Force Multiplier

Utilization of SOF from a Small State Perspective

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Editors

FORCE MULTIPLIER:

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INTRODUCTION

Colonel (retired) Bernd Horn and Colonel (retired) Hans Ilis-Alm

The military has always been a key instrument of national power. Its strategic utility for defending the nation and furthering the national interest using direct military force or by assisting friends, allies, coalitions and/or international organizations has earned it a voice in national security policy formulation and implementation. The three traditional services, the Navy, Army and Air Force, have for a long time been recognized as key players in this strategic context. Special Operations Forces (SOF), however, do not share this long history.

Historically, SOF have always filled a gap in times of crisis. They have been relied on, due to their innovation and pragmatic approach to operational challenges, to solve new and unexpected events or buy time for the larger conventional force to adapt and respond. However, on completion of the crisis, SOF have normally been shunted to the margins of their national military institutions.

This state of affairs seemingly changed. As a result of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001 (9/11) and the subsequent military campaigns across the globe, as well as the ambiguous, complex and volatile security environment, SOF have become a predominant military asset for national governments. This reality has led renown strategist, Colin Gray, to conclude that "special operations forces are a national grand-strategic asset: they are a tool of statecraft that can be employed quite surgically in support of diplomacy, of foreign assistance (of several kinds), as a vital adjunct to regular military forces, or as an independent weapon."[1]

In fact, the new millennium has proven Gray correct and it has changed much of the old paradigm. The ascendency of SOF in the post 9/11 security environment, where SOF has played key roles in the counter-insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as in the "war on terror," has caused scholars, military analysts and practitioners to generate new concepts to describe SOF's strategic relevance and saliency, namely, "Force of Choice" and "SOF Power."

In particular, the concept of SOF Power refers to the strategic effect SOF can achieve through the exercise of a wide range of specialized military and paramilitary activities that support national security and foreign policy objectives. It also reflects an evolution in the contemporary operating environment (COE) and the critical role that SOF plays within it. In essence, SOF have derived their "power" from their ability to provide their governments with specific capabilities (i.e., very well-trained and capable personnel and a wide spectrum of operational options) as well as precision effects, at a relatively low cost (i.e., in terms of fiscal expenditure and potential national commitment, as well as casualties, which is especially important in response to the sensitivity of Western societies regarding the loss of life). As a result, SOF has evolved from its historic fringe of acceptance in military institutions to a place of prominence. Importantly, SOF cannot take this change for granted and must always endeavor to prove its saliency.

Nonetheless, not surprisingly then, most countries maintain a SOF component as part of their military capability. For the purposes of this volume, SOF are defined as "organizations containing specially selected personnel that are organized, equipped and trained to conduct high-risk, high value special operations to achieve military, political, economic or informational objectives by using special and unique operational methodologies in hostile, denied or politically sensitive areas to achieve desired tactical, operational and/or strategic effects in times of peace, conflict or war."[2]

It is not difficult to understand why most governments and militaries have come to embrace SOF capability. Afterall, SOF can provide governments:

1. High readiness, low profile, task-tailored Special Operation Task Forces (SOTFs) and/or SOF Teams that can be deployed rapidly, over long distances and provide tailored proportional responses to a myriad of different situations;

2. Highly trained technologically enabled forces that can gain access to hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas;

3. Discrete forces that can provide discriminate precise kinetic and non-kinetic effects;

4. A deployed capable and internationally recognized force, yet with a generally lower profile and less intrusive presence than larger conventional forces;

5. An economy of effort foreign policy implement that can be used to assist coalition and/or allied operations;

6. A rapidly deployable force that can assess and survey potential crisis areas or hot spots to provide "ground truth" and situational awareness for governmental decision makers;

7. A highly trained, specialized force capable of providing a response to ambiguous, asymmetric, unconventional situations that fall outside of the capabilities of law enforcement agencies (LEA), conventional military or other government departments (OGDs);

8. A force capable of operating globally in austere, harsh and dangerous environments with limited support. SOF are largely self-contained and can communicate worldwide with organic equipment and can provide limited medical support for themselves and those they support;

9. A culturally attuned SOTF or SOF team that can act as a force multiplier through the ability to work closely with regional civilian and military authorities and organizations, as well as populations through Defence, Diplomacy and Military Assistance (DDMA)/ Security Force Assistance (SFA) initiatives;

10. A force capable of preparing and shaping environments or battle spaces (i.e., setting conditions to mitigate risk and facilitate successful introduction of follow-on forces); and

11. A force able to foster inter-agency and inter-departmental cooperation.

SOF's popularity in the new millennium has spawned a massive plethora of information and media on SOF. However, the vast amount of the SOF body of knowledge regarding employment, utility, doctrine, organization, case studies, etc., is based on American, and to a lesser extent British, SOF. Few countries have the resources or military infrastructure to support large SOF organizations or to replicate U.S. SOF capabilities. As such, the utilization of SOF, for the vast majority of Western, NATO and/or partner nations, requires a different lens through which to examine the employment of SOF. For small states (defined for the sake of this publication as any state that is not considered a large state/great power) SOF organization,

commitment and engagement must be driven by specific factors integral to respective small state circumstances and realities.

In essence, SOF have been able to offer decision-makers a myriad of timely, precise and tailored options in response to complex, chaotic and ambiguous national security challenges. The high readiness posture, small footprint, skill level and deployability of Special Operations Task Forces and SOF Teams allow for a rapid and determined response, domestically or internationally.

Importantly, SOF have consistently proven to be a strategic resource that provide political and military decision-makers with a wide range of precise kinetic and non-kinetic options to deter, pre-empt, disrupt, react or shape strategic or operational effects domestically or abroad. Additionally, SOF have provided small states with the ability to contribute a military contingent to larger coalitions that is not large in size or cost but delivers a recognizable and valued inject that passes the acid test of reality in terms of participating in international operations.

But once again, small states and their SOF have limitations due to size, training, experience and resources. Their employment must factor in those considerations. Copying American or British SOF may not always be the answer. A specific small state perspective must always be used to determine the best way forward. Moreover, political and military decision-makers must have the courage to use SOF in ways that have been unthinkable in the past (e.g., manhunting, domestic/internal security matters). As the threat(s) evolve both domestically and internationally, circumstances will challenge traditional concepts and thinking, as well as existing legalities. For most small states, the focus is reactive with an emphasis on defensive strategies. However, this approach may no longer be possible in the era of strategic competition and gray zone warfare.

For all these reasons, this volume specifically examines the utilization of SOF from a small state perspective. It embraces the capabilities and potential of SOF, while maintaining a lens that also factors in the limitations of smaller militaries and the concomitant personnel and resource issues that accompany reality of scale.

CHAPTER 1

SOF STRATEGIC RELEVANCE: DISCIPLINED BY REALITY

Lieutenant-General (retired) D. Michael Day

Strategic impact[1] is a much sought after objective for Special Operations Forces (SOF) around the world. In various ways we communicate this, highlighting the capability "to achieve strategic effect" designed for "when extra fidelity is required"[2] and other such similar language. SOF embodies strategist Colin Gray's dictum that "There can be no necessarily strategic action, because strategic quality only lies in the consequences of (tactical) behaviour.[3] But how is that achieved and how are the missions and capability sets within national SOF organizations determined, and constantly adjusted, to ensure they are in fact strategic and more importantly, strategically relevant to the needs of their nation? In smaller states who have more limited resources but still retain an imperative to engage on the international scene maintaining strategic relevance, the judicious employment of SOF elements provides a tailor-made opportunity.

Like all military members, those in the Special Operations community come with strengths and weaknesses. One characteristic is a belief that we see things as they are and propose solutions and or engagements accordingly. On a positive note, this allows for a laser-like focus, rapid innovation and the employment of individuals who are remarkably adept at finding a way to achieve a desired impact on the ground. The downside of such clarity of view is that there is sometimes a tendency to believe that this clarity of vision and perspective is singular in its application, unique to ourselves and any perspective that is at odds with these assessments is flawed and therefore can be dismissed as either distracting or totally irrelevant.[4]

Therefore, it is often a surprise when elected leaders, senior military officials and senior public servants do not share these uniquely informed perspectives. Such surprise comes with annoyance and a dismissal of political correctness but more importantly comes at the cost of wasted time,

money and most importantly wasted effort of a small already overburdened cadre. Small nations have correspondingly small SOF organizations with a finite capacity. Such capacity must be carefully, and efficiency applied. So, it is worth considering that there might in fact be a misalignment that such differences reveal. Improving alignment and thereby better serving the strategic needs of the government is an issue worthy of examination.

This chapter seeks to identify a simple construct and lens that might be applied when considering future capabilities in order to achieve an end state that contributes to the strategic objectives of the nation. It seeks to create a useful way by which to assess the subsequent chapters and proposals of what capabilities will define the next tactical bound for smaller Special Operations communities that face real constraints in terms of available resources. Conceptual brilliance and ambition are useless until translated into actual capabilities. That translation process is invariably reliant on the support of others including the approval of policy-makers and elected officials.

Much like 2 x 2 briefing slides, Venn diagrams are often too much of a good thing. It can be argued, however, that when trying to explain alignment and focus between stated policy, capability and aspiration, mission fit etc., such constructs are useful in dispelling uninformed views that there is a single perspective on "what should and/or can be done." As depicted in Figure 1-1, there is an overlap of these areas but in no way is the overlap universal.

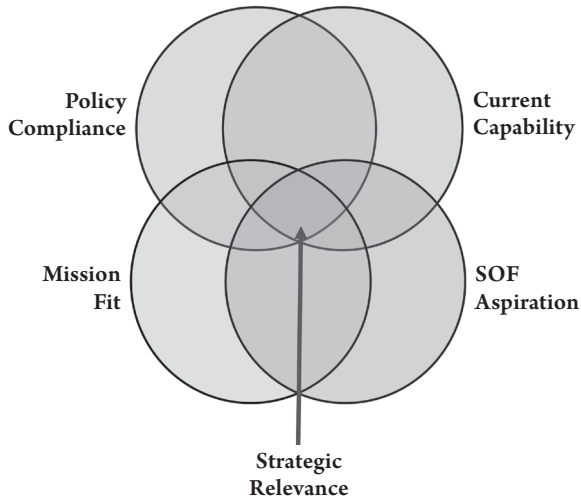

FIGURE 1-1.

In considering which element should be considered the most important, it is obviously possible to start the analysis with any of the elements, subsequently steadily working though each to find the common ground and therefore an acceptable future focus. Certainly, within a tactical SOF planning cycle the analysis often starts with a theatre-specific perspective. However, to help avoid the self-created trap of allowing our aspirations to lead the process it is invariably educational to allow policy considerations to help create the conceptual manoeuvre box. From there, consideration of potential theatre-specific opportunities determines what actions might best contribute to whatever overall objectives have been identified, and lastly looking at current and potential/aspirational SOF capabilities. A combination of the latter two assessments should then be overlaid on the first two and a determination of where, if anywhere, there is a gap in "top cover." This sequence provides insight as to the first steps to be taken in shaping policy and providing legal authority to do what will provide the best impact.

In considering "best impact", primacy is given to the force generating nation that is to deploy SOF elements, not the receiving theatre. To many it might appear harsh and uncaring but the decision to deploy SOF forces must be predicated on what it gains for our respective countries, not isolated tactical impact on the ground. The sought after strategic impact of those tactical actions, mentioned in the opening of this chapter, must be a constant guardrail to guide every step of the analysis. "On the ground impact" is obviously important but unless it translates to a measurable benefit to the SOF element's country it is wasted effort of a scarce resource. Strategic Forces, such as SOF, from smaller states must remain acutely aware that in the end this is the sole metric that matters.

GOVERNMENT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

In the Canadian instance rarely are governments clear about their foreign policy objectives, often obfuscating why we are involved in a foreign hotspot by referring to a narrative that elected officials believe will appeal to the electorate.[5] This approach is normal politics and for the purposes of analysis can be safely ignored. However, from time to time a sitting government finds itself in a position where what it can say and why it is doing something overlap. Without debating the merits of Canada's COVID response, it was such an occasion where the objective was clear: "My top priority is the

health and safety of all Canadians."[6] It is telling that this stands in such stark contrast to the proclamations about previous military deployments.

This transparency was not the case for the Afghanistan involvement. Despite what governments might have claimed, we were not in Afghanistan because we loved Afghans. Nor are we contributing to Ukraine's war efforts because we love Ukrainians. We might love and wish to support both of those groups, but such a sentiment is not causal. In the first instance we involved ourselves in these efforts because successive Canadian governments have understood that Canada and its citizens do better when the world is safer and more secure, and that if we can contribute to making it so we are better off. In the case of Afghanistan this was amplified by the expectation of the United States Government that Canada participate.

This second explanation, albeit harsher, is informative. Not contributing to Afghanistan, and more specifically not moving south to Kandahar would be to fly in the face of the ever-present foreign policy objective of maintaining influence in Washington.[7] In the Ukrainian instance we are there to contribute to global stability, but also because Canada has the largest Ukrainian diaspora in the world. These are germane examples of how understanding the operational policy as opposed to being swayed by the declaratory policy is a critical element of this assessment. Looking beyond the headlines and understanding both the policy and the motivation that animates the policy are critical elements in determining what will be deemed as acceptable action. Unlike the U.S., the governments of smaller states may not be burdened by an unspoken responsibility to lead stability efforts, but they most certainly inherit an expectation to contribute to such commitments. How then to best do so becomes the issue at hand.

In addition to seeing behind the public narrative, it is equally important to distinguish between the principle at work and a critique of the application of the principle. This chapter neither defends nor criticizes Government of Canada decisions, but rather seeks to expose and emphasize the reality that we deploy military forces because it is good for Canada. Point Finale.

Applying this somewhat stark but inescapable reality to the first step in any analysis about future SOF capability should be the identification and articulation of a government's policy objectives and general strategy. The subordination of this consideration to any other factor virtually guarantees

a more challenging road to achieving understanding by senior decision-makers, let alone gaining their support and approval for the development of new capabilities. During the approval process there are few more powerful or convincing arguments than those that start with a clear tracing of policy objectives to actions, and how the concept development and planning processes link the start and end states of the analysis. The takeaway for senior leaders outside of the SOF community must be: Development of this capability will provide a direct, efficient and useable contribution to achieving government objectives. In essence their take away is "this is how we best use SOF."

As noted above, amongst the thorniest issues any Canadian government department or agency (including the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)) must address is defining what activities fall within the current policy and what additional measures might be acceptable to expand that space. History tells us that there has almost always been scope for policies to be adjusted to allow for certain activities to be conducted. This flexibility has worked well when a deliberate approach has been engaged, building up the rationale with an emphasis on how such an evolution benefits Canada. At this stage any potential in-theatre benefit, although of value, falls a distant second. The whispered mantra "is this good for Canada?" should echo in every SOF commander's and planner's ears throughout the capability development process. Aspiration driving the development of future capabilities must always be guided by this principle.

Having noted that Canada has a multi-decade tendency of avoiding policy clarity, most often with foreign and security policy, the consequence of such an approach results in, however inadequate, occasions of opportunistic gestures to maximize the "in the moment" impact of a contribution or participation in a coalition.[8] This outcome is doubly so when it comes to the use of the Canadian military as politicians have long ago internalized the reality that Canadians, despite claiming a concern about the women and men in uniform, simply do not vote on such issues.[9]

Central, therefore, to any government policy that might support the deployment of any CAF element is the risk assessment which strongly informs the cost/benefit analysis. This risk assessment does indeed consider the danger to those deployed, the impact in the area in which they will work but also considers the impact in Washington D.C. and with other allies.[10] But ultimately, the political risk analysis considers if the

downside/upside calculus threatens to make this an issue which distracts from other elements of their agenda which they wish to pursue. Canadian governments have become habituated to the practice of having an uncaring electorate freeing them up from a pretense of the same. Approved activities will have therefore at their heart, the pros and cons of upsetting this invaluable aspect of Canadian politics.

One of the many impacts of our multi-year Afghanistan contribution was to sensitize both politicians and senior bureaucrats to the risks associated with unknown outcomes.[11] A combination of events, all predicated on the service of the women and men on the ground in Afghanistan, resulted in a public engagement on defence issues that arguably no Canadian government has faced since the Second World War. Given the subsequent costs of that contribution, in blood and treasure of the realm, no Canadian government will be keen to face that again.[12]

Notwithstanding this long-standing ambivalence Canadian governments have also demonstrated a tendency, indeed an eagerness, to be joiners. If there is an international coalition, we have a history of wanting to be a member.[13] Membership provides the opportunity to contribute to a more secure and safe international commons, albeit often coming with some unavoidable costs. It is here where policy objectives are often the clearest, with primacy being afforded to doing enough so that we can "join the club" and thereafter contributing a sufficient, albeit minimum amount to ensure we "stay in the club."

The North America Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) provide examples of how our contribution has been measured providing, in some instances, an imperative to do certain things. There is a key insight from this analysis that resonates as anyone with experience in the Department of National Defence (DND) Policy Group would recognize: What are our allies doing? For smaller states, comparisons matter and considering relative value of various contributions remains a central element in determining the commitment of resources. Within SOF communities this resonates strongly. Alignment with the Five Eyes SOF community provides a tangible value in explaining how we remain in lock step with our major allies. There is a comfort that comes in belonging, not the least of which is providing governments with a narrative that holds up to public scrutiny.

So, it is here, at the policy analysis stage, that a consideration for future capability sets must start and indeed must finish. The latter stage being as important as the former. With an understanding of what fits into the current policy envelope we have started to define how SOF might best be used and what type of tasks might be acceptable and approved. With an understanding of those tasks, we take the first step onto the capability development road map. With a start point defined, although not yet definitive in terms of constraints and restraints, the next step must be to look at current capabilities and potential theatre-specific needs. It is here that a combination of defining the current and near future environment with a set of scenarios is useful.

CURRENT CAPABILITY

When talking about the future there is a common tendency to disregard that which has come before as being no longer relevant even to the extent where it is assessed as encumbering the development of future capability sets at the expense of maintaining old ones. The SOF community's perspective, however, is not homogenous with that of its consumers. In a Canadian context the classic conundrum is the opportunity cost of time, money, effort and most importantly people dedicated to the ever present need to maintain a domestic counter terrorist response capability, including a maritime one. Maintenance of this standby capability restricts CANSOF's capacity to commit to other tasks. This observation is to neither validate their retention, nor support a shifting of their responsibilities to others, but rather to highlight that when we ask what capabilities best serve Canada as a medium power, we are concurrently asking: What capabilities do we intend on either dropping completely or minimizing? Accepting that we do not live in a purely zero-sum game, the reality with most smaller nations and most certainly in the Canadian context, is that there is little capacity to add more. "More of something" will invariably come at the expense of "less of something else." Making internal value judgements that are not validated by the consumers of SOF capability (i.e., governments) comes at risk of not just being wrong but being viewed as not supporting government objectives. Both are costly missteps. Consequentially the proposal of new capability must be accompanied by the "butcher's bill" or additional resources being allocated, or the dropping of old tasks. If the latter, analysis quickly stumbles over the idea that the proposal would either suggest that a previous strategic imperative is no longer valid or that there is another entity able to take on such a role. Subsequently

the question of "who" would take that role on has to be answered as well as the same sequence of resource issues: What will they have to drop to take this on, or will they be resourced accordingly?

