both peace and war.

SOF are now poised to break free of this pattern of waxing in war and waning in peace. In a reversal of historical patterns, SOF are expected to continue growing in the aftermath of war while conventional forces are shrinking. Furthermore, while some U.S. administrations—notably that of President John F. Kennedy—emphasized the value of SOF in peace, war, and the grey area in between, never before have SOF been the *preferred* instrument of American military power. SOF's new status as one of DoD's "crown jewels," and their central role in the emerging 21st century Way of War make it absolutely imperative that DoD retain the SOF capabilities that it has built since 9/11.

To fully capitalize on this investment, SOF cannot simply maintain the status quo. They must constantly adapt and redefine themselves, while maintaining the core human characteristics that make them "special." In the next QDR, DoD and USSOCOM must reshape, reorient, and re-posture SOF to meet future challenges such as the metastasis of VENs outside theaters of armed conflict, WMD proliferation and the potential for WMD terrorism, the emergence of A2/AD networks in the Persian Gulf and East Asian littorals, and the return of great-power competition and proxy conflicts. At the same time, SOF must retain their trademark adaptability so as to provide the president with the broadest set of options for the inevitable moment when the best-laid plans go awry.

[285] This pattern is in large part the inspiration behind the fourth SOF Truth: "Competent SOF cannot be created quickly after emergencies occur."

CHAPTER 6 > APPENDIX: OVERVIEW OF US SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Information presented in this appendix is derived from United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), *U.S. Special Operations Command Fact Book 2013,* (Tampa, FL: USSOCOM, 2012).

United States Special Operations Command

United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM, or SOCOM) is a Unified Combatant Command tasked with providing fully capable special operations forces to defend the United States and its interests and with synchronizing the planning of global operations against terrorist networks. Established in 1987, USSOCOM is both an operational combatant command and a provider of forces (Theater SOF) to the Geographic Combatant Commands. All told, USSOCOM oversees some 63,000 personnel, most of which are provided by the four Service components and Joint Special Operations Command, described below. Approximately 2,500 personnel staff the USSOCOM headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida.

United States Army Special Operations Command

United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) is the largest component within USSOCOM. Headquartered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, USASOC comprises approximately 28,500 personnel. In addition to headquarters and support services, it fields the following major Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) units:

- The **1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 10th** (Active Component) and **19th and 20th** (National Guard) **Special Forces Groups**, each of which has a regional focus and is composed of "Green Berets" with a combination of tactical and cultural knowledge and skills that make them experts at conducting special warfare;

Rangers from the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment conduct a raid on the house of a suspected Taliban facilitator.

- The **75th Ranger Regiment**, an elite airborne light infantry force specializing in direct-action missions varying in scale from squad-sized raids to battalion-sized airfield seizures;
- The **160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment**, which operates the MH-6, MH-60, and MH-47 helicopters employed in special operations;
- The **95th Civil Affairs Brigade**, which specializes in interacting with local populations and conducting civil-military operations such as humanitarian assistance;
- The **4th and 8th Military Information Support Operations Brigades**, which develop, produce, and disseminate information to foreign audiences; and
- The **528th Sustainment Brigade,** which provides logistical, medical, and communications support to Army special operations.

United States Air Force Special Operations Command

United States Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) is the second largest component within USSOCOM. Headquartered at Hurlburt Field, Florida, AFSOC comprises approximately 18,000 personnel. In addition to headquarters and support services, it fields the following major Air Force Special Operations Forces (AFSOF) units:

- The **1st and 27th Special Operations Wings**, which comprises a number of Special Operations Squadrons that operate the manned and unmanned, fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft used for ISR, infiltration and exfiltration, search and rescue, resupply, refueling, gunship support, and military information support operations and provide combat aviation advisors to partner forces;

- The **24th Special Operations Wing**, which comprises a number of Special Tactics Squadrons of **Combat Controllers** (CCTs) who control air traffic and air support employed in special operations and **Special Operations Weathermen** who collect and assess meteorological information in hostile and denied environments;
- The **352nd and 353rd Special Operations Groups**, which provide fixed- and rotary-wing transport to special operations commands in Europe and the Pacific, respectively;
- The **361st Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group**, which provides ISR support to Air Force Special Operations Forces; and
- **Pararescuemen** ("PJs") who, assigned to a number of rescue companies, treat and evacuate casualties and recover friendly personnel from dangerous situations.