This decision cycle does not begin to address the likely reality that the target of such a bait and switch may not have such an additional responsibility in their aspiration road map for future capabilities. Small nations rarely have redundancy of high demand capability sets and SOF proven competency comes as a double-edged sword. If advertised as a current capability, underlined by the remarkable competence of its operators and supporters how then do we make an argument that suggests "someone else can do it." It is beyond the scope of this chapter to address, but there is a strategic calculus about initiating this debate that goes beyond the development of new capability sets. Once a small nation has enjoyed the strategic benefits of employing SOF in a particular field it requires a convincing argument to ask them to forgo that benefit in the future.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOF ASPIRATION

"The future ain't what it used to be."[14]

Capability-based planning offers many opportunities from which a force must choose. Whereas nations such as the U.S. can opt to do most everything, all other nations face a choice. One of the proven methodologies to inform such a choice is to build a set of scenarios identifying a set of tasks that might be performed within each and thereafter considering their relative value. In today's context this means considering a global common that has most certainly been returned to the challenge of great power competition. But this is not a return to a Cold War construct of détente as the shift back to great power competition has not been accompanied by abandonment of the scourge of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) who continue to operate at the regional level around the global. We no longer face the binary swinging of a pendulum from one type of conflict to another but rather a global setting which not only needs to be addressed but which concurrently provides a complication as a backdrop to regional issues.

One need look no further than Africa and the now decades-long growing influence of China and the more recent involvement of Russia through the Wagner Group to understand that we do not enjoy the latitude of pretending that participation in a specific region does not lead to larger ramifications

on the global stage. Building scenarios that reflect this complexity is difficult but is an essential element to ensure that proposed tasks and the required capability sets are "fit for purpose." It is at this stage that we should allow our aspiration to take over but only to a limited degree. The idea of Blue-Sky analysis has always, to my mind, been utterly naïve and a waste of resources. We control neither the policy constraints nor restraints[15] and must deal with an operating environment that is informed by the unavoidable reality that some employment models, including those adopted by the U.S., are simply not realistic for smaller states with fewer resources and often more limited foreign policy objectives. We should go further in accentuating that reality in that even proposing some activities, in ignorance or not, comes at a cost of exposing a lack of understanding and or a tone deafness to a government position. Nonetheless as much as is possible, aspirational goals must be maintained as a start point to ensure both culturally and intellectually, we mine and exploit the experience and aptitude of our members.

Having directly identified the constraints/restraints that should restrict our aspirations, it is nonetheless at this stage that the innovation and imagination borne from decades of operational experience should be allowed to flourish. The previous used phrasing in some SOF communities of "by, with, through" captures the extent to which we must consider our conceptional manoeuvre box.[16] Coloured with a new set of tools that are informed by bleeding edge technology (predictive analysis focused cultural intelligence based on Open Source Intelligence as an example) a list of tasks can subsequently be derived that can be measured firstly against their applicability to the various scenarios that reflect a known reality and subsequently measured against policy compliance. It is important at this, and indeed at every stage, to discard nothing. Every proposal has value and ultimately the decision about which capability sets to preserve, discard, evolve, and develop will be based on a relative value and cost opportunity. But before this final stage of analysis is completed a revisiting of the policy space is essential.

After first considering the policy space, layering on reality-informed, scenario-based assessments, and using an innovative aspiration model for new capability sets, it is necessary to revisit the policy bubble to gain a sense of what is in the art of the possible with regards to gaining approval. It is highly likely that notwithstanding the start point of a policy base, the subsequent work of considering an operating environment and finding

ways to achieve effects will likely result in proposed tasks, associated capabilities and employment models that fall outside a common and current understanding of policy top cover. This last stage, although initially appearing to be repetitive, is more focused on informing how much work will need to be done to get approval rather than informing what should be achieved.

There are distinct differences in these reviews but both are equally invaluable. In the first instance, identification of national or strategic objectives forces a grounding and allows for a strong start point in presenting option analysis down the road, whereas the second identifies new approaches needing new authorities. Prematurely combining these aspects blurs the line between objective and act, and forces an unneeded complication in the approval gaining process. With nations such as Canada, which have a finite capacity and quite frankly limited appetite, this step will likely force a number of proposals off the table. Attached to the mantra of "what is good for Canada?" should be the addendum of "what are we willing to do?" Judgement and careful vetting by those most often exposed to senior government levels is essential to avoid a misstep.

Although the above provides a proposal for macro steps to be taken in the development and evaluation of future capabilities it is by no means exhaustive and there are other supporting analyses (legal, cultural etc.) that must be layered on to more fully inform the end-product. The real value of adopting a process is to ensure we don't allow a misinformed employment to form the basis of our recommendations to government.

SUMMARY

There is no doubt that SOF around the world are, like their conventional partners, facing an inflection point. From a small state perspective these challenges are magnified by limited capacity facing increasing demand and choice. History reveals a series of employment phases to which SOF has readily adapted, with the most recent, since 9/11, being a combination of a counter VEO force and an evolved but essentially classic Foreign Internal Defense (FID) capability. We are on the cusp of the next evolution. The combination of great power competition and continued regional instability merely scratch the surface of the challenge. Emerging technologies informed by Artificial Intelligence are, perhaps for the first time, outstripping our ability to absorb and incorporate them into our doctrine and tactics,

techniques and procedures. We are not at a loss for things to do, ways to contribute, new skills to develop, places to go etc. SOF is further challenged by the reality of a desire, by some, to be the solution to all requests. Success often has some unwanted consequences. As we contemplate the various capability sets described and championed in this book and the ways that small states might optimize the employment of SOF, we are, in essence, focused on strategic choice. That choice is not and should not be SOF's to make. We can inform it, and most certainly help shape the discussion, but ownership of that future belongs to decision-makers outside the SOF community. In order to get the first steps right, i.e., what SOF elements propose as the way ahead, full consideration of national objectives, policies, current capability sets etc., must be at the heart of our own internal processes. We neither enjoy the time nor have the capacity to go on a voyage of discovery and suffer a misstep. Cast aside blue-sky thinking, embrace stubby pencil analysis and comparative value assessments. Only then can we substantiate options that maximize the strategic impact that can be provided regardless of the size of our country or force.

CHAPTER 2

THE STRATEGIC LEVERAGE OF SOF

Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew L. Brown, PhD

Like leaves carried on a running stream, small states often find themselves pulled along by the powerful currents of international affairs over which they have little control. Sometimes those currents are dangerous enough to bring serious, even existential, security threats. Smaller players in the international system therefore struggle from time to time to cushion themselves from potential blows. This reality is as true today as it has ever been, as ambitious powers with hegemonic aspirations pose serious challenges to the rules-based international order and seek to replace it with authoritarianism. While China and Russia generate obvious concerns, other actors also menace international peace and prosperity. Active and smoldering conflicts involving state and non-state actors in war-prone regions often beget international problems, such as widening instability, humanitarian disasters, refugee flows, and the spread of violent extremism. While small states rarely possess the means to prevent or contain such problems, they do possess tools that may help sway events – diplomatic, financial, technological, and military power, amongst other things. Special Operations Forces (SOF) in particular offer small states a potentially valuable foreign policy tool, as decades of experience demonstrate. This chapter explores how SOF provide small states with affordable, yet potent strategic levers that can strengthen the pursuit of national objectives.

POLITICAL UTILITY

SOF offer their governments practical options for responding to security challenges. For example, national SOF organizations can make outsized contributions to the collective security arrangements that small states rely on. In recent years, member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have demonstrated how SOF can generate cost-effective, tactically proficient task forces that boost the strength of collective defence. Indeed, the recently-developed NATO SOF enterprise has grown and matured into a substantial joint force enabler. The war in Afghanistan

provided the catalyst. In 2002, the alliance created the NATO Response Force (NRF), a quick-reaction joint force with a major SOF component.[1] The NRF became fully operational in 2006. At the same time, the NATO SOF Transformation Initiative (NSTI) started, which included establishing a NATO SOF Coordination Centre (NSCC) under the command of U.S. (then) Rear Admiral William McRaven, who became a strong advocate of integrating allied SOF. In 2010, the NSCC became NATO SOF Headquarters (NSHQ), a three-star command, and developed a capacity to deploy a SOF Component Command (SOCC), or operational headquarters, to oversee the SOF component of a combined task force. Finally, in 2012, the NATO SOF project came of age when the first SOCC deployed to Afghanistan, in the form of the NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan (NSOCC-A).

Soon after, three small NATO states – Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands – agreed to form a Composite Special Operations Component Command (C-SOCC), with good results. According to NATO, integrating three national SOF elements has forged "a capability that provides operational value in excess of the sum of its individual national parts."[2] The C-SOCC exists to lead and coordinate up to seven special operations task groups that support wider joint operations – potentially even for United Nations (UN) or other multilateral efforts. It reached full operational capability in December 2020. In short, the development of NATO SOF has galvanized individual national SOF elements' abilities to operate with, and learn from, each other, while ensuring that individual contingents make meaningful, coordinated contributions to joint operations. Today, then, small NATO states have compelling reasons to plug their organizations into NATO SOF. Doing so contributes substantive combat capability to an alliance currently pressing its members to bolster their capacities, while affording an opportunity for national SOF elements to fortify relations with the like-minded allies they may one day fight alongside.[3] Some have valuable operational experience to share.

Denmark and the Netherlands' participation in NATO SOF, for example, demonstrates these benefits. Both countries have made good use of their SOF to assist NATO counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia. In 2008, rampant piracy in those waters became a serious international concern, prompting the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to authorize several international counter-piracy campaigns, including NATO's Operation Ocean Shield. In 2010, Denmark and the Netherlands

committed ships and SOF units to the operation, putting the two nations at the forefront of NATO's counter-piracy campaign. In fact, over the next two years, the two countries appointed force commanders to Ocean Shield five times on a rotational basis and developed effective interdiction methods that contributed to a steep decline in piracy.[4] The use of SOF went a long way in enabling these small states to take on lead-nation roles while helping to resolve an international problem.

SOF proved the right tool for both countries, producing the desired operational effect with politically acceptable means. Danish and Dutch SOF teams developed novel methods for countering evolving piracy operations while respecting national imperatives to limit the use of violence. In 2010, for example, pirates often employed twelve-metre-long whaling vessels as motherships. Restrictive rules of engagement (ROE) and the requirement to minimize the use of force required creative methods to neutralize this threat. Danish SOF provided a solution. The Special Maritime Intervention (SMI) unit, which included operators of the Frogman Corps, designed a campaign whereby seaborne operators infiltrated pirate camps along the coast, located anchored but unmanned whalers, and quietly towed them out to sea for destruction. To deal with whalers underway, teams used rigid hull inflatable boats at night to intercept the pirates and employed spotlights to blind them before boarding their vessels. The SMI campaign worked, with the pirates abandoning their targeted base camps.[5] When the pirates adapted, SMI did likewise. In late 2010-early 2011, pirates began capturing and using dhows – thirty-metre-long fishing boats with high freeboard – while often keeping the crews hostage. This complicated NATO operations, because of restrictive ROE that did not favour hostage rescue. In response, SMI operators helped design and execute a Danish "escalation ladder" that started with loudspeaker messages and climbed up through warning shots, to disabling fire on the vessel, and, only, if necessary, to opposed boarding.[6]

In 2011, the pirates adapted their tactics once again. Now they became more aggressive and unpredictable towards interdiction forces and hostages. They also ignored warning shots and raced their motherships towards the coast to evade NATO ships.[7] Once again, SOF developed a solution, employing precision force that minimized risk to the hostages while neutralizing any pirates who fired their weapons. In one instance, pirates threatened an approaching Danish warship with AK-47 and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire. The ship had to back off, but its embarked SMI snipers responded with precise shots while operators in a small craft

rushed towards the threat and assaulted the mothership. They killed four pirates and wounded ten, and prevented harm to sixteen hostages. Dutch SOF also developed methods to deal with the violent and unpredictable pirates, while respecting a national restriction on harming hostages or their captors. Operators avoided contact with the pirates and instead attacked the motherships using underwater demolitions that wrecked rudders and other essential machinery. These innovations contributed to the international campaign's success. In late 2011, Somali piracy plummeted thanks in part to Danish and Netherlands interdiction of motherships.

Small states can also use SOF to pursue foreign policies through demonstrations of political support for vital great power allies. Committing SOF contingents to an important ally's military campaign has long been an effective way to make a tangible and appreciated show of support. For instance, in 1961, when U.S. president John F. Kennedy's administration began preparing for combat operations in Vietnam, Australian diplomats saw an opportunity.[8] They ascertained that Canberra could make a military contribution that would be meaningful to Washington by deploying to Vietnam a small number of Australian Special Air Service (SAS) jungle warfare instructors.[9]

The greater consideration was demonstrating real commitment to the Americans, out of concern that Australia might one day need American support because of a potential military threat from Indonesia. For the rest of the decade, the Australians recognized that the real value of their contribution was not in the contingent's size, but in the political support it signaled.

Similarly, and more recently, New Zealand sought to make a meaningful gesture of support to the U.S. After the 11 September 2001 attacks, Prime Minister Helen Clark expressed her country's intent "to be counted in the campaign against terrorism" and highlighted potential contributions by the New Zealand Special Air Service (NZSAS).

Soon after, Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 presented another opportunity for states to use their SOF to demonstrate tangible support for the U.S. In the months preceding the operation, President George W. Bush wanted as many nations as possible in the coalition he hoped to build.[10] Australian Prime Minister John Howard, who became one of Bush's main allies, was an early supporter, telling the president in September 2002,

"I'm with you."[11] Howard's government saw an opportunity to bolster a long-term strategic objective: reinforcing the security relationship with the U.S.[12] And the prime minister took full advantage of the occasion. When Bush phoned Howard just days before the invasion, to brief him on an ultimatum speech he was about to deliver, giving Saddam 48 hours to leave Iraq, Howard replied "George . . . if it comes to this, I pledge to you that Australian troops will fight if necessary."[13] That must have impressed the president.

Poland viewed America's approaching war through a similar lens. The Polish government saw joining the coalition as a means of forging stronger political and military bonds with the only nation that could guarantee Polish security.[14] So it was that Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski maintained friendly relations with Bush. By January 2003 he had committed to sending troops to Iraq and personally assured the president that Poland was with him. The effort played well, as Poland's support and troop commitment were important to Bush.[15]

In the end, few nations joined the American-led campaign and the invasion coalition was small. The biggest partner, Britain, provided 41,000 troops. Australia deployed 2,000, and the Polish 200. Still, and regardless of later criticism of the campaign's justification, on 18 March, when the invasion began, these states' SOF were amongst the first units in. Polish SOF captured an oil platform in southern Iraq, while Australian SOF pushed into Western Iraq – and President Bush was quite aware of both nations' SOF efforts.[16] In fact, he spoke personally with President Kwaśniewski during the invasion's early hours. Australia, for its part, succeeded in strengthening relations with Washington by providing military and political support, which Bush's administration appreciated, especially given international opposition to the war.[17]

While committing SOF to larger campaigns for the sake of cultivating a great power's appreciation may be pragmatic policy, politicians and senior officers ought to be aware of the potential dangers of making only token contributions. Research on the multi-national dimension of military operations (not SOF-specific) demonstrates that making a token contribution may not provide genuine value to the leading nation and may even prove detrimental to a campaign.[18] The supported great power might perceive a token contribution as having political value for the legitimacy it provides but view the military value as unfavourable. The trade-off

might be enough to accept the contribution – but the small power misses an opportunity to increase its standing.[19]

For a troop-contributing nation to prove itself a useful military partner necessitates several considerations. First, a contingent must include enough troops to have a genuine impact. Token contributions, as NATO saw in Afghanistan with some contingents numbering as few as a handful of soldiers, have little military value because they cannot undertake meaningful operations.[20] Second, there must be political willingness to employ forces appropriately. Even larger contingents may have limited military value if nations impose "caveats" on their use, such that they cannot make real contributions to the campaign. Third, forces must be technologically capable of operating alongside the lead nation's forces (usually American). In other words, both quantity and quality are important, if a contingent is to be useful to a campaign and not an integration headache. Finally, states ought to be wary of imposing overly rigid command and control arrangements that inhibit how contingents may be employed. While governments will understandably insist on the right to decide how their forces may operate, excessively restrictive command and control can obstruct a contingent's ability to integrate into the campaign, causing a nuisance for the lead nation.

However, while these considerations apply to contingents in general and are not SOF-specific, contributing SOF offers a politically palatable means of ensuring both military and political relevancy. SOF elements tend to be comparatively small to begin with, and they tend to take comparatively fewer casualties owing to the nature of their operating methods. Consequently, authorizing SOF contingents to undertake meaningful employment carries relatively little political risk. In this regard, some Nordic SOF units have enjoyed success in proving themselves to larger allies, building a solid reputation as trustworthy partners for states such as the U.S., Britain, and France. As one Swedish soldier-scholar and SOF veteran aptly puts it, "When reliability has been proven in operations and political will is there to deploy SO [special operations] in difficult missions, it has paid off strategically and politically."[21]

Decision-makers, SOF commanders, and operators ought also to be mindful of the well-documented impediments to maintaining cohesive alliances and partnerships. For all the good that coalitions bring to their members, they can be problematic. After all, historian Paul Kennedy reminds us, military alliances "are not the same as friendships."[22] Rather, states enter coalitions

to serve their self-interest. He concludes that for coalitions to succeed, they require "substantial doses of tolerance, understanding and flexibility," which he likens to oil that keeps the coalition machinery operating smoothly.[23]

Historian Gary Sheffield reinforces the point, noting that coalitions tend to struggle with common problems. They limit states' capacities to implement policies to their liking. Differing interests mean that coalition strategy development may occur very slowly as partners negotiate compromises. And a coalition's centre of gravity, typically its cohesion, may be a critical vulnerability. These problems transcend time. During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, Sheffield observes, the U.S., Britain, and France wrestled with the same integration problems that afflicted them in 1918.[24] The states and SOF contingents that participate in coalitions ought to be well-aware of these perennial challenges if they are to cultivate the full benefits of partnership.

The political usefulness of SOF goes far beyond their potential for bolstering national contributions to alliances. SOF also provide small states with a valuable and appealing strategic lever because they can produce strategic effect inexpensively, quickly, and discreetly. From a purely cost-related perspective, SOF are far cheaper than capabilities that involve major capital projects. This economy is not to say, of course, that SOF can substitute for other vital military capabilities such as warships, armoured formations, and fighter aircraft, but because they do provide strategic-level effects at a fraction of the cost, they have exceptional potential to produce a high return on investment. As a rough but illustrative example, in 2014, the U.S. SOF enterprise accounted for a surprisingly modest proportion (1.7 per cent) of the American defence program.[25]

For nations with much smaller military budgets, the comparatively inexpensive nature of SOF makes them attractive. New Zealand offers a good example. The public there has long tended towards unenthusiasm for defence spending, which politicians have mirrored. Consequently, in the period following the Second World War, New Zealand governments have seen considerable value in their SOF, simply because they produce good effects but cost relatively little to maintain or deploy. In fact, a review of high-level government records over five decades shows that recommendations for NZSAS deployments frequently referred to their cost-effectiveness.[26]

Regardless, while states with small military budgets may enjoy high payoffs from investments in SOF, their SOF planners would be prudent to consider

carefully which roles and capabilities to invest in, focusing on those most likely to be employed in support of national objectives. Small states, with much smaller budgets in real terms than large powers, cannot invest in the broad range of SOF roles and capabilities that large powers maintain. (To illustrate the point, in 2013, the budget of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) was 167 per cent the size of Sweden's budget for its entire armed forces.)[27] Complicating the imperative to prioritize is the requirement to ensure that capabilities are interoperable with, and perhaps even compliment, those of close allies.

SOF may also prove an attractive option for governments wary of considering larger conventional ground force deployments that might prove unpopular with the public.[28] In comparison, SOF units are much smaller, with total strength numbering perhaps in the dozens – yet, by their nature, they are capable of significant achievements. At the same time, SOF deployments and activities tend to be discreet by necessity, as most laypeople know and accept, and therefore do not draw a great deal of public attention. This reality is not to propose any bad-faith exploitation of SOF's low signature, but rather to acknowledge that SOF, as professor Austin Long at Columbia University argues, form part of democratic nations' legitimate "clandestine intelligence collection and covert action [units] that are not widely debated in public."[29]

Again, New Zealand provides an illustrative example. Going back to the establishment of an SAS squadron in 1955, New Zealand has a history of succeeding in committing credible military forces to close allies, without generating much domestic concern, by deploying relatively small SOF contingents.[30] More recently, successive New Zealand governments maintained an effective military contribution in Afghanistan, partly because the relatively small scale of SOF operations did not arouse significant unease from a public that otherwise gave undistinguished support for the war.

ORGANIZING FOR AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Despite ubiquitous scholarly and intelligence assessments of future threat environments, no one knows for certain what challenges will manifest. One thing is clear, however. All states will face strategic surprises and even shocks, as they always have. Sometimes crises will manifest abroad, and governments will experience domestic and allied pressures to help resolve them. Sometimes crises will directly impact national interests, abroad or

even at home. In all scenarios, governments will need to respond. SOF provides them with a flexible and effective response capability.

Events in the past decade alone underscore how such crises abroad can materialize suddenly, forcing states to react. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 stands as the obvious example. As the West rushed to provide materiel and training aid to Ukraine, SOF had an important role to play. Publicly available information indicates that SOF from various NATO countries, large and small, surged to the region. Canadian SOF, for instance, had been in Ukraine in a training role even before the Russian invasion.[31] And "a few dozen commandos" from Canada, Britain, France, and Lithuania were in Ukraine shortly after the invasion to provide weapons and training, and to acquire intelligence. Individual national efforts soon bonded into an allied whole when U.S. Special Forces reportedly established a coalition planning cell in Germany to facilitate the delivery of military assistance to Ukrainian troops. When a crisis erupts and calls go out to alliance and like-minded nations to respond, SOF are certain to be in high demand – something that small states can help satisfy with relatively low cost and risk options.

The sudden rise of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), more commonly known as Daesh, is another recent example. Growing out of Al Qaida in Iraq (AQI) in 2012 when the organization expanded into Syria, Daesh became a magnet for Sunni fighters who helped the organization increase its territorial control. On 29 June 2014, it declared the establishment of a caliphate that ran across 423 miles astride Iraq and Syria.[32] Daesh posed a grave regional threat and a potential international menace through inspiring or sponsoring attacks abroad. It eventually numbered 40,000 fighters from over 120 countries and demonstrated an ability to defeat local state forces. As it exercised civic government over its territory, Daesh imposed severe and cruel theocratic rule that led to ethnic cleansing and slavery, not to mention barbaric rules for women and public behaviour. Something had to be done. The U.S. responded by forming a coalition to fight the extremists, establishing the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve, and encouraged states to join the effort.

The coalition's military strategy was twofold: conduct direct operations against Daesh with airstrikes and SOF, and conduct indirect operations by sponsoring proxy militias to combat the extremists.[33] This approach had much to do with anxious troop-contributing nations not wanting

to commit conventional ground forces because of the political risks of becoming entangled in a Middle East war. Once again, SOF provided a politically palatable and militarily effective option. SOF from the large powers – the U.S., Britain, and eventually France – were very active in both training roles and in targeting Daesh.[34] But several small states also supported the coalition by dispatching SOF contingents. Australia and Canada each committed fairly large task forces, while smaller detachments came from Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, Sweden, Italy, and Spain.[35] Indeed, SOF proved a politically viable and operationally effective contribution to the coalition effort that, in concert with local forces, compressed Daesh's control of territory, peeled off its control of key cities, and finally liberated its supposed capital city, Raqqa, in October 2017. SOF helped achieve this without taking large casualties or engendering significant domestic political opposition.

In April 2023, when fighting broke out in Sudan between rival army generals, governments around the world came under sudden pressure to evacuate their diplomats and citizens. Continuous fighting wracked the capital city Khartoum, and violence quickly spread across the country. Access to food, water, and power dwindled. Many nations responded with remarkably fast operations to evacuate their embassy personnel and other citizens. The volatile and hazardous conditions demanded agile forces that could protect themselves and their evacuees.

Naturally, SOF played a key role. Large states set a standard that put public pressure on small states. The U.S. dispatched SOF to evacuate the American embassy. Staging from Djibouti, the team – including SEAL Team 6 and the Army 3rd Special Forces Group – used three MH-47 helicopters, flying at low altitude in the dark. They spent less than an hour at the embassy before extracting 70 embassy staff and their families.[36] Within hours, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that British SOF had executed a "complex and rapid" evacuation of diplomatic staff and families. The British defence secretary added that the operation had also included over 1,200 personnel including army, Royal Marine, and Royal Air Force personnel, while other sources indicated that the British Special Air Service (SAS) played a prominent role.[37] The pressure was on for others states to do similar for their citizens.

In fact, the situation in Sudan suggested that governments that do not act fast enough risk paying a domestic political price, when frustrated citizens

and commentators point to other nations' greater efficiency. The Canadian government, for example, took criticism for not moving quickly enough to evacuate its citizens.[38] Pundits complained that Canada had been too cautious, compared to other countries like France, Germany, Britain, and the U.S. Canadian citizens who had been trapped in Sudan fumed to media about their frustrations with Canada's sluggish response, when numerous other countries had evacuated their citizens much faster.[39] Several days after other nations launched their missions, Canadian officials announced the deployment of two C-130J aircraft to the region and some ground forces – plus, naturally enough, a SOF component.

Canada eventually conducted six evacuation flights, starting five days after the American operation, and extracting about 550 people. Even so, as media pointed out, hundreds of Canadians had already been evacuated by other countries. In the end, while non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) are nothing new – relatively recent evacuations from Afghanistan, Libya, Lebanon, and Haiti come to mind – the Canadian example in Sudan demonstrates that in today's hyper-connected world where citizens watch global events in near-real time, governments can come under sudden public pressure to act as quickly as other states. In such circumstances, SOF's inherent capability to plan and execute operations in hostile environments with minimal notice offers governments indispensable response options.

Aside from assisting things like NEO, SOF are ideal for providing small states with options for dealing with other direct threats to national interests abroad. For instance, of the many plausible scenarios that could manifest, hostage taking stands out as something that governments will inevitably have to deal with, if the experience of recent decades has any predictive value. (Canada alone has faced hostage situations with kidnapped citizens in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Niger, the Philippines, and Mali.) Hostages typically include people working in destabilized regions, tourists, and even service members. Each case is unique and compels governments to assess all possible avenues for recovering their citizens. SOF can help with those assessments, which may include military solutions.

London's response to the hostage taking of British military personnel in Sierra Leone in August 2000 is instructive for small states. A vehicle patrol of eleven soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment, operating in the country as part of a training mission, plus their Sierra Leone army liaison officer, had found itself surrounded and outnumbered by a militant group known as

the West Side Boys (WSB). This group of volatile thugs took the soldiers prisoner.[40] International news outlets picked up the story, leading to much criticism of the British government's Sierra Leone policy, and British media demanded an immediate rescue. Meanwhile, the WSB leadership decided that the captives made for good bargaining chips and, in a peculiar twist, even released five prisoners in exchange for a satellite phone. But then the militants began to make unrealistic and frequently changing demands, such as passage to Britain to attend university or employment in the government of Sierra Leone.

While London preferred to negotiate the soldiers' return, military authorities began contingency planning at the outset and called forward SAS operators who were training in Kenya. A company of paratroopers from the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment (1 Para) came forward too, and was integrated into the personnel recovery plan, called Operation Barras. As the days wore on, British negotiators warned that the WSB were growing increasingly volatile and they worried that the remaining prisoners, now suffering terrible abuse, might be killed. After two weeks, London decided that negotiations would not lead to a release and that the seven remaining hostages were now in grave danger. A rescue attempt was necessary.

On 10 September, Operation Barras launched at first light. SOF planned and executed the whole plan, assaulting the WSB forces that had settled into two adjacent villages, one with the hostages and the other a support base from which the militants could fire upon any approaching rescue forces. The company from 1 Para rushed in on two CH-47 Chinook helicopters and assaulted the support base to prevent the militants there from reinforcing the hostage holders. Concurrently, the SAS swept in on a third CH-47 and assaulted the hostages' location. They recovered all prisoners, although one rescue team operator was killed from a gunshot wound. Two other soldiers sustained serious wounds, and another ten suffered minor injuries. The WSB, however, suffered far worse. The leader and eighteen of his associates were captured and twenty-six militants were confirmed dead, although the final tally was probably higher. The WSB, having suffered leadership decapitation and significant losses, never recovered.

Operation Barras, then, is a useful case study for small states to consider how SOF can provide governments with options for resolving crises affecting the national interest abroad, in this case to recover citizens taken hostage. To be sure, every hostage case is unique, and a rescue mission is not

always viable. A wide array of preconditions must exist, the most obvious being political will to accept risk to strategic interests and the hostages, access to the territory in question, identifying the precise hostage location, a detailed intelligence picture, and the capacity for tactical overmatch. The point to emphasize, however, is that involving SOF in assessing a crisis from its outset, as the British did, fosters development of the widest possible range of options. In the case of the British hostages in Sierra Leone, as the crisis worsened and non-kinetic options fell away, all the necessary preconditions for a rescue operation gradually aligned, and when the threat to the hostages became intolerable, British authorities had a SOF-based option ready to go. The mission carried a great deal of risk – failure would have embarrassed London and the British forces in Sierra Leone and could have been disastrous for the hostages – but tactical excellence ultimately carried the day. And achieving such excellence in risky and volatile situations is the essence of what SOF does.

SAFEGUARDING SOVEREIGNTY

Finally, SOF offer small powers a practical tool for responding to one of the most serious challenges states can face: military incursions on their territory. For governments concerned with threats to their territorial sovereignty, and with tailoring their armed forces accordingly, SOF can make important contributions to joint military efforts that respond to aggressors.

NATO's Cold War concepts for special operations during a Warsaw Pact invasion of Western Europe portend SOF's potential value during future high intensity conflict. During the decades of wrestling with how NATO could defeat an invasion by quantitatively superior forces, planners gave much thought to the roles SOF should play. In fact, NATO war plans assigned several important tasks to SOF.[41] A key concept was "stay-behind" operations, whereby SOF teams would conceal themselves as enemy forces pushed past and would then conduct activities behind enemy lines. Some units prepared to occupy predetermined hide sites, from which they intended to conduct important tactical tasks, including: collecting targeting information on high value targets such as headquarters and theatre weapons systems; demolition tasks to create bottlenecks for enemy ground formations; and, providing escape and evasion assistance to the anticipated large numbers of downed pilots. 21 and 23 SAS, the British regiment's reserve units, specialized in such missions. While other large powers

generated stay-behind forces too, such as the Germans and the French, so did smaller NATO states like Belgium and the Netherlands.

Also, during any Warsaw Pact invasion, when hostile armoured formations were expected to push westward rapidly, NATO commanders would have frantic requirements for timely and accurate intelligence on the enemy's main axis of advance, primary supply routes, reserves, and supply dumps. Because planners anticipated that air reconnaissance and signals intelligence would not be adequate, commanders tasked NATO SOF units to acquire the crucial intelligence and to call down fires on high-priority targets.[42] Meanwhile, some SOF, such as 22 SAS and the U.S. 10th Special Forces Group, had strategic tasks. These included infiltrating deep into enemy-held territory to gather intelligence, execute strategic demolition and sabotage, and facilitate precision targeting.[43] Furthermore, NATO's intention to use tactical nuclear weapons if necessary to blunt the Warsaw Pact's numerical superiority necessitated timely targeting data, which again fell to SOF to help collect.[44] In short, from almost the Cold War's outset, NATO intended to use SOF, including from small powers, to play a key role in containing any Soviet invasion. Some of the associated concepts warrant re-visiting today for their applicability to the current threat environment.

Lastly, SOF may prove indispensable for helping certain small states defend their sovereignty in a frontier now opening to great power competition, the Arctic. Global interest in the region continues to grow as vanishing sea ice opens the resource-rich area to international access. The region is bound to attract states hungry for its abundant gas and oil reserves, minerals, fishing grounds, tourism potential, and commercial shipping routes that will yield large savings in fuel costs and transit time.[45]

States potentially hostile to the West already pose potential threats to Arctic states' sovereignty. Since 2011, Russia has invested heavily in its military presence in the Arctic.[46] China, meanwhile, now considers itself a near-Arctic state. Consequently, the U.S. continues to contemplate how it can protect its Arctic interests, including using SOF, likely in support of larger conventional operations. As U.S. SOF veteran officer and defence analyst Steven P. Bucci assesses, a hostile incursion into friendly Arctic territory could result in a requirement for SOF services, such as special reconnaissance, joint terminal attack, and direct action against enemy assets that impede friendly forces, such as radar sites.[47] However, SOF operations in the extreme cold entail major challenges. Cold weather survival skills are

obvious, as enduring the conditions and preserving operational effectiveness requires expertise. Beyond mere survival, conducting operations in the environment brings an array of difficult challenges, such as maintaining weapons and vehicles in temperatures that solidify lubricants, communicating where satellites may not be overhead, and refueling, maintaining, and operating sophisticated aircraft in extreme cold weather.[48]

Fortuitously, the armed forces of the West's Arctic states possess skills and experience that exemplify how SOF can be valuable contributors to defending sovereign Arctic territory. Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the U.S. each maintains expertise in Arctic operations. Compelling arguments have been made that SOF have strong potential for providing much-needed surveillance and deterrence effects in the Arctic, and for retaking valuable assets such as military installations, oil and gas infrastructure, or even cruise ships, that could be seized or threatened by hostile state or non-state actors.[49] Danish SOF, to take but one example, already maintain expertise in restoring control of Arctic oil and gas installations. They also provide a useful model for how special reconnaissance proves valuable. Their Arctic defence unit, Sirius Patrol, has a long history of conducting long-range reconnaissance in Greenland, to support Danish sovereignty through presence and real-time surveillance and reporting. Sirius Patrol comprises two-man long-range patrolling teams that monitor Greenland's coastline and landmass. Pre-positioned supply depots and aerial resupply sustain the patrols. A tour with Sirius Patrol lasts twenty-six weeks and includes up to five months operating on the ice.[50] This sort of expertise in operating in the harsh Arctic environment will be invaluable as NATO forces work to improve their proficiency in very cold weather operations. Similarly, Finland maintains a SOF airmobile training centre with expertise in operating at temperatures down to -40 degrees Celsius. And with the Arctic's growing strategic importance, other NATO states routinely send their SOF units to train with those that have expertise in Arctic operations.[51] In short, collaboration in Arctic operations represents yet another key area in which small states' SOF organizations can reap big rewards by forging strong collective capabilities.

CONCLUSION

SOF have great potential to provide small states with affordable yet potent strategic levers for asserting national interests. The challenge will be to tailor those forces to an uncertain international security environment.

No one can be sure of what lies beneath the storm clouds on the horizon. While challenges to the rules-based international order by authoritarian states seem evident, less clear are the blurry threats that could manifest from things like resurgent terrorism, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, humanitarian crises in failed and failing states along with the responsibility to protect suffering populations and erupting regional conflicts. But this unpredictability argues for investments in SOF, because of their political utility. That is, SOF's low cost, speed of deployment, diminutive public profile, and capacity to lend valuable contributions to allied efforts make for politically viable responses to sudden crises, especially for states with small military budgets and little public enthusiasm for costly military campaigns.

Stakeholders across a small state's defence and SOF establishments have a role to play in optimizing SOF's utility by contemplating how special operations can reinforce national policies. In the interest of generating thought on the matter, this chapter concludes by proposing a few subjects for reflection. At the highest levels, politicians and senior civil servants, in concert with their SOF advisors, may consider how their SOF organizations can best contribute to collective defence, as with the NATO SOF enterprise or similar combined arrangements. They might also consider that to maximize the potential advantages SOF bring, contributions should be more than mere token forces. To this end, for SOF to be of best value to their states, governments should exercise the political will to give them useful mandates, while at the same time avoiding the well-known pitfalls that frustrate alliance partners. Senior military leaders might consider how best to incorporate their SOF into all joint contingency planning.

This inclusion, in turn, probably necessitates things like integrating SOF into command and staff training at every level. Senior SOF leaders might contemplate which roles and capabilities to invest their limited resources in. Capabilities should probably be ones that the government can expect to deploy, as opposed to niche specializations that will be used only rarely. SOF leaders might also explore the value of cultivating greater interoperability with allied SOF and the associated technological, policy, and training implications. Finally, SOF operators, the men and women at the tip of the spear whose tactical excellence produces the strategic benefits, might consider their roles in ensuring that operations support their nations' strategic objectives. To this end, they might consider how

to address everything that gets in the way of being able to shoot, move, and communicate with key SOF allies, and promote ongoing dialogue about how their activities reverberate to the political level. Ultimately, all should realize that small states gazing into an uncertain future, one that is bound to bring strategic surprises, can do so with improved confidence – if they possess a competent SOF capability.

CHAPTER 3

CANADIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES AND ENABLING BAD STRATEGIC BEHAVIOUR: OPERATION AEGIS

Colonel Howard G. Coombs, PhD

> *"Strategic relevance means being a solution closely connected to the problem, offering a way forward ahead of demand."*[1]

This viewpoint is one much articulated within the Canadian Special Operations Forces (CANSOF) community. Similarly, a 2020 Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services) presentation concerning audit results pertaining to aspects of CANSOF programs opines that CANSOF offers the Government of Canada agile and quickly deployable capabilities, able to provide "unique strategic options."[2] While a focused and operationally relevant perspective, this idea enables the Canadian Government to rapidly utilize military resources – specifically CANSOF – in an immediate fashion that obviates forward-looking strategic visioning and planning. One can argue that in doing so, CANSOF enables bad strategic behaviour. This behaviour is the result of a lack of military strategic process by successive governments which has produced a nationally generated Canadian way of war governed by influences other than military effectiveness.

The United States, Canada's closest ally, has a coherent and transparent military strategy process based on an articulated foreign policy guided by national interest, which is both vital and important.[3] This material is updated on a regular basis – yearly, like the National Security Strategy, to every four years, such as the Quadrennial Defense Review.[4] On the other hand, Canada's foreign policy and associated military strategy lacks coherency and is opaque. There is no systemic governmental process, policy documents are not regularly updated, the last defence policy was released in 2017, and the link between foreign and defence policies is attenuated at best. Additional decisions pertaining to defence and security are based on other factors than achieving positive military outcomes. This has constructed a disjointed

approach to military activities which has manifested a way of war (or employment of military forces) that is shaped by considerations of the moment rather than regularly reviewed strategy.[5]

This chapter will examine the Canadian Way of War that has evolved in the 20th century to illustrate that without coherent strategy Canada's military is used in a less than efficacious manner. This suboptimal usage is persistent because it meets political needs. Furthermore, by looking at the use of CANSOF during the Afghanistan evacuation in August 2021, one can discern that having readily available special operators enables the Canadian Government in facilitating its bad strategic behaviour.