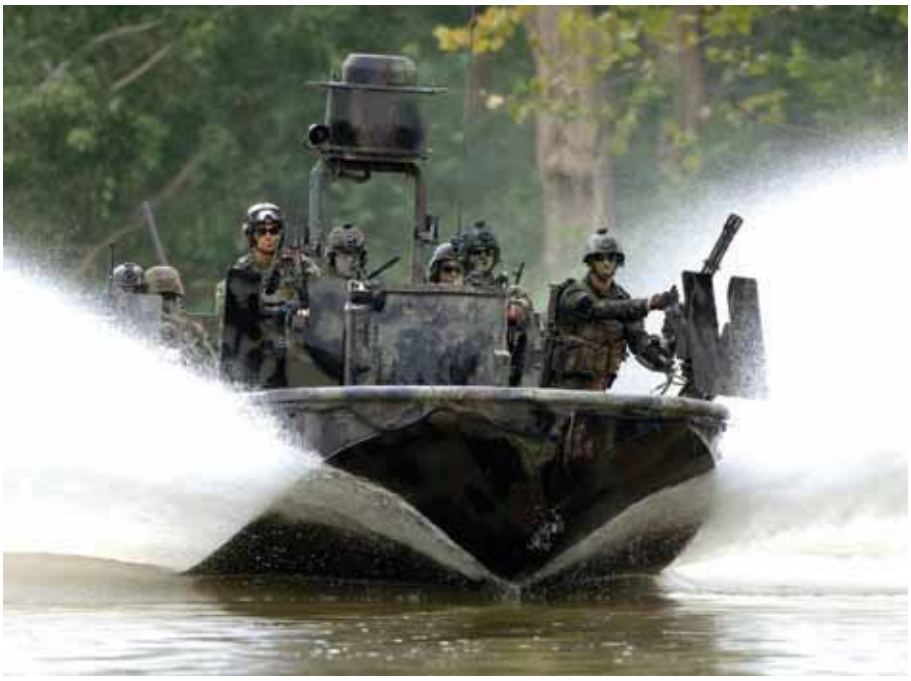
Naval Special Warfare Command

Naval Special Warfare Command (NSW, NAVSPECWARCOM, or WARCOM) has approximately 8,900 personnel and is headquartered in Coronado, California. In addition to headquarters and support services, WARCOM fields the following major Navy Special Operations Forces (NAVSOF) units:

- **SEAL Teams 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 10** (Active Component) and **17 and 18** (Reserve) composed of **Navy SEALs** who specialize in surgical-strike missions, especially in maritime environments or involving insertion by sea;
- **Special Boat Teams 12, 20, and 22**, composed of **Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen** (SWCCs) who operate the small, fast surface craft that provide SEALs with infiltration, exfiltration and maritime mobility; and
- Enablers who provide logistics, maintenance, communications, and other essential support.

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) was established in 2006 and remains the youngest and smallest component with SOCOM. Headquartered at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, MARSOC has since grown to comprise roughly 2,600 personnel.



Navy Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewmen conduct a live-fire exercise aboard a Special Operations Craft-Riverine.

In addition to headquarters and support services, it fields the following major Marine Special Operations Forces (MARSOF) unit:

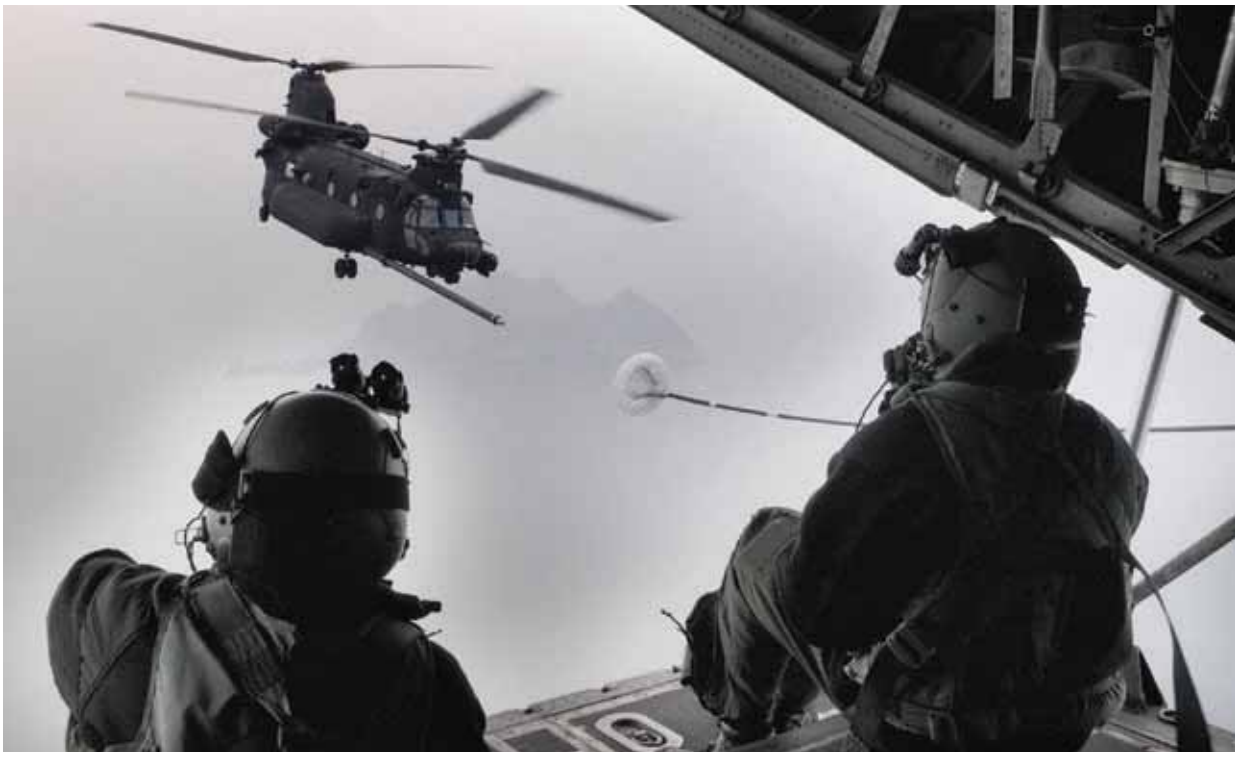
- The **Marine Special Operations Regiment (MSOR)** comprises three battalions composed of **Critical Skills Operators** (CSOs) who conduct direct action, special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, and unconventional warfare and **Special Operations Capabilities Specialists** (SOCS) who provide explosive ordnance disposal, dog handling, intelligence, and other essential support.

Joint Special Operations Command

Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) is a sub-unified command located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. JSOC's role is to "study special operations requirements and techniques, ensure interoperability and equipment standardization, plan and conduct special operations exercises and training, and develop joint special operations tactics."[286] JSOC personnel include "an impressive amalgamation of rigorously screened Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians."[287]

286 USSOCOM, *U.S. Special Operations Command Fact Book 2013,* p. 22.

287 Ibid.



An Air Force MC-130P Combat Shadow refuels an MH-47 Chinook from the Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment during operations near the Korean Peninsula.

CHAPTER 7 > **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

Terms marked with an asterisk are explained in the glossary.

A2/AD	Anti-Access / Area-Denial*
AC-130	"Spectre," "Spooky," or "Stinger II" gunship
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AFSB	Afloat Forward Staging Base
AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
AFSOF	Air Force Special Operations Forces
ALP	Afghan Local Police
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ARSOAC	Army Special Operations Aviation Command
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
ASAT	Anti-Satellite (weapons)
ASCM	Anti-Ship Cruise Missile
ASDS	Advanced Seal Delivery System
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
BPC	Building Partner Capacity
BUD/S	Basing Underwater Demolition / SEAL (training)
C-130	"Hercules" transport aircraft
C2	Command and Control
C4ISR	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance*
CA	Civil Affairs*

CAMPLAN	Campaign Plan
CAP	Combined Action Plan
CASEVAC	Casualty Evacuation
CAT	Civil Affairs Team
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear
CCT	Combat Controller
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIF	Commander's In-Extremis Force*
CMET	Civil-Military Engagement Team
CMSE	Civil-Military Support Element
COCOM	Combatant Command
COIN	Counterinsurgency*
CONUS	Continental United States
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support
CN	Counternarcotics
CSAR	Combat Search and Rescue
CSO	Critical Skills Operator
CT	Counterterrorism*
CTR	Cooperative Threat Reduction
D3A	Decide, Detect, Deliver, Assess
DCS-M	Dry Combat Submersible-Medium
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
DSG	Defense Strategic Guidance
EHF	Extremely High Frequency (radio)
ELINT	Electronic Intelligence
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Demolition
F3EAD	Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze, Disseminate
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FED	Foreign External Defense
FID	Foreign Internal Defense*
FORGEN	Force Generation
FY	Fiscal Year
FYDP	Future Years Defense Program
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GPF	General Purpose Forces*
GSCF	Global Security Contingency Fund*
GTEP	Global Train and Equip Program
HIG	Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin
HPM	High Power Microwave
IADS	Integrated Air Defense System
IATF	Inter-Agency Task Force
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance*
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training*
JIATF	Joint Inter-Agency Task Force*
JMMS	Joint Multi-Mission Submersible
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force*
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines
JTAC	Joint Terminal Attack Controller*
KASOTC	King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center
LOC	Line of Communication
MADL	Multifunction Advanced Data Link
MARSOC	Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command
MARSOF	Marine Special Operations Forces
MAVNI	Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest
MFP	Major Force Program*
MH-47	“Chinook” heavy-lift transport helicopter
MH-60	“Black Hawk” medium-lift utility helicopter
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MISO	Military Information Support Operations*
MIST	Military Information Support Team
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
MSOB	Marine Special Operations Battalion
MSOR	Marine Special Operations Regiment
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAVSOF	Navy Special Operations Forces
NAVSPECWARCOM	Naval Special Warfare Command
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NCS	National Clandestine Service
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act