THE EVOLUTION OF A CANADIAN WAY OF WAR

Starting with Confederation, Canada has aligned itself with its closest ally starting with the British Empire. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Canada's foreign policy and military strategy were mainly defined by its relationship with Britain. Participation in the Boer War (1899-1902) and First World War (1914-1918) were determined by British interests. Even with the Statute of Westminster (1931), which established legislative equality between Canada, other commonwealth dominions and Britain, Canada was sensitive to and supported British strategic interests up until the Second World War.[6]

During the Second World War (1939-1945) Canadian national security interests and the foreign and defence policies that governed them became more aligned with that of the United States. Much of this bilateral defence cooperation that followed over the course of the Second World War and in the subsequent decades, lay in the uncertain times after the German invasion of France in 1940. The Ogdensburg Agreement signed by Prime Minister Mackenzie King and President F.D. Roosevelt strengthened defence and security connections between the two countries and formalized North Americanism through the implementation of a North American Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD). This pact increased what prominent Canadian Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs Oscar D. (O.D.) Skelton wrote was "the imperative necessity of close understanding between the English-speaking peoples."[7] In fact, the Ogdensburg Agreement had been presaged in August 1938 when, while accepting an honorary doctorate at Queen's University, in Kingston, Ontario, Roosevelt had emphasized the close relationship of the peoples of the

two countries and said "I give to you assurance that the people of the United States will not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other Empire."[8]

The early years of the Second World War proved challenging for the nations fighting the Axis powers of German, Italy, and Japan. The losses in all theatres of war forced normally conventional military thinkers to draw upon their experience of small wars and imperial policing to examine unconventional options. Forces that were considered "unconventional" were debated in the hopes of taking advantage of enemy weaknesses and forcing the redeployment of their military personnel to protect vital installations, routes, population centres, and lines of communication. This type of activity offered the benefit of using much smaller forces to occupy much larger opposing elements. In 1940, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill rather famously referred to newly organized Commando type forces as having the mandate to "set Europe ablaze."[9] In this atmosphere, the First Special Service Force (FSSF), a combined American and Canadian formation was formed.

The FSSF had lasting strategic impact on the form and shape of Canadian defence. The 1940 Ogdensburg agreement set the foundation of Canadian and United States bilateral defence arrangements with the PJBD, as well as the groundwork for the 1946 Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) – which facilitated American and Canadian military staff engagement. The challenges imbued in the formation, training, administration, and operations of a bi-national formation that the FSSF encountered and overcame had significant resonance with the militaries of both countries. Furthermore, its successes assisted in solidifying a desire to implement cooperative postwar bi- and multi-national defence arrangements. The FSSF was a significant indicator of the possibilities and results that Canada and the United States could achieve with integrated forces. Also, this bi-national formation presaged the postwar defence cooperation between Canada and the United States in addition to the use of CANSOF to create strategic outcomes.[10]

Consequently, since the Second World War Canada has aligned its interests with its closest partner – the United States – and a Canadian way of war has emerged due to the influence of budgets, public opinion, and bilateral defence arrangements. During the Cold War and immediate post-Cold War period, five distinct trends emerged. First, national policy is at times predicated by alliances and the linking of national interests to

military objectives is not always clear. Second, military force is not always deployed based on martial considerations but is determined by political interests. Consequently, force deployments are normally incremental over time in response to political deliberations. Third, there is a requirement, seldom adhered to but constantly reinforced, for maintaining a standing expeditionary force to meet the national requirements. Fourth, Canada commits tactical forces because of allied strategy and sometimes has little input into the operational decisions, which dictate how the tactical forces will be employed. As a result, strategic ends, operational ways, and tactical means are not always a smooth linear progression, but often disjointed. Finally, there seems to be an initial lack of adaptation and innovation building upon the lessons of the past.[11]

The absence of strong overarching security policy during the Cold War combined with the desire to achieve saliency as a middle power[12] within existing alliances permitted the Canadian military to become focused on its own geostrategic commitments. All three services – Navy, Army, and Air Force – developed close affiliations with corresponding American military forces and viewed military strategy through the prism of their support for a *Pax Americana* that took the form of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the North America Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and the United Nations (UN). Accordingly, without a national focus Canadian defence policy remained diffuse.

Canadian deployments to Somalia in 1993, Rwanda during 1993-1994, and disclosure of incidents at Bacovici in the former Yugoslavia in 1993-1994 created a great deal of public and private introspection regarding the nature of the profession of arms in Canada.[13] The 9/11 terrorist attacks provided the Canadian Government the impetus to re-establish defence and security credentials with the Americans, which took form in a military contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.[14] With the commitment of these forces in the context of alliances with the United States, Canada – whether knowingly or not – became bound to a commitment that inexorably grew with time. In the 21st century this approach exemplified a way of war that has six salient characteristics:

1. military strategy is determined by alliances and a desire for saliency;

2. Canada's forces are employed tactically with sometimes little national input;

3. military force is not always deployed in a coherent fashion;

4. the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are not in the forefront of public interest;

5. there is a tension in civil-military relations; and

6. Whole of Government (WoG) operations are a necessity, not always observed.

Together this creates a situation in which Canada is focused upon contributory warfare and is a consumer but not a maker of strategy.[15]

AFGHANISTAN

Canada's military commitment to the NATO mission in Afghanistan initially lacked clear strategic objectives, or a vision of what mission success would look like beyond stabilizing the security environment. Consequently, an initial lack of comprehension by Canadian politicians resulted in an approach to the military mission that demonstrated a lack of understanding of the Afghanistan conflict. That miscomprehension did not change until casualties started to mount in 2006 after the move from Kabul to Kandahar.[16] This relocation was part of the larger strategy of establishing Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), which initially were coordinating mechanisms that incorporated military and civil affairs, bringing together government departments to ensure development and reconstruction efforts were aligned with the demands of the mission. The PRTs later became more involved with supporting local governance and priorities.[17]

The continuing absence of clear strategic goals resulted in unfocused military objectives and, from 2006 until the surge of 2009, piecemeal force employments. Despite some early success, notably Operation Medusa – a large-scale combat operation that destroyed organized Taliban units in Kandahar – Canadians were primarily used as a "fire brigade" rushing around the south to reinforce other NATO forces, or to fight. Some Canadian officers dryly referred to these activities as "whack-a-mole" when discussing the constant shifting of tactical deployments in response to, or attempting to pre-empt, insurgent activities. Also, this lack of tactical coherency sometimes resulted in criticism regarding Canada's commitment.[18] To address the lack of a national campaign plan that explained – to

the Canadian military, government and public – the use of tactical force, the Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command (CEFCOM) created a document that integrated a number of international and national civilian policy documents, as well as military plans and directives. The resultant document, which wove together these sometimes conflicting plans, was described by the former Commander CEFCOM, Lieutenant-General (Retired) Michel (Mike) Gauthier, as presenting a "challenge."[19] During this time the use of CANSOF to conduct counter-terrorism and other operations grew correspondingly.

The lack of standing expeditionary force capabilities and key functions such as intelligence, special operations, armour, artillery, aviation, air transport, plus others to upgraded equipment and precision weaponry created unanticipated costs and an impetus to continue Canadian Forces structural transformation. These initiatives began in earnest with the appointment of General Rick Hillier as the Canadian Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in 2005.[20] These changes included implementation of the current Canadian military structure, like the creation of Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM).

Canadian efforts to build coordinated inter-departmental activities in Afghanistan evolved in conjunction with the growth of the NATO mission, national debate and at the end of the combat mission in 2011. While this discussion and the record it generated is wide-ranging and contains much of value from both strategic and tactical perspectives, points for immediate importance for future WoG practices were derived from this collaboration. Of all this discussion, the need for more intra-government contact, understanding and collaboration prior to such missions was critical. In the years since the end of Canada's engagement in this combat mission, it is evident that while these lessons were identified they were not learned. During the evacuation of Afghanis from Kabul in August 2021, it was clear that this operation, named Aegis, was ill-coordinated and ineffective. During that time, Hillier gave an interview to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *Power and Politics* show saying: "Canada had 'not shone greatly' and that the operation had been 'so cluttered by bureaucratic clumsiness, bureaucratic inefficiency, bureaucratic paperwork.'"[21]

Operation Aegis in and of itself can be taken as an example of the use of special forces to obviate a lack of foreign policy, along with a deficiency of related defence strategy and capacity. Despite these changes that Hillier

commenced at the beginning of his tenure as CDS, one could opine that in the post-Afghanistan period from 2014 onwards various challenges from capital equipment procurement, maintenance of force structures, recruiting and a series of scathing reviews of CAF culture and leadership, the CAF still lacks the capability to generate and mount standing expeditionary forces.[22] In the absence of standing (and readily deployable) capability to perform non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) filled this immediate need. Arguably, this mission would have better suited readily deployable conventional forces – if they existed.

While CANSOF is structured and trained to support non-combatant evacuations, the conduct of large-scale NEO operations is better accomplished by conventional ready reaction forces with special operations support.[23] Operation Aegis, as noted by Hillier, was not an overwhelming success for the joint forces implicated. As part of that outcome, the availability and responsiveness of special operations forces allowed the Canadian Government to react in the face of domestic and international opinion that Canada needed to do something to evacuate Afghans who had supported Canada during its participation in the Afghanistan conflict. One CSOR platoon second-in-command later wrote that the operation was unlike any for which they had trained:

> On Op AEGIS, I was a Platoon Warrant Officer with the CANSOFCOM high readiness ground force. Our platoon deployed on short notice with a variety of possible tasks in an uncertain security environment. Once we landed in Kuwait, we quickly got up to speed on the challenges and began planning for a variety of tasks that included force protection, the screening of Canadian citizens and eligible national Afghans, and the recovery of those from the gates surrounding the international airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. Shortly after landing at the Kabul airport, it became clear to everyone that the nature and complexity of the task was like nothing anyone had ever experienced before.[24]

In effect, CSOR became an immediate solution to a Canadian strategic need coupled with an *ad hoc* approach to defence and security. In this case, its use aptly illustrates the concept advocated by psychologist Abraham Maslow in which he proposed that reliance on a habitual tool created a situation in which that instrument was used for all purposes. He opined,

"I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."[25] As one former Canadian intelligence officer testified to the House of Commons Special Committee on Afghanistan:

> The moment that President Donald Trump announced to the world that America was leaving Afghanistan, I think anyone who was in Afghanistan knew the writing was on the wall as to what was going to happen. The question was when, and then President Biden gave a date.
>
> There were lots of opportunities long before July or August 2021 to bring all the Afghans who helped us, who we had records of, over to Canada. There is no excuse whatsoever for us to have waited until August 2021, when we knew that Afghanistan was folding. There's no excuse whatsoever for waiting that long.[26]

While counter intuitive, it is understandable in the face of the Canadian Way of War, and the availability of CSOR to fill a hitherto unconsidered strategic need. In fact, the House Special Committee on Afghanistan identified the inability of the Canadian Government to do strategic security planning with the following conclusion:

> When it comes to Canada's machinery of government, this study has shown that Canada has the capacity to act and systems to coordinate efforts once a situation reaches the level of a full-fledged crisis. However, what was less clear is if the government is equipped, structured, and instructed to act in the same cohesive and timely manner in response to situations that require foresight and action over longer time horizons, before a worst-case scenario has taken hold. Such an approach, as was called for with Afghanistan, requires not only the exchange of information between departments and the harnessing of institutional memory, but clear leadership and decision-making to guide all aspects of Canada's response. In the words of Warda Meighen, Partner, Landings LLP, "We have to be prepared before the moment requires it."[27]

This statement in and of itself, highlights that the Canadian Government reacts in a strategic crisis, in this case using CANSOF, rather than plans and creates the necessary strategy in advance of crises.

One could argue that Operation Aegis was an isolated event regarding the use of CANSOF; however, that would seem to go against the ever-increasing use of special forces to address many strategic needs. A prominent British-American professor of international relations, Colin S. Gray, predicted in the 1990s that due to their agility and ability there would be a rising use of special operations forces to meet strategic needs, but added the warning that they could easily be committed to operations that were politically or strategically unwise.[28] Since then special operations researchers H. Christian Breede and Kevin D. Stringer have identified a number of broad trends in the use of CANSOF. Together these trends indicate the continuing and ever-increasing use of SOF in an ever-volatile security environment.[29] Operation Aegis aptly illustrates these points. In the absence of strategy and strategic planning, along with a perceived political need to provide a Canadian contribution, the most readily available tool is CANSOF, whether, or not, it is the most appropriate force to address the problem.

CONCLUSION

> Importantly, SOF represent a hard-wired military capability in peace, competition, conflict and war. Their earlier manifestation of filling 'gaps and seams' during periods of crisis to buy time to configure themselves to deal with a military emergency is no longer applicable. SOF have proven themselves to be a reliable, consistent, integral miliary capability that offer decision-makers a myriad of capabilities and policy options that allow for efficient, effective and timely responses. Within the context of GPC [Great Power Competition]/strategic competition, SOF remains the force of choice.[30]

Former Deputy Commander CANSOFCOM and current SOF researcher Colonel (retired) Bernd Horn, PhD, accurately captures the current visualization of CANSOF by the Canadian Government. In the absence of strategic planning SOF is a ready solution and employed in a fashion that corresponds to the 21st century Canadian Way of War. This fashion of using military forces is not linked to military achievement and is somewhat incoherent. It reflects a lack of strategy and strategic thinking, strained civil-military relations, public disinterest, dearth of standing expeditionary force capability, and the political needs of contributory warfare.

Given this discussion, Operation Aegis exemplifies both the Canadian Way of War and the derivative increasing use of CANSOF as the "force of choice"

during international contingencies. While much of this employment is outside the control of CANSOFCOM it is necessary to acknowledge the discursive effect that the strategic agility and operational proficiency of CANSOF has in enabling bad strategic behaviour by the Canadian Government. In doing so, this awareness can also sensitize CANSOF to ways in which advice can be provided to predict and construct more robust strategic options (and strategy) that simply does not rely upon throwing SOF at the problem and seeing what works.

Since the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, Canada has been enmeshed in NATO activities aiding Ukraine. The elements of Alliance power being focused on the Russians are considerable and comprehensive, integrating diplomatic, information, military and economic instruments in a coordinated and holistic fashion. Canada too is bringing to bear in a like fashion various governmental elements to support this effort. However, there seems to be little use of systemic structures and processes to ensure that Canada's efforts are integrated and focused to obtain the maximum effect achievable. As the Canadian Government looks towards deeper involvement with NATO in Ukraine, CANSOFCOM needs to heed the lessons identified by its contribution to Operation Aegis and assist with creating sound national military strategy in the advance of crisis. Otherwise, to satisfy the needs of contributory warfare, for international problems requiring immediate Canadian contributions CANSOF run the risk of becoming the implement of choice – regardless of the appropriateness of the tool.[31]

CHAPTER 4

SOF/CONVENTIONAL INTERFACE: A FUTURE OPERATING CONCEPT FOR SMALL STATES

Major (retired) Tony Balasevicius

Traditionally, Special Operations Forces (SOF) have been utilized by states to achieve strategic effects. As renowned strategist, Colin Gray, points out, SOF "are a tool of statecraft that can be employed quite surgically in support of diplomacy, of foreign assistance (of several kinds), as a vital adjunct to regular military forces, or as an independent."[1] Simply stated, SOF provide state leaders with a variety of cost efficient, and effective options that can be utilized discreetly.

In fact, for many small states SOF have become an "easy button" for both cost and effectiveness. A principal advantage of SOF is their political usefulness in supporting larger powers as a military contribution to an alliance or coalition operation. Although they can be a relatively small and inexpensive force to deploy, their cachet ranks high with partners due to SOF capabilities and effectiveness. Nonetheless, SOF utility reaches far beyond this narrow employment stream. What is often overlooked by SOF and conventional military decision-makers alike is their value in working closely with both regular military and irregular forces. This relationship needs to become a primary focus of SOF moving forward.

This different outlook for SOF is due to the evolving future security environment, which is changing as different forms of warfare are converging to create a far more complex battlefield. Conventional military operations, irregular warfare, hybrid war, acts of terrorism and criminal activities are now occurring simultaneously on the battlefield. To counter these new threats, Western forces must become more flexible and adaptive. One means to achieve this is to integrate SOF into an Army's employment concept using unconventional warfare (UW) to train and coordinate the operations of irregular forces.

Such a concept would formally bring irregular forces into the operating doctrine of the conventional military. Properly done, it would give Western states a more holistic force structure with a flexible doctrine of battlefield saturation. It would also provide armies with the ability to transition between hybrid, conventional and counter-insurgency (COIN) operations simply by emphasizing different aspects of the doctrine and/or the forces available.

In fact, the idea of bringing a variety of forces together, or pairing conventional and irregular forces onto the same battlefield is nothing new. Such tactics have been used extensively throughout history with great success and have sometimes been referred to as hybrid or compound warfare. In order to better understand these types of warfare and what roles SOF could play within their context, it is important to first understand the character of the evolving security environment.

THE FUTURE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The international order is continuing to move from a unipolar world dominated by the United States and its Western Allies towards a multipolar one where both China and Russia are playing increasing roles on the world stage. In fact, international relations between China, Russia and the Western World are currently characterized by very intense competition that has been focused on gaining economic, political, and military advantage using both direct and indirect (asymmetric) methods to achieve desired outcomes.[2] As a result, Western states have begun facing a variety of threats covering the full spectrum of conflict, with multiple threats occurring simultaneously.[3]

In different ways, both China and Russia have driven much of the change in the character of contemporary conflict. Both have clearly articulated their public belief that the world is now in a continual state of conflict. They also believe that wars are no longer declared and, having begun, will move in different and unfamiliar directions.[4] According to General Valery Gerasimov, the Chief of the Russian General Staff, this new "template refers to asymmetrical operations using a host of [strategic] capabilities that can be used to nullify an enemy's advantages in conventional armed conflict."[5]

Recent operations carried out by the Russians suggest that the core capabilities needed to affect change in this new environment will rely heavily on the employment of Special and Specialized Forces linking up

to coordinate the activities of internal opposition groups throughout a targeted country.[6] Once this has been achieved, the idea is to expand influence so that an operating front can be established throughout as much of the enemy's territory as possible. These actions are combined with information operations, cyber warfare, legal warfare, economic war, and other state level activities that are all linked to strategic outcomes and are constantly modified to meet the specific needs of a particular operation.[7]

Experience has shown that such methods, employed and sequenced properly, can, in a very short period, throw a stable and thriving state into a web of chaos, humanitarian upheaval, and outright civil war, making it susceptible to foreign intervention or takeover.[8] Peer adversaries believe that the idea of collapsing a state onto itself through social upheaval is becoming an important part of future conflict's underlying methodology. As such, conventional warfare is being downplayed to focus efforts on the broader use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures. These tools are coordinated with the protest or resistance potential of a target population to increase complexity.[9] Examples of this trend can be found in the Russian takeover of Crimea and the Donbas region of Ukraine in 2014. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has also used elements of this strategy in Libya, where a no-fly zone and naval blockade were combined with the use of private military contractors working closely with the armed formations of the Libyan opposition.[10]

Critical to this change has been the introduction of new information technologies, which have opened the information space to the widespread use of asymmetrical applications. For the most part, this focus has been used to reduce the fighting potential of an enemy through influence operations.[11]

Should conflict need to escalate into all out warfare, asymmetric activities will be followed up by the extensive use of high-precision weapons with simultaneous and heavy strikes on the enemy's units and important military, political and economic facilities. If this is not effective, it is likely that these peer adversaries will begin employing a greater range of conventional military capabilities.[12]

This outcome would mean conventional military operations would be undertaken to roll over areas of resistance to destroy enemy units. Where possible SOF will be used to coordinate many of the operations between conventional and irregular forces. This function would also include attacks

on specific targets and reconnaissance missions to identify enemy units and to call-in missile/artillery/and air strikes. It is expected that these types of actions will destroy a defender's remaining military capability while manoeuvre operations by ground forces continue to surround points of resistance, take additional territory, and carry out mopping-up operations.[13]

A major concern for national security forces is the possibility that violent extremism and international criminal organizations will be employed by competitors to threaten target populations. Their aim, over the long-term, would be to slowly erode social stability. The fear is that these threats will come together with state and other "non-state actors to augment and diversify power projection. In the process, these internal threats will have the ability to access greater and more sophisticated resources."[14]

For military forces, the biggest change on the battlefield is the move towards a greater expansion of operations across all military domains. This development includes Land, Sea, Air, Space, and Cyberspace. More importantly, these domains are becoming more integrated with operations on the cognitive, moral, and physical planes. This trend is moving the focus of conflict towards multi-domain operations as competitors seek to simultaneously dominate the physical, virtual, and cognitive planes in order to gain tactical and operational advantages in the various domains.[15]

The move towards multi-domain operations is forcing decision cycles and reaction times to become more compressed. Furthermore, Western militaries are increasingly required to conduct operations under persistent surveillance, as they seek to overcome advanced capabilities from global competitors. Additionally, major players are becoming more proficient in the areas of cyber warfare, counter-space, electronic warfare, and the use of robotics in their operations.[16]

As a result, both peer state competitors and sophisticated non-states actors are starting to challenge Western dominance in almost every domain. This development is a significant change for Western military forces, who have long maintained both a technological advantage and overall dominance in all domains over their adversaries particularly on the battlefield.[17]

Notably, Western military assessments of future conflict have acknowledged the rise in interstate competition suggesting that sub-threshold asymmetric activities will complicate decision-making and responses.[18] In the

short term, it is expected that strategic and tactical level actions will be increasingly compressed.[19] The continued emphasis on asymmetric approaches, will likely force greater integration of non-state actors and various forms of irregular warfare in conjunction with conventional operations.[20] As such, it is likely these changes will see a rise in what some are referring to as hybrid wars.

HYBRID WARS – THE FUTURE BATTLEFIELD

In a 2007, a monograph entitled, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars,* by Dr. Frank Hoffman from the Foreign Policy Research Institute, laid out the key principles that have come to define Western perceptions on hybrid war. In this work he defined hybrid wars as incorporating "a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorism acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder."[21] He also suggested this form of warfare is blurring the lines between different types of conflict, those who fight them, and the technologies that are used.[22] In this respect, Hoffman saw the world entering a period where multiple types of warfare would be used simultaneously by flexible and sophisticated adversaries.[23]

Hoffman believed, "The future does not portend a suite of distinct challenges with alternative or different methods but their convergence into multi-modal or Hybrid Wars."[24] He emphasized that units operating in such an environment would be hybrid in both form and application. As an example, he pointed out that future conflict would include hybrid organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas, employing a diverse set of capabilities. Additionally, he envisioned states shifting their conventional units to irregular formations and adopting new tactics, as the Iraqi *Fedayeen* did in 2003 and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) did from 2012 onward.[25] Hoffman also highlighted the fact that although these activities could be carried out by the same, or separate units, they would usually be operationally and tactically coordinated within the main battlespace by one headquarters to achieve synergistic effects.[26]

One of Hoffman's most critical observations pertained to how hybrid wars would function in terms of the interaction between regular and irregular elements. He revealed that historically, many wars had seen both regular and irregular elements fighting; however, these elements traditionally operated

in different theatres and/or in different formations. He hypothesized that in the future this may no longer be the case. In fact, he declared that it would not be unusual for the irregular element to become operationally decisive, rather than just being relegated to the traditional role of a secondary player.[27]

Hoffman's ideas regarding the simultaneous use of multiple forms of warfare, the employment of state-level hybrid war, and the emergence of the irregular element as a decisive, or at least an equal partner, in open conflict is slowly developing into conventional military thinking. Along with this concept is the idea that operations are becoming more distributed as the battlefield expands and fighting becomes more dispersed and complex.

DISTRIBUTED OPERATIONS WAR-FIGHTING CONCEPT

The modern concept of dispersion in warfighting, was researched and developed by the United States Marine Corps and initially published as a war-fighting concept, *Distributed Operations* (DO), in April 2005. This document was subsequently refined and adopted in various forms by other Western states. The concept was specifically designed to deal with adaptive enemies operating in a complex environment by providing conventional forces with the ability to decentralize both decision-making and force distribution as necessary.

More importantly, distributed operations are designed to provide commanders with the ability to employ tactical units across the depth and breadth of the non-linear battlespace.[28] As the document states, "Distributed Operations describes an operating approach that will create an advantage over an adversary through the deliberate use of separation and coordinated, interdependent, tactical actions enabled by increased access to functional support, as well as by enhanced combat capabilities at the small-unit level."[29]

The publication explains, "The essence of this concept lies in the capacity for coordinated action by dispersed units, throughout the breadth and depth of the battlespace, ordered and connected within an operational design focused on a common aim."[30]

At the tactical level, distributed operations envisions manoeuvre units operating in a disaggregated fashion. Companies, platoons, and sections can disperse beyond the range of mutually supporting organic direct fires, but would remain linked through a common command and control

network. To do this, units need to be organized, trained, and equipped to facilitate such operations. This requirement means, particularly at the lower levels of command, that they would need a host of new equipment and training. The trade-off would reduce vulnerability to enemy observation and fire. However, with all these changes forces still need to possess sufficient combat power to close with, and destroy, the enemy.[31]

To maintain the ability to destroy the enemy or support other operations, distributed units need the capability to rapidly re-aggregate.[32] This ability to distribute and aggregate is necessary to provide commanders with the capability to operate using the fuller range of tactical employment methods that are complementary in character. For example, the concept envisions sea-based forces projecting power using ship-to-objective manoeuvre in an aggregated fashion while being complemented by additional units using distributed operations.[33]

FINDING THE RIGHT EMPLOYMENT CONCEPT

Understanding this problem is one thing, finding a way to integrate and manage the various capabilities on the battlefield is another. Part of the answer lies not so much in attempting to find new capabilities as it does in finding new ways to bring current capabilities, such as heavy, medium, and light ground forces together with SOF/irregular forces onto the battlefield within an integrated and flexible doctrine. In this case, the challenge is in finding the right tactics to effectively employ SOF/irregular forces by allowing them to be coupled to conventional forces, while allowing the two groups to break apart when necessary. One option could be the integration of SOF/irregular and light forces into the part of the construct for dispersed operations, while maintaining medium and heavy forces to carry out more of the aggregate work.

In this case, SOF could be integrated into the employment of this concept using UW. This approach allows the further integration and employment of irregular forces into the larger operating doctrine. This construct, properly done, creates a holistic force structure operating from a common and flexible doctrine of battlefield saturation.

Such a doctrine and force structure would also give Western armies incredible flexibility to deal with the complexities of future conflict by allowing them to have the ability to quickly transition between hybrid, conventional

and COIN operations simply by emphasizing different aspects of the doctrine and forces that are available.

Interestingly, the idea of bringing these different types of forces together is nothing new. In fact, it has been used extensively throughout history and with great success. Moreover, the idea of pairing conventional and irregular forces onto the same battlefield is also nothing new and has sometimes been referred to as compound warfare.[34]

COMPOUND WARFARE

Compound warfare has been defined as the simultaneous use of conventional and irregular forces against an enemy.[35] According to Thomas M. Huber, editor of *Compound Warfare: That Fatal Knot,* operations of the regular and the irregular forces are extremely complementary. He explains that the irregular forces can give important advantages to the regular force, such as developing superior intelligence information while suppressing enemy intelligence. They can also provide supplies and quick passage through territory that they occupy, while denying these to an enemy.[36]

Huber also believes that regular forces can give important advantages to irregulars. For example, they can pressure the enemy to withdraw forcing them into, or out of, areas where irregulars are operating, thus, creating the conditions for greater freedom of action. "The main force can provide strategic information, advising the guerrillas of when and where to act to accommodate the overall effort."[37]

From an historical perspective, Huber's thesis appears to have merit as there are numerous examples of armies employing various forms of compound warfare. The more famous cases include Wellington's use of irregulars in Spain (1808 and 1814), Mao Zedong in China's revolutionary wars (1927 to 1949), and Ho Chi-Minh in Vietnam's wars of independence (1945-1975).[38] In fact, compound warfare was an integral part of the early Canadian "way of war" as both the English and French used conventional and militia units in North America that integrated irregular forces, such as indigenous allies during much of the 18th and early 19th centuries.[39]

Interestingly, French Canadian militiamen adapted these tactics to the conditions of fighting in the North American wilderness faster and better than their English counterparts, and for this reason they usually had a tactical

advantage. Eventually, the British discovered that they could overcome this very effective form of warfare by adopting similar tactics.[40] Michael Pearlman, associate professor of history at the United States Army Command and General Staff College, asserts, "The British did more than slavishly copy the French. They domesticated irregular operations… [this was done] by substituting rangers for Indian auxiliaries, and then more reliable light infantry regulars for American rangers."[41] Ironically, once the British had developed a capacity for irregular warfare, they used it to great effect on their enemies, and even exported the idea to the Spanish theatre of war where they ravaged a far superior French force. The number of irregulars operating with Wellington's forces during the Spanish campaign provides some insight into effectiveness of compound warfare. Huber states that "France had 320,000 troops in Spain at the height of its presence in 1810 and… during their six-year campaign, French forces lost 240,000 men. Of these, 45,000 were killed in action against conventional forces, 50,000 died of illness and accident, and 145,000 were killed in action against guerrilla forces." By comparison, he estimates that "…Wellington's army in Spain at its height had only about 40,000 troops, with some 25,000 Portuguese forces attached." Incredibly, despite enjoying a conventional force advantage of four to one, the French were unable to achieve any type of measurable success let alone victory during the six-year campaign.[42]

The synergy derived from combining regular and irregular operations at both the tactical and operational level makes compound warfare especially effective for operations by smaller forces over large areas and in difficult terrain. If properly developed, such operations would significantly enhance the flexibility and combat effectiveness of any smaller state's future doctrine.[43] However, if such a concept were to be integrated into that doctrine, a capability would be needed that could organize, train, and employ irregular forces and conventional light forces within the framework of a small state's campaign plan. This requirement is where SOF come in.

As SOF are likely to play the central role in the initial phases of any future conflict, their operations would also set the battlefield framework for any escalation and subsequent move to conventional force operations. The key capability SOF would need to bring to the table for this modern version of compound/hybrid warfare to be effective is unconventional warfare.[44]

UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In its most basic terms, UW can be defined as the ability to organize, train, equip, advise, and assist indigenous and surrogate forces in military and paramilitary operations. According to the American *Joint Special Operations Joint Publication 3-0517,* UW is operations "that involve a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source."[45] The publication explains that "UW is unique in that it is a SO [special operation] that can either be conducted as part of a geographic combatant commander's overall theater campaign, or as an independent, subordinate campaign. When conducted independently, the primary focus of UW is on political-military objectives and psychological objectives."[46]

Yet, UW has not been well received or understood by conventional military commanders, which may be the reason it originated outside of the armed forces establishment. Despite this lack of interest on the part of the military, the American and British Governments devoted significant effort to such activities during the Second World War as both the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) were set up to coordinate various UW activities in occupied countries in Europe and Asia. These activities included the insertion of teams to support and coordinate existing resistance movements.[47] One such organization was based on a three-man liaison team, commonly referred to as Jedburgh. These teams consisted of a British or American officer, a French officer, and a radio operator, who would be deployed into areas known to have active resistance movements with sufficient arms to supply about one hundred men.[48]

Once deployed, teams contacted local authorities or other allied organizations to distribute arms and coordinate offensive operations. In the process, they attempted to convince local resistance leaders to be selective in their assaults. According to historian Denis Rigden, "In giving such advice the agents needed to be skilled negotiators, able to persuade guerrilla groups when to strike and when to hold back."[49] Rigden emphasizes that "when Resistance fighters undertook operations independently, it usually achieved little or nothing of military value and often resulted in the enemy taking savage revenge on the local civilian population. Trained to be aware

of the dangers of rash guerrilla action, SOE agents strove to ensure that all irregular warfare served the strategic aims of the Allied leaders."[50]

In the United States, General William J. Donovan, head of the OSS, believed, that America provided the Allies with a pool of recruits possessing the necessary language and cultural skills for UW and given the proper training, successful candidates could be infiltrated into targeted regions. By necessity, much of the initial training undertaken by the Americans was modeled after the SOE experience. However, over time the Americans developed several of their own unique and innovative concepts for the selection, training, and employment of UW forces.[51] In addition to the Jedburgh teams, the OSS developed and successfully employed the idea of operational groups (OG).

OGs were unique as they were deployed on missions that required a wider range of capabilities than could be provided by the three-man Jedburgh teams. As a rule, an OG was comprised of between fifteen and thirty men and included two specialists, a medical technician, and a radio operator.[52] These groups were organized and trained to work independently or in cooperation with either the Jedburgh or partisans. They undertook a variety of activities that ranged from ambushing enemy columns, cutting lines of communications, and blowing up railroad lines and bridges, to providing supplies to various resistance groups. According to Patrick K. O'Donnell, an expert on Second World War espionage and special operations, "The typical OG team was described as 'a small self-sufficient band of man who might be required to live and fight in the manner of guerrillas.'"[53]

During the war, the success of the OSS validated the concept of UW and provided the SOF with a unique mission. The idea was refined in postwar analysis as members of the OG indicated that their extensive training was effective but felt that some adjustments needed to be made. Specifically, greater emphasis needed to be placed on such things as the operation and maintenance of foreign weapons and vehicles, methods of instruction, French military nomenclature, and radio maintenance and repair.[54] Members of the groups realized that any type of team functioning behind enemy lines for extended periods needed highly developed skills in critical areas, such as communications, medical procedures, weapons knowledge, and vehicle and equipment maintenance and repair.[55]

EMPLOYMENT OF THE UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE CAPABILITY POST WWII

At the end of the Second World War, the OSS was disbanded and most of its operational intelligence activities were handed over to the newly created Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Initially, the United States Army did not see a need to develop an UW capability; however, a growing Soviet threat resulted in the activation of the 10th Special Forces Group (Green Berets), albeit reluctantly, in 1952. From the beginning, the group's main mission was to conduct guerrilla warfare behind any Soviet advance in the event of a Russian invasion of Western Europe.[56] The organization of the 1952 SF operational detachment (OD) was very similar to the OGs that had deployed to France, with the addition of many of the postwar recommendations.[57]

ODs were authorized a strength of 15 men, which included a "detachment commander, an executive officer and 13 enlisted men. In theory, these teams could organize, support and direct a regimental-sized guerrilla unit. The functional specialties used to carry out this mission included medical, demolitions, communications, weapons, [and] operations and intelligence."[58] During the Vietnam War (1959-1975), the Americans had the opportunity to again prove and refine this concept as the Green Berets were tasked to employ indigenous troops using many of the same small-war methods the enemy was using.[59] In fact, for much of the war "the 5th Special Forces Group trained and led Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDGs), which included Mobile Strike Forces ("Mike Forces") and reconnaissance companies that were manned by ethnic minority tribes from the mountain and border regions."[60] These forces carried out reconnaissance along the border regions and provided security for their home bases. The idea of having CIDG forces was to broaden the COIN effort by asserting security over much of the tribal-minority-populated areas of the highlands and remote districts of the Mekong Delta to provide a buffer against Viet Cong infiltration.[61]

Controlling the region allowed the Americans to set up a system of "indigenous trail watchers, whose mission was to locate and report Viet Cong movements near the border. The trail watcher program was significant in that it was the precursor to the border surveillance program, where area development and border surveillance combined to create one of the more valuable components of the CIDG program."[62] Over time, these

forces developed an offensive capability and by 1964 they were carrying out operations against Viet Cong safe havens and interdicting infiltration routes into Vietnam. By 1965, these operations had developed into more aggressive search and destroy missions using larger forces.[63] Other CIDG-type forces included mobile guerrilla teams, which raided enemy base areas using hit-and-run tactics against regular enemy units.

To put these operations into perspective, 2,500 Special Forces soldiers raised, trained, and led an army of 50,000 tribal fighters that carried out operations in some of the most difficult areas in Vietnam. This force patrolled the border areas, provided intelligence, and developed a security force in areas that otherwise may have been controlled by the enemy.[64]

The adaptability and employment of the UW capability has remained valid in the contemporary operating environment. In fact, in the aftermath of 9/11, SOF has played increasingly important roles in military operations throughout the world. As in the case of Afghanistan, they proved they could quickly adapt to changing circumstances. Despite having as few as 300 soldiers on the ground, SOF teams were able to successfully rally unorganized and rival anti-Taliban-opposition groups within the country to focus a Northern Alliance that went on to defeat Taliban forces. These well-planned operations included very intense and precise bombing campaigns that used state of the art equipment coordinated by SOF soldiers. However, what is even more astonishing than the effectiveness of these operations was the speed at which they were accomplished. Only 49 days were needed from the time they became directly involved with operations on the ground to the fall of Kandahar.[65]

TRAINING THE UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE CAPABILITY

In order to meet the specialized requirements of training and controlling irregular forces in operations and achieving the efficiency and results displayed with the CIDGs or with elements of the Northern Alliance during the opening stages of the Afghanistan mission, UW specialists need a specific organizational and training construct. Organizationally, today's UW Company consist of six 12-man Alfa detachments.[66] Each detachment includes a captain, a second-in-command (warrant officer) and 10 non-commissioned officers that are trained in one of five functional areas: weapons, engineer, medical, communications, and operations and intelligence.[67] Training for this organization is quite extensive, with the

process being broken down into a number of phases: individual skills, military occupation structure qualification, collective training, language training and survival and evasion training.[68]

Candidates start with individual skills training that includes land navigation (cross country), marksmanship training, and military operations on urbanized terrain, small unit tactics, mission planning, live fire exercises, and several patrol exercises.[69] General Carl Stiner, former commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), captured the essence of the training conducted when he stated:

> Everyone in an A-Detachment was trained in the following: each soldier had to be an expert marksman on his individual weapon (a pistol) and his M-16 rifle, and be familiar with weapons, such as AK-47s... In the case of larger weapons such as mortars and machine guns, he had to be able to emplace and employ them properly… Each soldier was trained in explosives... If he had no explosives of his own, he was taught how to obtain what was needed to make them from local sources. Each soldier received communications training …[and] was capable of operating any kind of communications gear they might be using. Each soldier received advanced first-aid training...how to establish intelligence nets and escape and evasion nets; how to conduct resupply operations at night; how to set up a field for landing airplanes and bring them in, and how to set up parachute drop zones.[70]

The first phase of training lasts about 65 days, and once completed soldiers move to what is commonly referred to as their functional specialty training. According to unclassified sources, each member of the team is trained in different specialties and it starts with the Detachment Commander. Their training emphasizes the leadership skills and knowledge necessary to "direct and employ other members of his detachment."[71] The second specialty in the team is the Weapons Sergeant, who is given training in "tactics, anti-armor weapons utilization, functioning of all types of U.S. and foreign light weapons, indirect fire operations, man portable air defense weapons, weapons emplacement, and integrated combined arms fire control planning."[72]

The Engineer Sergeant is trained in "construction skills, field fortifications, and use of explosive demolitions." Next is the Medical Sergeant who receives training in "advanced medical procedures to include trauma management

and surgical procedures."[73] Finally, there is the Communications Sergeant. Their training includes the installation and operation of high frequency burst communications equipment, antenna theory, radio wave propagation, was well as communications operations procedures and techniques.[74] The decision regarding who goes into which specialty is based upon several factors including the individual's background, aptitude, desire, and the specific needs of the organization.[75]

Once this specialty training is completed candidates are brought back together for collective training and a final confirmation phase that lasts about 38 days. During this time soldiers are given additional common skills training based upon developing UW fighting techniques.[76] The final exercise in this phase is called Robin Sage and is conducted to amalgamate all the instruction and training. Candidates are placed into simulated detachments and deployed to a fictional country where they must organize the local population into guerrillas.