NSCC	NATO SOF Coordination Center
NSHQ	NATO SOF Headquarters
NSW	Naval Special Warfare*
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OCO	Overseas Contingency Operations*
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha (“A-Team”)
OEF-P	Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPCON	Operational Control
OPTEMPO	Operational Tempo*
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PACOM	U.S. Pacific Command
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
PE	Preparation of the Environment*
PED	Processing, Exploitation, Dissemination *
PERSTEMPO	Personnel Tempo*
PJ	Pararescueman
PNP	Philippine National Police
POTFF	Preservation of the Forces and Families
PSI	Proliferation Security Initiative
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
R&D	Research and Development
RASP	Ranger Assessment and Selection Program
RIP	Ranger Indoctrination Program
ROP	Ranger Orientation Program
RSCC	Regional SOF Coordination Center
SATCOM	Satellite Communications
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SDV	SEAL Delivery Vehicle
SEAL	Sea, Air, Land
SF	Special Forces
SFA	Security Force Assistance*
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SMU	Special Mission Unit*
SOAR	Special Operations Aviation Regiment
SOC FWD	Special Operations Command, Forward
SOCCENT	Special Operations Command, Central

SOCOM	Special Operations Command
SOCS	Special Operations Capabilities Specialists
SOCSOUTH	Special Operations Command, South
SOF	Special Operations Forces*
SOFORGEN	Special Operations Force Generation
SOJTF-A	Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan
SO-Peculiar	Special Operations-Peculiar*
SOPGM	Special Operations Precision Guided Munition
SOS	Special Operations Squadron
SOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
SR	Special Reconnaissance*
SSE	Sensitive Site Exploitation*
ST	Special Tactics
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
SWCC	Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman
TSCP	Theater Security Cooperation Plan
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command*
TTL	Tag, Track, Locate
TTP	Tactic, Technique, and Procedure
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft System
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UHF	Ultra-High Frequency (radio)
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USARC	U.S. Army Reserve Command
USASFC	U.S. Army Special Forces Command
USASOC	U.S. Army Special Operations Command
USSOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare*
VBSS	Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure
VEN	Violent Extremist Network*
VSO	Village Stability Operations*
WARCOM	Naval Special Warfare Command
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction*

CHAPTER 8 > **GLOSSARY**

Doctrinal definitions are presented verbatim and denoted by quotation marks.

Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD) – Adjective applied to capabilities, forces, and strategies that are intended to prevent an adversary from entering a theater of operations (anti-access) and operating effectively within it (area-denial). China and Iran are often cited as leaders in the development of such capabilities, forces, and strategies.

C4ISR – Command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. The collection of military systems used to gather, process, and share information.

Civil Affairs (CA) Operations - Military operations that "enhance the relationship between military forces and civil authorities in localities where military forces are present; require coordination with other interagency organizations, intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, indigenous populations and institutions, and the private sector; and involve application of functional specialty skills that normally are the responsibility of civil government to enhance the conduct of civil-military operations." (JP 3-57)

Clandestine Operations – "Operation[s] sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of identity of the sponsor. In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine and may focus equally on operational considerations and intelligence-related activities." (JP 3-05.1)

Commander's In-Extremis Force (CIF) – Special operations unit kept on standby to respond to crises in which direct-action skills might be needed (e.g., counterterrorism, hostage rescue). Each Geographic Combatant Command has one CIF at its disposal, typically a specially trained Special Forces company.