After completing the collective training phase candidates attend the Special Forces Language School at the Special Operations Academic Facility, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. This phase can last between six months and a year.[77] The importance of language training for UW specialists cannot be overstated as the benefits of speaking the native language were clear when the Jedburgh teams and OGs deployed into the occupied territories during the Second World War. In addition to pure langrage training soldiers also receive extensive cultural training so when they enter a country, they understand local customs and do not alienate the people they want to help.[78]

The ability to operate behind enemy lines for extended periods requires soldiers that can live off their environment and evade local military forces and other authorities. As Captain Shaw, a former officer in the Long-Range Desert Group stated:

> To exist at all in the Qattara Depression or in the Sand Sea in June or in the Gebel Akhdar in February is in itself a science which practice develops into an art. The problem is to make yourself so much master over the appalling difficulties of Nature—heat, thirst, cold, rain, fatigue—that, overcoming these, you yet have physical energy and mental resilience to deal with the greater object, the winning of the war, as the task presents itself from day to day.[79]

For the Americans, this type of conditioning is carried out during the training process and is then reinforced during the Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape (SERE) course. The course is 19 days long and is carried out at Camp Mackall, North Carolina. The aim of the training is to teach soldiers survival, evasion, resistance and escape, and personnel are taught the basics of how to survive if they become separated from their unit; they learn how to live off the land by catching their own food; to evade a hostile force and make their way back to friendly forces; and to avoid capture.

If soldiers are captured, SERE training prepares them to resist the enemy's attempts at exploitation, and to escape from captivity. Classroom lectures can include talks from former prisoners of war who discuss their experiences and how they were able to live through their respective ordeals. The course ends with a final exercise.[80] Once all the phases of training are completed soldiers are posted to their units, where depending upon the unit's specific requirements additional training may take place. Regardless, at this point they are now considered UW specialists.

MOVING TOWARDS A SMALL STATE UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE CAPABILITY

UW has proven to be a versatile operational capability, however, in order to be a successful, part of the force structure would have to be devoted to working within the irregular construct of compound warfare. This requirement means that, at the operational level, UW activities would be focused on establishing and/or maintaining the overall framework for dispersed operations around which conventional forces could manoeuvre. This approach would allow Distributed Operations (DO) forces employing UW to provide tactical support to conventional forces operating in theatre on an ongoing basis.

Such a change would significantly alter the current relationship that has historically existed between SOF, irregular and conventional units. Once these issues have been worked out the possible combinations of UW and conventional forces could be as numerous as the situations they would be expected to encounter. Moreover, it is this flexibility, that is at the heart of compound warfare's true strength, and it is this flexibility that will allow smaller states the ability to deal with increasingly larger threats in the future security environment.

SOF NEED TO MOVE AWAY FROM DIRECT ACTION MISSIONS

When looking at the development of UW within the context of small states, it is important to note the on again, off again, debate within the United States Special Forces community regarding this capability as the debate will likely affect coalition attitudes moving forward. Despite having one of the best and most versatile SOF capabilities in the Western world, USSOCOM appears fixated on Direct Action (DA) missions that emphasize the capturing or killing of terrorists and their leaders. Interestingly, this concept is imbedded into the 2006 *Capstone Concept for Special Operations*, which states, "While conducting surgical direct-action operations on a regional and global scale is imperative for USSOCOM, Joint SOF must also be able to maintain persistent presence with small groups of regional and global experts in areas of strategic interest…"[81]

This emphasis on DA has not necessarily been for the better, nor is it without critics. In a thesis produced for the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, Steven Basilici and Jeremy Simmons asserted that "with the Taliban gone the military was able to direct Special Operations teams to 'capture or kill' so-called High Value Targets (HVTs)." They then go on to explain, "The Military had no understanding of the post-Taliban environment. Instead of applying solutions based on the dynamics of the conflict, it preferred to pursue counterforce operations at the cost of indigenous based operations."[82]

Max Boot, a scholar and leading expert in modern warfare, is very direct in describing the result of these efforts when he states that although "this strategy can occasionally pay off, as with the capture of Saddam Hussein and the killing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi… the immobilization of major enemy leaders proved to be only temporary setbacks for a large-scale, decentralized terrorist movement." Boot's solution is that real progress in the current operating environment can only be achieved by placing greater emphasis on the "more difficult and far less glamorous tasks such as establishing security, furthering economic and political development, and spreading the right information to win over the populace."[83]

As Boot rightly points out, such tasks clearly fall under unconventional warfare. Regardless, of the debates, there are several issues that would have to be resolved if this option were to be pursued by a small state. First, as SOF capabilities are specific to nations it would require some to develop a

distinctly new capability. And with limited resources, such changes would likely have to come at the expense of current capabilities; specifically, a de-emphasizing of DA units.

This transition may prove difficult given the fact that for the last 20 years most of NATO's primary SOF experience has been based on DA units. In fact, the institutional culture within NATO and the United States has derived largely from this counter-terrorist experience and its emphasis on DA. Such a mindset is unlikely to change especially when the American "War on Terror" is placing such a heavy demand on these types of missions, and in the process, validating the current thinking towards the existing force structure.[84]

Another issue that would have to be addressed when considering the development of an UW capability for DO is the need to closely align SOF operations with the small state's conventional forces doctrine. To achieve the necessary coordination SOF, would have to become an integral component within their operations and this new emphasis would require a major cultural shift for many militaries and their SOF. In developing such a capability, small states could better tailor their operational needs to meet the specific requirements of DOs and hybrid war rather than trying to make employment compromises that could reduce DO's full potential.

THE FINNISH ARMY'S INTERPRETATION OF COMPOUND/ HYBRID WARFARE CONCEPT

Many of these ideas have already, to some extent, been incorporated into the Finnish military's modern force structure and doctrine.[85] The country's defence doctrine is to hold vital ground and key points with regional forces while destroying attacking forces using a combination of irregular and conventional mobile forces. This approach is done within the context of a deep territorial defence based on a force employment concept similar to that of compound warfare.

The synergy derived by combining regular (light, medium, and heavy) and irregular operations at both the tactical and operational level makes this type of warfare especially effective for operations by smaller forces. As with the Finnish Army's experience in the Winter War in 1939-1940, when properly employed, such operations can significantly enhance the flexibility and combat effectiveness of an army.

Finnish forces achieve this level of fighting efficiency by breaking down their force structure into general forces, local forces, and support forces. General forces are based on brigades and are the best equipped units within the Army. As such, they are the elements most suited for decisive massed attacks at key points along the battle front.[86]

The Finns use local forces to supplement this conventional military capability. These units consist of a professional cadre, older reservists, and newly raised conscripts. Their primary function is to carry out guerrilla operations in areas that have been overrun by the enemy. When necessary, these local forces are combined with general forces for conventional attacks against a weakened or encircled enemy. Support forces assist the other two forces with logistics, supplies, and other requirements.[87]

In peacetime, the Finns' standing forces are concentrated in areas where they can be deployed to provide the greatest flexibility at hitting back at potential threats in the most likely areas of attack. Any attacking force would have to go through a "deep zone" defence that would take advantage of both geographical features and climatic conditions. Tactics of delay and attrition would be employed to the greatest extent possible to prevent an attacking force from reaching vital areas.[88]

As the attacker's lines of communication lengthen, concentrated counter-attacks would be launched under conditions favouring the more lightly armed Finnish units. In areas seized by an invading army, local forces would continue to conduct guerrilla-type operations, such as ambushes, limited raids on the enemy's supply lines, mining of roads, and carrying out strikes against logistics centres.[89]

These local defence forces would also be expected to operate as self-contained units in relative isolation. The object of such operations is to sap the strength of an attacker as they move deeper into the country, denying them the use of roads and facilities to slow down progress. After enemy combat units have been cut off from supplies and reinforcements, diminishing fighting power, it is expected that local and general forces would be concentrated to deliver strikes against the enemy before dispersing into the wilderness to repeat the process.[90]

After suffering costly damage over a protracted period, the Finns hope that the attackers would find it more expedient to abandon their original objectives and accept some type of a negotiated settlement.[91]

CONCLUSION

There is no question that the trend towards hybrid warfare and the use of DO holds great potential for the future of land battle. With some refinements, a more flexible doctrine is clearly the way ahead for Western military forces that are dealing with these complexities of modern conflict.

The employment of SOF and the development of an UW capability that links the concept of compound warfare to DO and conventional forces will go a long way in dealing with this issue. In the process, it will give Western militaries greater flexibility in responding to unforeseen threats that are lurking within the future security environment.

This added flexibility is derived from the fact that UW is a modular capability. As such, it is suitable for use within a DO construct or as an independent line of effort capable of being carrying out on its own in situations that may be more suited to the national interest. Historically, the potential of UW has never really been fully exploited even by the Americans who developed the modern concept. Perhaps it is time for other Western militaries, particularly small state SOF, to show the world how it should be done. The move towards incorporating an UW capability within DO and better integrating SOF into conventional operations at the tactical and operational level is one whose time has come. All we must do going forward is to look back into the future.

CHAPTER 5

THE FUTURE OF SOF – WHAT'S SPECIAL WITH MULTI-DOMAIN OPERATIONS?

Colonel Christian Jeppsson

Special Operation Forces (SOF) have evolved since their inception in the Second World War. In fact, their evolution during the decades following the end of the Cold War in 1989 have positioned them to ably operationalize the concept of Multi-domain Operations (MDO) as laid out in Western military conceptual thinking.[1] Arguably, there will be cultural and organizational forces pulling SOF towards autonomous, single-service and special operations. However, that approach should be balanced by small states with a demand for multinational joint operations and maintenance of freedom of action for Joint Force commanders as one of the tenets of operational thinking.

THE PAST

The end of the Cold War had major implications for the military forces of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. One of those implications was SOF assuming a new role in modern Western warfare. From nationally retained units, intended primarily for war-time intelligence collection on Warsaw Pact armored echelons and, if opportune, for raids or strikes at a depth beyond conventional assets, these same forces in conditions of peace, were often employed in support of police or intelligence authorities in a domestic counter-terrorism capacity, national legislation allowing. The crisis response operations in the Balkans and the first Gulf War employed national SOF in combined and joint operations, in contrast to the hitherto national, often autonomous and covert, SOF employment or plans thereof. Providing ground-truth on the positions of warring factions in Bosnia or hunting for ballistic missile firing positions in the Iraqi desert, for hand-over to airstrikes, or assault if the former was not possible. The tactical skills needed in the above-mentioned conflicts were still the same or similar to the previous Special Reconnaissance (SR)

and Direct Action (DA) tasks, but in a new context of combined joint operations conducted in coalitions of the willing or under NATO command and thus multinational.[2]

The attack on World Trade Center in New York, on 11 September 2001, and the ensuing Global War on Terror accelerated the evolution of SOF. The skillsets used and types of employment were honed to address the new types of targets and operational environments. Fusing SR and DA skills into high-tempo man-hunting capabilities within a wider counter-insurgency (COIN) or counter-terrorism framework of operations. Military Assistance (MA) tasks were also introduced, until then a rather peripheral task for smaller states' SOF with a slim military role outside national borders.[3] Assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the SOF component in the COIN-campaign plan issued by the then-commander for ISAF, General Stanley McChrystal, the nations contributing SOF to ISAF were tasked with standing up Afghan National Police Response units throughout the country.[4] The intent being to provide Afghanistan the means to handle the Taliban insurgency on their own. Again, a few years later, Western SOF was tasked to support regular and irregular units from Iraq and Syria, fighting the proclaimed caliphate of Daesh in the Levant region. Advising and mentoring, as well at times accompanying local ground forces and enabling Western intelligence and air support, much like during the ousting of the Taliban from Afghanistan in 2001, meant that small states' SOF attained experience also from the offensive application of MA, as compared to the more defensive building partner capacity in the ISAF mission.

The operational environment for SOF operations as described above was made up by a plethora of governmental agencies, international organizations (IO), non-governmental organizations (NGO) and other non-military stakeholders present in the joint operational area. For example, the integration of national Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) or Cyber authorities into SOF deliberate detention operations in support of local security forces.[5] Other examples include the cooperation with IOs and NGOs to gauge the human terrain in an area of operations and the coordination with other international or government agencies, such as the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency or EUROPOL, to deal with drug proliferation, organized crime or corruption, as well as to recognize the complex operational environment of an insurgency or international terrorism and the comprehensive means necessary to counter it.

The major crisis response and stabilization operations of the last decades have steeped Western SOF in multi-faceted and multi-agency joint operational experience. Another factor in the evolution of SOF operations was the technological factor. By a combination of SOF formations being relatively well-funded per capita and comprised of extremely well-trained, experienced and capable operators, coupled with the market value of labelling equipment battle-proven by SOF, technological advances in relevant warfighting equipment are often introduced in SOF units before reaching wider implementation in conventional forces, if at all.

Additionally, the recent decades of SOF evolution have seen the institutionalization of SOF within many national Armed Forces. Importantly, there has been widespread implementation of some sort of Special Operations Command at headquarters and/or defence staff level, with SOF being elevated on par with the traditional services at higher tactical or component command level. In NATO the organizational development since the end of the Cold War is evident. From literally one SOF advisor to Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), to the NATO SOF Headquarters (NSHQ), adjacent to NATO headquarters in Mons, Belgium. NSHQ is nested conveniently somewhere in-between NATO Force Structure and NATO Command Structure. One of the roles for NSHQ is being the custodian for NATO SOF doctrine and driving SOF capability development through NATO Defence Planning Process for allied and partner nations. NSHQ also has a SOF "school house" in nearby Chièvres, Belgium. In short, SOF has settled itself solidly as an important military instrument of power for the future, both nationally and multinationally.

To summarize the evolution of small state Western SOF during the last decades, they have:

- operated in a joint, multinational and multi-agency engagement space;
- fused the DA and SR skills into capabilities to deliver both lethal and non-lethal precise effects in complex environments;
- been enabled by a variety of national or multinational assets, including Space and Cyber;
- introduced both offensive and defensive MA tasks;

- worked *by, with, through* local societies and authorities, even for national SOF without colonial history or global power ambition; and

- positioned themselves to be complementary to the traditional services of the Army, Navy and Air force both in national and multinational military structures.

THE FUTURE

Already a decade ago, former Supreme Allied Command Europe (SACEUR) Commander, Admiral John Stavridis, stated, "The new triad in future conflict is formed by SOF, Cyber and Drones."[6] While the end of the Cold War is epitomized by the TV-pictures from Berlin on the night of 9 November 1989, it is probably more correct to state that the Cold War ended by the dissolution of the Soviet Union on 31 December 1991. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved six months earlier. The period after the Cold War has still to be labelled, but political scientist Francis Fukuyama has been proven wrong. Ideological evolution has not stopped and Western liberal democracy is far from being the final form of human government.[7] If anything, it is in decline and has been for the last 15 years or so.[8] Regardless of what historians will call the decades after the demise of the Soviet Union and whether that period ended with the Russian attack on Georgia in 2008, the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, or the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the world is moving towards multi-polarity. The global environment with regional and global powerful actors, are competing for everything from territory, to natural resources, to global market shares, as well as to the narrative and the rules in the playbook for human co-existence on this planet. Not unlike what political scientist Samuel Huntington categorized as *the Clash of Civilizations*, with the apt sub-title, *and the Remaking of World Order*.[9]

The shift from what was before, into what will become, is visible in the rise of global defense expenditure and the Western world shifting focus from more peripheral crisis response and stabilization operations towards the challenge from great powers like China and Russia and the military capabilities required. The western view on the world we are headed for, and how to tackle it, is summed up in the NATO 2021 policy document, *NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept*, where the direction on western warfighting capability development is laid out by the alliance member nations for the next 20 years.[10]

"Out-fight, Out-think, Out-pace, Out-last, Out-excel and Out-partner" is the bold and ambitious summary of that policy. The NATO concept of Multi-domain Operations (MDO) is introduced as the way to operationalize the policy in the engagement space. MDO is expanding the previous Joint Operations concept from being centred on activities of forces or services towards activities in the land, sea and air domain, introducing space and cyber as two additional domains.[11] The MDO concepts integrate the previous effects-based and comprehensive approaches, in that they seek to achieve converging effects from military and other actors' activities in the three plus two domains into the physical, cognitive and virtual dimension.[12]

Currently, the capability to conduct MDO is still practically under construction in Western armed forces. The NATO definition and vision for MDO has recently been approved by its highest military governing body, the Military Committee, and the full MDO concept is pending approval in the first half of 2023. From there on the concept is to be enshrined into doctrine, and from doctrine implemented in commands and forces of the alliance, member states and partner nations through education, training and exercises, a process which will take several years. That being said, similar national concepts are further into implementation under designations such as *Joint All-domain Operations*, *Multi-domain Integration* or with marginally differing conceptual standpoints on what constitutes a domain versus a dimension. Though there are different nuances as to what the future is going to look like and what military capabilities are going to be effective, the general direction of a multi-polar world characterized by rivalry and competition, challenging the status quo of the current rules-based world order, seems undisputed. That future conflicts will be waged not only in the air, at sea or on the ground, but also in space and cyberspace, by more than purely military forces and that effects will be important not only in the physical realm, but also in the virtual and cognitive dimension is unmistakable in contemporary conflicts like in Ukraine.[13] As an unambiguous statement from the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept directing the alliance force development for the next 20 years posits, "All NATO strategies and activities must be aimed at delivering MDO."[14]

Though the deteriorating security situation is tangible, defence budgets are increasing and policy is directing Western armed forces to being able to conduct MDO, substantial resistance is to be expected. Most Western military establishments have experienced 30 years of reductions and at a first glance the old Russian arch-enemy has materialized itself on the Eastern

border to Western Europe, especially from that geographical viewpoint. Like a carpenter is said to see every problem as a nail, needing only a hammer to solve it, it is to be expected that there will be proponents for replacing what has been disbanded since the end of the Cold War. A tanker arguing for more armored brigades, a fighter pilot demanding more and newer combat aircraft and so forth. The same is also to some extent to be expected from within national SOF, reminiscing previous defence plans. Another aspect on the evolution of warfare in the form of MDO, as described previously, is the shifting focus from coordination of Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) to the coordination of Domains and the conceptual expansion of the engagement space to include two domains that permeates the three traditional domains, namely space and cyberspace. Though socio-technical evolution mandates both battlespace management of weapons and sensors crossing the boundaries of the traditional domains, like surface launched and controlled drones or loitering munitions affecting adjacent domains, the orchestration and synchronization of non-military and military actors to achieve converging effects also in the cognitive and virtual dimension, will challenge contemporary command and control arrangements and staff procedures. The possible adjustments in the span of command and control for components commanders and the traditional services of Army, Navy and Air force will most likely add to the drag as foreseen in the previous paragraph.

THE QUESTION

With the evolution of SOF in the last decades, as well as the challenges to the rules-based world order set in place after Second World War, the formulated Western world response to those challenges and the anticipated organizational inertia to change, where does that put small state SOF looking towards the future? On the one hand, the national, covert, autonomous, deep SOF operations have materialized themselves once again. Especially if those operations are tied to military geography, which is less prone to change. Quite simply, it is easy to follow the well-beaten path. The operational experience of Military Assistance could be applied to a national population building resilience through the formation of organized resistance, both contributing to deterrence, resilience and channeling the energy from a population largely disconnected from the small national military forces of today, as compared to the Cold War.

On the other hand, there will be the multinational pull from organizations like NATO or the European Union (EU), utilizing SOF in the foreseen role as part of the "New Triad." It is worthwhile reflecting on the utility of the old triad, of nuclear armed bombers, nuclear submarines and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles with nuclear warheads, through the lens of the Russian war on Ukraine. Regardless of where the Russian threshold of employing nuclear weapons lies, it's fair to assume that the Western threshold is higher. If a reciprocal exchange of nuclear ordonnance is not preferable, then what are the response options? The prescribed response according to *NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept* is Conventional joint operations, evolving into Multi-domain Operations, waged on Russia or other future challengers to the rules-based world order.

The role for SOF in those operations is well established in both practice, doctrine, as well as force and command structures. On the note of MDO and national capability targets set forth by NATO for multinational *North Atlantic Treaty* Article 5 operations, those requirements need to be balanced with national defence and *North Atlantic Treaty* Article 3, capabilities. It should be a viable option to utilize SOF in a national MDO-enabling role for a small state with limited resources, as many aspects of contemporary special operations fit well within the concept of MDO and the traditional services are likely slower to change.

The answer to the question on the future use of small state SOF is probably not "everything, everywhere, all at once." But it might well be, "most of it, according to the situation and to the extent possible." This chapter may not end with a clear and authoritative answer to the future role of small state SOF; however, it should highlight important considerations for both practitioners, commanders and policy-makers contemplating the future role for SOF. The intent with this chapter is to further the debate on the future use of SOF, thus, sharpening the sword intellectually, before wielding it in the multiple domains of the future engagement space. As Sun Tzu articulated in his famous treatise *The Art of War*, "Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win."[15]

CHAPTER 6

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD: SOF IN THE GRAY ZONE

Colonel (retired) Bernd Horn, PhD

A great focus has been placed on Great Power Competition (GPC) since the release of President Donald Trump Administration's December 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) and in the January 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS).[1] This way ahead was further reinforced by President Joe Biden Administration's *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, in 2021, which underpins the focus on strategic competition with peer and near-peer competitors as a top priority.[2] However, this narrative is flawed. First, at best it is a renewed GPC. States, large and small, have always, throughout history, vied for influence and access to allies, partners, resources, colonies, etc., in their quest to attain political, military, economic and geographic advantage.[3]

Secondly, from the perspective of a resurgent Russia and an emergent China, the competition with the West, whether from an ideological, political, economic, or military perspective, never ended with Cold War. Although Russia was still in the throes of domestic reconstruction and China was still in its early-emergent phase, and even though neither could challenge the military or political strength of the U.S. and its allies in the same capacity as during the Cold War, they continued to "compete" in accordance with their capabilities during this period.[4] They have never stopped attempting to ameliorate their position in global strategic competition.

Finally, it is not only great powers that compete for access and influence to achieve national political objectives. All states, small, medium, and large vie for advantage in the geo-political arena. In essence, strategic competition, a more accurate moniker than GPC, is undertaken by all states at times independently and at other times as part of a regional, international coalition or alliance.

Importantly, the current strategic competition is not as simple as a return to "high-intensity" combat hearkening back to the Cold War stand-off between super-powers. Although conventional forces are required as a deterrent and a backstop to military adventurism by opponents, the preponderance of competition takes places below the threshold of armed conflict.[5]

Regarding the Western approach to strategic competition, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), General Joseph Dunford, conceded, "We're already behind in adapting to the changed character of war today in so many ways." He argued that the West must recognize that the binary peace/war distinction is flawed. Rather, nations must understand conflict as a continuum, as a "range of different modes of conflict with increasing levels of violence, from measures short of armed conflict (Gray Zone) through conventional warfare." He noted that by failing to fully understand the true breadth of our adversaries' stratagems and their strategic narratives, the Western alliance has ceded influence and access to its competitors.[6]

It is this failure, if not unwillingness, to come to grips with the true nature of strategic competition, specifically, understanding the competition space and balancing resources correctly that disadvantages the West. Although competitors such as China and Russia maintain large military forces and continue to improve and expand their arsenals, they remain careful to avoid actions that would possibly activate the conventional war "trip wire." Rather, they maintain the military capability as a substantial, viable and overt threat, but compete on various levels under the threshold of a "hot" or "shooting war." They utilize "Gray Zone" operations, defined as "competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality. They are characterized by ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks."[7]

Gray Zone operations are also captured by the term Hybrid Warfare," defined by NATO as "a wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary, and civilian measures [...] employed in a highly integrated design."[8] NATO political-military expert Chris Kremidas-Courtney described Hybrid Warfare as "the mix of conventional and unconventional, military and non-military, overt and covert actions employed in a coordinated manner to achieve specific objectives while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare."[9]

The National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) of the Netherlands further refined the definition of Hybrid Warfare stating, "it is understood as conflict between states, largely below the legal threshold of an open armed conflict, with the integrated use of means and actors, aimed at achieving certain strategic goals." He characterizes this form of warfare by:

- The integrated deployment of multiple military and non-military means, such as diplomatic, economic and digital means, disinformation, influencing, military intimidation, etc., that belong to the toolbox of state instruments;
- Orchestration as part of a strategy/campaign;
- The intention of achieving certain strategic goals; and
- Important features, namely deception, ambiguity and deniability, which accompany the actions (or could do so), making it difficult to attribute them and respond to them effectively.[10]

Jānis Bērziņš, the director of the Center for Security and Strategic Research at the National Defense Academy of Latvia, explains the shift from "traditional" to "Hybrid Warfare" as the transition:

- from direct destruction to direct influence;
- from direct annihilation of the opponent to its inner decay;
- from a war with weapons and technology to a culture war;
- from a war with conventional forces to specially prepared forces and commercial irregular groupings;
- from the traditional battleground to information/psychological warfare and war of perceptions;
- from direct clash to contactless war;
- from a superficial and compartmented war to a total war, including the enemy's internal side and base;
- from war in the physical environment to a war in the human consciousness and in cyberspace;

- from symmetric to asymmetric warfare by a combination of political, economic, information, technological, and ecological campaigns; and
- from war in a defined period of time to a state of permanent war as the natural condition in national life.[11]

Importantly, the different interpretations of Gray Zone/Hybrid Warfare, or how analysts see competition/conflict in the current security environment, puts the emphasis on non-military actions. The new competitive landscape blends conventional, irregular, asymmetric, criminal and terrorist means and methods to achieve a political objective. This actuality makes the opponent largely irrelevant. Whether a state or non-state actor, adversaries will make use of the proliferation of technology and information that has accompanied globalization. Instruments such as cyber warfare, economic coercion or even blackmail, exploitation of social/societal conflict in a target country and the waging of disinformation campaigns and psychological warfare are all in the inventory. Criminal behaviour and terrorism are also in the repertoire of opponents.

General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, markedly identified the weakness of modern states. He insisted that history has shown that "a perfectly thriving state can, in a matter of months and even days, be transformed into an arena of fierce armed conflict, become a victim of foreign intervention, and sink into a web of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe, and civil war."[12] This state of affairs is due, in his estimation to the fact that "the role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness."[13]

Similar to Gerasimov, General-Lieutenant, Andrey V. Kartapolov, in 2015, then chief of the Russian General Staff's Main Operational Directorate, published an article in the *Journal of the Academy of Military Science* that described the "new-type war." It clearly highlights the fact that the military was not seen as the only actor in strategic competition. Kartapolov argued that the framework of conflict included:

- political, economic, informational, and psychological pressure;
- disorientation of the political and military leadership;
- spreading dissatisfaction among the population;
- support of internal opposition in other countries;

- preparing and deploying armed opposition;
- deployment of special forces;
- conduct of subversive acts; and
- employment of new weapon systems.[14]

Rather than a kinetic solution to conflict, Gerasimov and Kartapolov argue that the focused application of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures, when applied in a coordinated manner with internal discontent and protest, can wield significant results. In addition, all of these actions are also combined, at the right moment, normally to achieve final success, with concealed military action, often "under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation." Gerasimov insisted, "Asymmetrical actions have come into widespread use, enabling the nullification of an enemy's advantages in armed conflict. Among such actions are the use of special-operations forces and internal opposition to create a permanently operating front through the entire territory of the enemy state, as well as informational actions, devices, and means that are constantly being perfected."[15]

A Gray Zone/Hybrid Warfare approach is seen by competitors as a methodology of achieving the political end state without tripping the threshold of war, which would allow an opponent the recourse to legally use force and/or attract international intervention.[16] Gray Zone operations/ Hybrid Warfare create a perfect ambiguity that paralyzes opponents since they are often not even aware that they are under attack.

Gray Zone operations have a distinct impact on all actors in the global arena. From a small state perspective, the choice of participating in strategic competition is far from discretionary. Concerns with sovereignty, resource control and access, membership to coalitions, alliances and international organizations, all make competing independently or within an alliance/ coalition framework necessary. Matching conventional inventories with larger states for most small states is not an option. As such, the use of conventional forces to achieve political objectives is normally out of the question unless contributing capability to a larger alliance/coalition. However, special operations forces (SOF) used in the Gray Zone of strategic competition can level the playing field giving even small states the ability to punch above their weight.

In view of a competition battlespace in which competitors try very hard to remain under the threshold of a shooting/hot-war, the struggle for access, influence, political and economic advantage will remain in the shadows. Irregular warfare will be a dominant methodology. Disinformation campaigns meant to sway, alienate and/or divide populations; cyber-attacks; use of proxy forces; agitation; and support for political opposition and insurgent movements, will be predominant, as will economic and political strategies. As a result, particularly from a small state perspective, SOF will remain an influential military instrument for governments to employ in strategic competition. SOF offers governments a means of dealing with the myriad of threats at a low level utilizing small teams (i.e., a small footprint that does not raise attention) capable of defusing and disrupting threats before they become problematic or violent.

This rationale is why SOF offers small states such great capability and efficiency in strategic competition, especially in the Gray Zone. Its characteristics and skill-sets are perfectly geared to irregular warfare and war in the shadows. SOF operations, and those who perform them, are positioned to conduct clandestine, time-sensitive, high risk (i.e., political and to force) missions in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments. Much of the strategic competition is taking place in the obscure domains and in regions around the world where gaining access and influence to populations and regional governments is key. On this playing field, information warfare, the competition over narrative and gaining acceptance goes hand-in-hand with having impact (i.e., economic, military, political, social) on the ground. Dr. Jonathan Schroden elucidated, "access equals influence; influence equals alignment; and alignment equals power."[17]

Small state SOF, through their military assistance/special warfare/irregular warfare programs such as Security Force Assistance (SFA), Foreign Internal Defense (FID)[18] and Unconventional Warfare (UW), allow for a low cost (both in personnel and financial terms) methodology of developing favourable foreign relations with friendly and at-risk states to further political objectives. Their ability to train foreign security forces to deal with real or potential threats also works to pre-empt crises before they become out of control or trigger larger conflagrations. Whether acting independently or as part of a larger coalition, the contribution of a SOF component is seen as a small state making a significant contribution.

SOF operations around the globe also act to create networks and important "lily-pads" should the larger conventional joint force require basing options in times of crisis or war. In short, SOF programs develop access and influence that furthers advantageous foreign relations in support of national objectives.

Moreover, SOF's situational awareness around the globe through the cultivation of long-term partnerships and creation of networks provides comprehension of emerging trends and threats worldwide. It also allows for influencing actors and events to coincide with desired outcomes. Since most SOF deployments are comprised of small teams, they are rapidly deployable and do not represent an irreversible commitment. Pulling out a SOF team that most did not even realize was deployed is far easier than packing up a larger conventional force with all its equipment.

It is SOF's ability to excel at their non-kinetic mission sets that create security capability within partner nations; develop relationships and networks; target hostile agents, agitators, insurgents and terrorists; as well as promulgate a narrative that counters opponent disinformation, that makes SOF an important player in strategic competition. As two SOF strategists assessed:

> SOF is uniquely positioned, across the globe to thoughtfully combine intelligence, information, space and cyber operations to affect an opponent's decision making, influence diverse audiences, and unmask false narratives. Furthermore, SOF can coordinate operations, activities, and actions in the information environment with those across the other operational domains and, as a matter of routine, fuse "cognitive" and lethal effects to obtain favorable outcomes. The SOF enterprise can inform more comprehensive understanding of adversary global operating systems and develop options that exploit vulnerabilities in those systems. Especially when paired with capabilities in the cyber and space domains, special operations allow the Joint Force to gain positional, political, or informational advantage in competition and enable a rapid transition to combat operations should the need arise.[19]

David Gompert, a former acting Director of (U.S.) National Intelligence, asserted, "any force prepared to address hybrid threats would have to be built upon a solid professional military foundation, but it would also place

a premium on cognitive skills to recognize or quickly adapt to the unknown."[20] To this end, the special operator of today possesses the knowledge, skills, and essential abilities that are effective in counter-Hybrid Warfare. They tend to be well-educated, mature, flexible, resilient, adaptable and through experience able to operate and coordinate with other organizations under virtually any condition. Special operators due to their exceptional physical qualities, skills and training are adept at conducting no to low notice, high-precision, and high-risk tactical operations.

And so, within the context of strategic competition and Gray Zone operations SOF fulfills several important roles:

Crisis Response

Crisis response remains a core task that SOF will continue to perform in the GPC. Unexpected, potentially hazardous events that occur domestically or internationally often require highly-trained and educated operators who can work well in chaos and ambiguity. As such, SOF's characteristics position them to provide high-readiness, rapidly deployable SOF teams or Special Operations Task Forces (SOTFs) that can address a wide range of threats or problems and provide governments with situational awareness, intelligence, as well as kinetic and non-kinetic policy options to achieve political objectives.[21] SOF capability and low cost (i.e., fiscal and potential risk due to small footprint, high level of training and education of operators) provide decision-makers an immediate and effective tool to address crisis and chaos.

Sensor

SOF expertise at Special Reconnaissance enables them to provide covert surveillance, observation and reconnaissance to provide governments and their militaries with ground truth and situational awareness. In contemporary jargon, SOF can provide "illumination" which in essence is clarity on what is/has happened or what is likely to transpire. This function is extremely important since adversary actions are often shrouded with ambiguity and deceit. In addition, although alliance members and friendly nations share information and intelligence, each actor has its own particular national interests so it is essential that a country can determine ground truth for themselves, which allows them to make the necessary decisions based on credible information. As former British Prime Minister Henry John Temple asserted in the mid-1800s, "Nations do not have permanent friends or enemies, only interests."[22]

This SOF "sensor" role is also essential for information gathering, collating and processing into intelligence. It assists as a warning mechanism and individually, or in cooperation with partners, can assist in constructing a clear picture of occurrences in the security environment. As a function of the sensor role, SOF can also provide clear culpability with regard to actor(s) responsibility for security events and transgressions. Furthermore, through persistent surveillance and observation, SOF can also assist with the determination of adversary "intent."

SOF's sensor role can also extend to preparing/developing an environment for future special or conventional operations. SOF missions can develop a better understanding of key characteristics of a specific region, its population and physical attributes. This knowledge can assist with strategic messaging, countering disinformation, developing key networks, as well as targeting and enhancing potential future operations.[23] For example, in the six-year period prior to the outbreak of the war in Lebanon in 2006, a joint effort between the Mossad and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF), which involved about 40 special operations, led Israel to glean intelligence concerning Hezbollah's strategic arsenal and command and control centres. This information proved vitally important in determining the success of Operation Density on the second night of the war (12 July 2006), during which the IAF destroyed about 90 per cent of Hezbollah's rocket arsenal.[24]

In sum, the SOF sensor role in the shadows of the GPC is instrumental in assisting governments understand what is transpiring in the security environment, who is responsible and to what end are they manoeuvring. This information is critical in determining policy options and decisions for governments. As an example, British SOF were sent to Kabul to monitor events as well as protect hundreds of British soldiers as they prepared to leave Afghanistan after twenty years.[25] SOF were also deployed to the Ukraine and other Baltic states to monitor events during the Russian 2022 invasion.

Signaler

Another role for SOF in the sub-threshold landscape of the GPC is to act as a signaler. SOF has become a universal representation of a nation's military elite. As such, SOF deployment carries a number of nuances, if not overt indicators. Specifically, the employment of SOF demonstrates intent, namely, the seriousness of a situation and the desire

of a government to address the issue(s). This manifestation expresses intent to take action/respond; ability to deploy quickly with highly capable forces; and high level of support to alliances/coalitions/partner nations. For instance, Australia, New Zealand and Poland all sent small SOF contingents to participate in the U.S. Operation Iraqi Freedom. For years they were all publicly hailed by American commanders as America's close allies. Canada, which had the third largest contingent (i.e., ships and aircraft but no combat ground forces) in the "War on Terror" received little to no recognition whatsoever.[26]

SOF's importance as a signaler with regard to threats was also underlined by SOF scholars Will Irwin and Dr. Isaiah Wilson III. They explained:

> SOF can help to detect, monitor, and report on the covert and overt gray-zone activities of adversaries, illuminating their actions to better inform geographic combatant commands, country teams, JIIM-C partners, and national decision makers. This early warning function helps to eliminate strategic blind spots and improve situational understanding, reducing response time and creating course-of-action consideration and decision space.[27]

Similarly, other analysts have argued that "the overt forward deployment of SOF working with allies and partner forces in combat and on training missions communicates commitment on a very high level and affords access to information that would otherwise be obscured." They explained, "a continued forward SOF presence limits the threat posed by a strategic competitor by ensuring that would-be aggressor states consider de-escalation. Partnership commitment is clearly communicated to allies and adversaries alike."[28]

SOF can also "signal" warning of threat(s), as well as changes in the geopolitical environment to their national governments, the Joint Force, Other Government Departments (OGDs) and allies, which allows for timely, responsive decision-making and policy formulation. Moreover, SOF's ability to determine ground truth can be instrumental in assisting with the strategic narrative to ensure the proper accurate messaging is undertaken to disarm adversary disinformation and deceptive accounts, as well as take disruptive action if required.

Integrator

SOF, due to their activities, relationships and networks within both the national security and national defence domains, are positioned to act as an efficient and effective integrator between SOF elements, the Joint Force, OGDs and allies. They provide the capacity to bring various actors together in either a leading or supporting role. SOF's understanding of, and experience working with, partners in both the national security and defence domains also allows them to become an important enabler by sharing contacts, doctrinal issues, tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), as well as SOPs, as well as liaison and interoperability capacity. Additionally, SOF can "translate" capability and effects between partners and across the national security and defence domains. They can identify vulnerability gaps through its pan-domain knowledge and experience and enhance national security protection by assisting in coordinating capabilities and effects of all actors.

The integrator role is of the utmost importance as national resilience is increased through the cooperative, integrated "whole-of-government" approach, which is further augmented through alliance partners. Importantly, it allows for more rapid and comprehensive mitigation of crises by allowing for the integrated approach to mitigate damage caused by adversary action through the existence of experienced and tried Command & Control (C2) concepts, liaison officers and staff processes tested by practice and exercises.