Conventional Forces – "Those forces capable of conducting operations using non-nuclear weapons. [And] [t]hose forces other than designated special operations forces." (JP 3-05) Also known as general-purpose forces (GPF).

Counterinsurgency (COIN) – "Comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances." (JP 3-24)

Counterproliferation (CP) – "Actions taken to defeat the threat and/or use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States, our forces, friends, allies, and partners." (JP 3-40)

Counterterrorism (CT) – "Actions taken directly against terrorist networks and indirectly to influence and render global and regional environments inhospitable to terrorist networks." (JP 3-26)

Denied Environments – Areas into which projecting influence and/or military power is extremely difficult due to geographical factors and/or adversary capabilities.

Direct Action (DA) – "Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or diplomatically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets." (JP 3-05)

Enablers – Personnel, forces, and capabilities that provide essential support to special operations, such as intelligence, logistics, medical treatment, and transport.

End Strength – The maximum number of personnel a military organization is authorized to have (specifically, at the end of the fiscal year).

F3EAD – Find, fix, finish, exploit, analyze, disseminate. The network-based targeting approach developed since 9/11 to closely integrate operational and intelligence functions.

Force Generation (FORGEN) – The process by which forces are made ready and available for deployment. The force generation process for SOF, called SOFORGEN, is still under development and will be finalized in 2013.

Foreign Internal Defense (FID) – "Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security." (JP 3-22)

Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) – A pool of money, authorized (but not appropriated) by Section 1207 of the National Defense Authorization Act, that is created by reprogramming funds from other budgets within Department of Defense and the Department of State. These jointly administered monies are used to provide resources for flexibly engaging and supporting foreign military and security forces.

General Purpose Forces (GPF) - The armed forces of a country not including nuclear forces and SOF. These forces often include units and personnel that support and enable SOF, but are not included in the latter.

Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) – A Unified Combatant Command with responsibility for conducting military operations within a given region. The six GCCs are: NORTHCOM (North America), SOUTHCOM (the Caribbean, Central, and South America, EUCOM (Europe, Russia, and Israel), AFRICOM (Africa, less Egypt), CENTCOM (the Middle East and Central Asia), and PACOM (India, East Asia and Southeast Asia, Oceania, and the Pacific).

High-Demand/Low-Density – Description applied to forces and assets that are greatly desired by field commanders but are not available in sufficient quantity to meet demand. High-demand/low-density forces and assets typically must endure high operational and personnel tempo.

ISR – Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and, by extension, the forces and systems that provide them (e.g., MQ-1 Predator UAVs).

Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) – "A program conducted overseas to fulfill US forces training requirements and at the same time exchange the sharing of skills between US forces and host nation counterparts." (JP 3-05) Typically involves small groups of U.S. SOF conducting short-duration exercises with partner forces.

Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) – A task force composed of DoD personnel and interagency partners.

Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) – "A joint task force composed of special operations units from more than one service, formed to carry out a specific special operation or prosecute special operations in support of a theater campaign or other operations." (JP 3-05) The joint special operations task force may have conventional units assigned or attached to support the conduct of specific missions.

Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) – "A qualified (certified) Service member who, from a forward position, directs the action of combat aircraft engaged in close air support and other offensive air operations. A qualified and current joint terminal attack controller will be recognized across the Department of Defense as capable and authorized to perform terminal attack control." (JP 3-09.3)

Kinetic Operations – An unofficial term typically used to refer to military operations focused on the application of violence; it is roughly synonymous with direct action. Used in apposition to non-kinetic or "indirect" operations such as training and advising, civil affairs, and military information support.

Major Force Program-11 (MFP-11) – Major Force Programs are aggregations of program elements within the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) according to the forces and missions they support. MFP-11 is the aggregation of funding that is provided to Special Operations Command to address requirements that are SOF-peculiar in nature.

Military Information Support Operations (MISO) – "Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives." (JP 3-13.2)

National SOF – Special operations forces that, unlike Theater SOF, are not subordinate to theater commanders, but rather carry out national missions, such as direct-action counterterrorism, at the behest of the president or secretary of defense. Also called Special Mission Units or "Black" SOF.

Naval Special Warfare (NSW) – "A naval warfare specialty that conducts special operations with an emphasis on maritime, coastal, and riverine environments using small, flexible, mobile units operating under, on, and from the sea." (JP 3-05)

Operations Tempo (OPTEMPO) – "The rate at which units of the armed forces are involved in all military activities, including contingency operations, exercises, and training deployments." (10 USC Sec. 991)

Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) – Term used to refer to post-9/11 military operations and their budgeting requirements, as distinguished from peacetime or base operations and budgeting requirements.

Personnel Tempo (PERSTEMPO) – Often expressed in terms of "deploy to dwell" or "BOG (boots-on-ground)-dwell" ratios comparing the number of years personnel spend deployed (for combat, training, or education) to the number of years spent at home. For example, a deployed to dwell ratio of 1:2 indicates that personnel spend two years at home for every year deployed.

Preparation of the Environment (PE) – "An umbrella term for operations and activities conducted by selectively trained special operations forces to develop an environment for potential future special operations." (JP 3-05)

Preservation of the Force and Families (POTFF) – Initiative by USSOCOM to maintain the health and wellness of special operators and their families.

Processing, Exploitation, and Dissemination (PED) – The three-stage process by which collected information is converted to useful intelligence.

Proxy War – A war in which one or more belligerents is supported by outside powers that are not themselves directly involved in the fighting.

Render Safe – "The interruption of functions or separation of essential components of unexploded explosive ordnance [including, perhaps most critically, weapons of mass destruction] to prevent an unacceptable detonation." (JP 3-15.1)

Section 1204 (Formerly Section 1206) – Section of the National Defense Authorization Act that authorizes the Global Train and Equip Program (GTEP) and thereby provides the funding SOF use to train and equip foreign military and security forces for counterterrorism operations and to facilitate their participation in and support of U.S. counterterrorism and stability operations.

Section 1207 – The section of the National Defense Authorization Act that authorizes the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) and transitional funding authorities.

Section 1203 (Formerly Section 1208) – The section of the National Defense Authorization Act that authorizes "support of military operations to combat terrorism" and thereby provides funding needed by SOF to support foreign regular and irregular forces supporting or facilitating U.S. counterterrorism operations.

Security Force Assistance (SFA) – "Activities that contribute to unified action by the US Government to support the development of the capacity and capability of foreign security forces and their supporting institutions." (JP 3-22)

Special Activities – "Activities conducted in support of national foreign policy objectives that are planned and executed so that the role of the US Government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly. They are also functions in support of such activities but are not intended to influence US political processes, public opinion, policies, or media and do not include diplomatic activities or the collection and production of intelligence or related support functions." (JP 3-05)

Special Operations-Peculiar (SO-Peculiar) – Adjective describing "equipment, material, supplies, and services required for special operations missions for which there is no Service-common requirement." (JP 3-05) SO-peculiarity is important in budgeting, as SO-peculiar requirements must be funded with Major Force Program-11 funding from USSOCOM.

Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) – Activities conducted in the wake of operations to exploit captured personnel, documents, electronic data, and material.

Special Forces (SF) – "U.S. Army forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare capabilities." (JP 3-05) Also known as "Green Berets" after their distinctive headgear.

Special Mission Unit (SMU) – "A generic term to represent a group of operators and support personnel from designated organizations that are task-organized to perform highly classified activities." (JP 3-05.1) Also called "National" or "Black" SOF.

Special Operations – "Operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with and/or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and/or a high degree of risk." (JP 3-05)

Special Operations Forces (SOF) – "Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations." (JP 3-05)

Special Reconnaissance (SR) – "Reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces." (JP 3-05)

Special Warfare – "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." (ADP 3-05)

Stability Operations – "An overarching term encompassing various military missions, tasks and activities conducted outside the United States in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or re-establish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction and humanitarian relief." (JP 3-0)

Surgical Strike – "The execution of activities in a precise manner that employ special operations forces in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover or damage designated targets, or influence threats." (ADP 3-05)

Theater SOF – SOF that, unlike National SOF, are under the operational control of the GCCs and are directly commanded and controlled by a Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC).

Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) – "A subordinate unified command established by a combatant commander to plan, coordinate, conduct, and support joint special operations." (JP 3-05)

Unconventional Warfare (UW) – "Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area." (JP 3-05)

Village Stability Operations (VSO) – Operations conducted by SOF in Afghanistan to gain the trust of village elders, build local security capacity, strengthen local civilian institutions and infrastructure, and effectively convey information about these efforts to target populations.

Violent Extremist Networks (VENs) – Non-state networks of individuals and small groups, including but not limited to al Qaeda and associated movements, that pose a national security threat due to the combination of their extreme ideology, clandestine operations, network organization, and their capacity for violence.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) – "Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons capable of a high order of destruction or causing mass casualties and exclude the means of transporting or propelling the weapon where such means is a separable and divisible part from the weapon." (JP 3-40)

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