Mark Mitchell, the American principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for special operations/low-intensity conflict, argued that the greatest role for SOF was "being in position globally as tensions rise [and] having a deep network in place on day one." He explained, "working with our partners and allies, training, collaborating, we've been able to nip a lot of things in the bud."[29]

Trainer

Another instrumental role for SOF in the GPC shadow wars is that of trainer. Highly capable and experienced SOF operators have conducted this function for decades. It is an essential task that provides huge dividends. Training partner nations:

- assists at-risk nations to develop a more robust and capable security apparatus;

- cultivates deep networks and relationships across the globe;
- advances national and host nation capabilities (i.e., both military, as well as cultural);
- enhances interoperability within the SOF Global Network;
- demonstrates intent, commitment and capability, which also functions as deterrence;
- stymies adversaries from making inroads into strategic geo-political areas of interest;
- creates resistance cells; and
- increases partner state national resilience.

The training function, specifically engagement with at-risk or partner nations, enriches deterrence by demonstrating commitment and capability. Researcher Evgeny Finkel in his 2015 work on Jewish Resistance in World War II (WWII), observed that urban resistance networks that possessed specific pre-war training and subsequent "toolkit" were more likely to operate effectively against superior forces as compared to groups that lacked such knowledge and experience. Finkel explained that the "toolkit" consisted of such capabilities as: communicating securely, possessing/acquiring weapons covertly, creating safe havens, conducting effective forging and identifying, and neutralizing informers and infiltrators.[30]

A more recent 2021 study focused on WWII French resistance networks similarly determined that "resistance networks that were organized locally and later supported by coalition forces are more likely to be successful than those resistance networks that were organized during the conflict by foreign operatives inserted covertly into France." The researchers asserted operational security was a key element of a resistance network's survival and was in essence the necessary condition for success. They argued that pre-war local networks were more proficient in security measures than those organized by foreign operatives during the war, which led to a higher success rate in case of the former.[31]

The 2022 war in the Ukraine provides a contemporary example. SOF operators from the U.S. and other NATO countries had been in Ukraine for nearly a decade, establishing training centres, initiating training

cadres, and building a capability that is credited with significantly disrupting the Russian advance on Kyiv. Ukrainian SOF operated behind Russian lines, effectively disrupting and destroying Russian equipment and personnel on their lines of communication.[32]

Importantly, the assistance continued as the war progressed. A covert network of SOF operators provided weapons, intelligence and training. Much of the activities are occurring outside Ukraine, at bases in Germany, France and Britain. Although, a small number of operators from some NATO countries continue to work inside Ukraine.[33]

SOF as trainers during the pre-conflict period of an at-risk state are critical in fostering resistance networks and the relevant "toolkits" that will enable it to effectively combat numerically and potentially technologically superior adversaries. There is substantial evidence to suggest that military partnering activities can not only build the tactical military capabilities of partner nations but also make them more resilient to instability or political subversion by hostile actors.[34] Therefore, SOF become an important enabler by consistently, and routinely, training and exercising with partner states and their resistance networks. This relationship-building will develop trust, enrich mutual understanding and enhance interoperability, which in turn will maximize effectiveness and the ability to confront and repel armed confrontation. For small states, it also shows commitment, boots on the ground, which earn for the nation a "seat at the table."

Weapon System

The final SOF role in the shadowy GPC is that of a weapon system. Despite the American pivot to GPC, which has drawn-in all allied nations, to focus on great geo-political rivals China and Russia, the reality remains that the world is on fire. Terrorism and insurgency have not abated. In fact, terrorist movements persist to flourish and in locations such as Africa are continuing to grow and expand. In many instances, terrorist organizations and insurgents are supported, armed and encouraged by rivals as part of the strategic competition that is playing out worldwide. As a result, SOF capabilities in conducting counter-terrorism (CT), Counter-Violent Extremist Organization (CVEO) and Maritime CT (MCT) are very much relevant in the GPC, as is their expertise in counter-insurgency (COIN). The rise of the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS) and the devastation it wrought after the

large-scale withdrawal by the Americans in Iraq and the reluctance of Western nations to re-engage after the fatigue from fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2011, is evidence of the consequences of turning a blind eye to terrorism and insurgency. As former U.S. Secretary of Defense General James Mattis explained, "Terrorism is an ambient threat, it's out there just like the air we breathe. It's going to be something we're going to have to deal with throughout our lifetime and probably through the lifetime of our children's generation. It's a reality in the globalized world."[35]

Another potential role for SOF as a weapon system in the GPC is to conduct agitation and subversion. These actions can be used to harass and/or distract adversaries, as well as degrade their political will. The 2014 Russian campaign in Ukraine is a contemporary example. "Little Green Men" undertook various missions agitating and assisting with protests to destabilize the government, blocking police and military garrisons, as well as working with separatist elements to destroy the credibility of the government and stability of the country.[36] Ukrainian sources also stated that approximately 150 GRU (Russian military intelligence) and Russian SOF operators had been in the city of Sloviansk for almost a month before the Donbas anti-Kyiv rebellion became full blown.[37]

SOF agitation and subversion can also work to undermine adversary relationships with other nations by discrediting their commitment or capability. For example, the discovery of a billboard with Chinese characters accompanying a photo of the southern Port of Harcourt triggered a Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (3rd Special Forces Group) and a Psychological Operations Detachment (7th Psychological Operations Battalion) to take disruptive action. The billboard revealed a Chinese Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) initiative to construct a deep-water port in the Niger Delta. As a result, the SOF detachments undertook an influence campaign to discredit Chinese activities and impede the Chinese from purchasing land by igniting long-standing friction between Nigerian workers and Chinese companies. Their actions sparked protests around Chinese businesses in Abuja and within two weeks the Chinese construction company lost sixty per cent of its required labour pool for the port expansion. Importantly, the SOF team worked with the U.S. Embassy, USAID, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to establish a job fair near the protest areas to provide disaffected Nigerian workers with employment.[38]

SOF can also actively work with resistance cells and/or local populations and host nation forces to disrupt and deny adversary attempts at gaining a foothold/access to areas of interest.[39] U.S. and NATO SOF are focusing on creating resistance networks that make invasions by Russia or China too costly for those powers to even attempt. The successful efforts of Ukrainian SOF demonstrate the value proposition of developing this capability. Not surprisingly, U.S. SOF are working with their Taiwanese counterparts to develop a similar capability.[40]

SOF can also undertake sabotage missions in the shadowy GPC Gray Zone. Avril Haines, director of national intelligence, explained that "sabotage behind enemy lines is a fundamental element of special operations warfare. It's an integral tool for an insurgency or an army facing an opponent with superior numbers or equipment, as is the case in Ukraine." She explained, "such operations are designed to telegraph a capability that can be expanded across Russia and target platforms of increasing sensitivity and value to Putin. Strategically, sabotage operations offer Ukraine, the United States, and its partners the decided advantage of flexibility in ratcheting pressure up or down. With few overt options short of going to war, covert sabotage operations might prove to be a critical deterrent - if not the best and only remaining one."[41]

Sabotage was a key element of the Cold War, where sabotage plans were a part of bigger strategy. Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) wasthe main objective of U.S. and Soviet agents who intended to destabilize an adversary's economy and disrupt their social stability.[42] For example, During the 1960s Soviet reconnaissance assessed that the Kerr Dam on the Flathead River in Montana was the largest power supply system in the world. In 1967, they developed Operation Doris, which was designed to find a vulnerability to attack the dam and simultaneously sabotage the Hungry Horse Dam on the Flathead River. [43]

The Soviets also developed Operation Target Granit which was a two-step plan designed to initially disrupt power lines and pipelines in specific areas of the United States. The Soviets believed this would create a massive blackout in the East and Midwest as well as massive pipeline fires in Texas and California. The second step would have entailed a strike against New York City. The plan was to attack a network of piers

and warehouses that lined the Port of New York, which included ships' berths, warehouses, communications systems and port personnel.[44]

The final example during the Cold War was Operation Kedr-Cedar, which took place between 1959 to 1971. The operation, conducted from the Soviet embassy in Ottawa, was a twelve-year mission that amassed a detailed plan of Canada's oil refineries, as well as oil and gas pipelines from British Columbia to Montreal. The potential targets were photographed and vulnerable points were identified. The intent was to be prepared to sabotage the oil and gas facilities in the event of war.[45]

The Russians continued to use sabotage as a key tool in the GPC. The first GRU operative was arrested on Ukrainian soil by the Ukrainian security service SBU in March 2014. He was arrested together with three otherswhile gathering intelligence on Ukrainian military positions on the Chongar Peninsula just north of Crimea.[46] Another Russian-GRU agent was killed in Kharkov in September 2014 during the execution of a sabotage mission. He was suspected of blowing up train wagons with air fuel at Osnova railway station. Ukrainian officials also claimed a combined group of rebels and Spetsnaz-GRU agents increased their activities in Ukrainian rear areas in the summer of 2015. This activity included mine-laying and attacks at poorly guarded Ukrainian transport convoys.[47]

The possibility of sabotage during the GPC has pressed countries to increase their ability to detect, disrupt and stop adversary sabotage activities. For example, U.S. Navy SOF operators regularly work with Coast Guard personnel to practice defending critical infrastructure.[48]

Another potential role for SOF is the placement of sensors to provide real time visibility on adversary actions, as well as targeting information (as in the case of the killing of Iranian Quds commander Qasem Soleimani). In this latter example, U.S. SOF operators posed as airport maintenance staff at Baghdad Airport to coordinate the air strike that assassinated Iran's top commander. One report noted that they were joined on the ground by Kurdish special forces personnel and assisted by remote help from phone-tracking experts in Israel.[49] Although small states tend to avoid this type of activity, circumstances may dictate the requirement to assign SOF aggressive action.

Importantly, SOF can also operate in the counter-SOF role to detect, disrupt, repulse and if necessary, destroy adversary SOF. This line of tasking also includes counter-UW operations to thwart adversary assistance to insurgent groups, influence target populations and remove nefarious actors that represent a threat to national security and global stability. Examples include the Israeli assassination of Colonel Sayyad Khodaei, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander of Unit 840, responsible for assassinations and kidnappings. This killing was designed as a warning to Tehran to stop the operations of that covert military unit.[50] Israeli SOF also eliminated Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the chief of Iran's nuclear program. Another example is the U.S. Delta Force raid that killed ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi in Syria.[51]

Research has shown that decreases in leader availability and communications undermine organizational cohesion. The reductions in senior leader activity undermined al-Qaeda's organizational effectiveness, including its ability to retain personnel.[52] In a speech at the National Defense University in 2010 outlining his administration's counterterrorism strategy, President Barack Obama argued that al-Qaeda's "remaining operatives spend more time thinking about their own safety than plotting against us."[53]

Significantly, SOF as a weapon system can also contribute to deterrence through their ability to provide governments with a viable, credible (yet relatively restrained) counter-threat to adversary actions that test the "below the threshold of violence" benchmark. The ability to conduct covert or clandestine precision kinetic operations to strike adversary vulnerabilities as a retaliatory measure can have a restraining effect on adversaries.

In summary, SOF will always maintain a pivotal role in the GPC, or more accurately, in strategic competition. Their characteristics and skill-sets are perfectly geared to irregular warfare and war in the shadows. SOF operations, and those who carry them out, are positioned to conduct clandestine, time-sensitive, high-risk (i.e., political and to force) missions in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments. Much of strategic competition is taking place in obscure domains and in regions around the world where gaining access and influence to populations and regional governments is key. On this playing field, information warfare, the

competition over narrative and gaining acceptance goes hand-in-hand with having impact (i.e., economic, military, political, social) on the ground.

SOF, through their timeless military assistance/special warfare/irregular warfare programs of SFA, FID and UW allow for a low cost (both in personnel and financial terms) methodology of developing favourable foreign relations with friendly and at-risk states to further political objectives. Their ability to train foreign security forces to deal with real or potential threats also works to pre-empt crises before they become out of control or trigger larger conflagrations.

SOF operations around the globe also act to create deep relationships and networks, as well as important "lily-pads" should the larger conventional joint force require basing options in times of crisis or war. In short, SOF programs develop access and influence that further favourable foreign relations in support of national objectives. Moreover, SOF's situational awareness around the globe through the cultivation of long-term partnerships and creation of networks provides comprehension of emerging trends and threats worldwide. It also allows for influencing actors and events to coincide with desired outcomes.

It is SOF's ability to excel at their non-kinetic mission-sets that create security capability within partner nations; develop deep relationships and networks; target hostile agents, agitators, insurgents and terrorists, as well as promulgate a narrative that counters opponent disinformation, that makes SOF an important player in the GPC. Notwithstanding SOF's non-kinetic capabilities, SOF can transition to kinetic action (or warfighting ability) seamlessly. Their ability to undertake kinetic actions as part of UW, COIN or CT tasks, as well as direct action missions or special reconnaissance, on order without delay, also make them an indispensable tool.

After all, SOF will remain an essential, if not pivotal, tool in a government's arsenal because it can deliver:

1. High readiness, low profile, task-tailored Special Operations Task Forces (SOTFs) that can be deployed rapidly, over long distances and provide tailored proportional responses to a myriad of different situations;

2. A wide spectrum of special operations options, lethal and non-lethal, to deter, disrupt, dislocate, and when necessary, destroy those that would do harm to the nation, its allies and friends, or its national interests;

3. Highly trained technologically enabled forces that can gain access to hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas;

4. Discreet forces that can provide discriminate precise SOF kinetic and non-kinetic effects throughout the entire spectrum of competition (i.e., "peace" through high-intensity combat);

5. A deployed capable and internationally recognized force, yet with a generally lower profile and less intrusive presence than larger conventional forces;

6. An economy of effort foreign policy implement that can be used to assist coalition and/or allied operations;

7. A rapidly deployable force that can assess and survey potential crisis areas or hot spots to provide "ground truth" and situational awareness for governmental decision-makers;

8. A highly trained, specialized force capable of providing a response to ambiguous, asymmetric, unconventional situations that fall outside of the capabilities of law enforcement agencies, conventional military or OGDs;

9. A force capable of operating globally in austere, harsh and dangerous environments with limited support. SOF are largely self-contained and can communicate worldwide with organic equipment and can provide limited medical support for themselves and those they support;

10. A culturally attuned SOTF or teams that can act as a force multiplier through the ability to work closely with regional civilian and military authorities and organizations, as well as populations through Defence, Diplomacy and Military Assistance/ Security Force Assistance initiatives;

11. A force capable of preparing and shaping environments or battlespaces (i.e., setting conditions to mitigate risk and facilitate successful introduction of follow-on forces);

12. An enabler to foster inter-agency and inter-departmental cooperation through its ability to serve as a catalyst to unify, extend the reach and maximize the effects of other instruments of national power; and

13. A highly trained and educated, adaptive, agile-thinking force capable of dealing with the threat that has not yet been identified.

Renowned strategist, the late Colin Gray, declared, "Special operations forces are a national grand-strategic asset: they are a tool of statecraft that can be employed quite surgically in support of diplomacy, of foreign assistance (of several kinds), as a vital adjunct to regular military forces, or as an independent weapon."[54] He captured the essence of SOF. Simply put, SOF are/have indispensable relevance to decision-makers, providing them with a wide scope of cost efficient, low risk and effective options is precisely the driving force behind SOF power. Their ability to produce on short notice, courses of action and desirable outcomes, in a number of domains, regardless of location, with a high probability of success, give them great saliency to political and military decision-makers. After all, arguably, the acid test of strategic utility is what an organization contributes to national power and the ability to project or defend national interests. And, for small states, SOF can level the playing field giving them the ability to punch above their weight.

ANNEX A

Summary of the Sub-threshold Activities

Table 1 provides a summary of several key "Below-Threshold" activities that are currently utilized by state and non-state actors to pursue strategic competition designed to achieve influence, access and advantage in the global struggle for national political objectives.

TABLE 1 – SUMMARY OF BELOW-THRESHOLD ACTIVITIES

SERIAL	ACTION	EFFECT
1	**POLITICAL** · influence/control international institutions · use international agreements, organizations to push desired action when advantageous and ignore when not · exert diplomatic pressure · create regional blocs · utilize economic treaties, foreign aid, security arrangements, forums, and creation of international organizations to compete with opponents to gain and influence · support to regimes · interfere in internal politics of a target country · isolate adversaries diplomatically · sharing/leaking intelligence	· disorientation of target society, political & military decision-makers · create doubt · gain access and influence · create power blocs · create advantageous political, economic, military partnerships (and deny same to opponents) · subvert internal political cohesion · create distrust

Table cont...

2	**ECONOMIC** · sanctions · predatory lending · boycotts/restrict imports · blackmail/threat to sell state debt · sponsor economic development/ funding as means to gain access · restrict critical exports (e.g., rare earth minerals, energy) · employ predatory practices (e.g., steel production) to expand market share/force competitors out · purchase key real estate/ corporations/resources · restrict access to markets	· disrupt opponent's economy · force concessions from other states/corporations · gain access to strategic real estate and resources · control market dynamics · enhance intelligence gathering capabilities · enhance ability to undermine opponent economies
3	**INFORMATIONAL** · disinformation · deception · PSYOPs · establish radio and other media in target countries · impersonate real news organizations (i.e., mimic name, logo, visual branding of real outlets)	· create doubt, wrong understandings, assessments, and decisions · shake thinking, conviction and will of target audience · diminish trust, credibility and legitimacy of target government/leaders · produce harmful social, political, and economic outcomes in a target country by affecting beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour · inform, shape and influence public perception · generate public support · maintain internal morale · shape public discourse · sow division and distrust in opponents' societies/alliances

Table cont...

4	**CYBER** · denial of service · ransomware · hacking · interference in elections	· Erode trust in government services/financial institutions · Create chaos and turmoil and economic/financial losses · Disrupt critical infrastructure · Theft of innovation, trade secrets, intellectual property, personal/economic/political/ military data · public release of sensitive and/ or embarrassing information
5	**SABOTAGE** · destroy opponent infrastructure, shipping, resource industry/supply chain, etc. · disrupt political alliances / agreements · target adversaries	· create economic loss · create disruption of supply chain · potential ecological disasters · erode trust in government/ military to protect national interest · create suspicion and tension between international partners · kill adversaries
6	**SUBVERSION** · disinformation campaign · agitation · fifth columnists · open educational/cultural centres with a specific covert hostile agenda in target countries	· support internal opposition · create dissatisfaction with target leadership/government · impact economy and societal stability · access intelligence · shape public perceptions
7	**RESOURCE CONTROL** · limit/deny access · buy up resource suppliers/supply chain	· create economic/resource crises · restrict competition/gain monopoly · disrupt opponent's economy

Table cont...

8	**TERRORISM** · support, fund, train, direct agents/ proxies to conduct terrorist attacks against opponents	· ability to harm opponents while maintaining plausible deniability · cause target countries to undertake expensive security operations/infrastructure · create climate of fear in target countries · destroy adversary assets (e.g., political /military/economic/ cultural infrastructure)
9	**CRIMINAL ACTIVITY** · conduct/support criminal activity · assassinations/kidnappings · harassment of citizens · create political unrest · steal sensitive information	· create fear · silence critics · sow distrust in government ability to protect its citizens · gain access to sensitive materials
10	**ESPIONAGE** · military, economic, political	· gain/loss of sensitive technological, military, economic and political information
11	**BULLYING** · threatening economic action (e.g., boycotting/block importation of goods, denying access to market/ population and or commodities) · mobilization and deployment of maritime militia, joint military exercises close to opponent territory	· force compliance · deny access to commodities, resources, geographic regions · force expenditure of adversary's limited military resources
12	**BRIBERY** · appoint adversary business and political leaders to Boards of Companies (with generous salaries) · provide grants to universities to gain access to their research · ignore corruption and human rights abuses to gain access to target nations · pay directors of international organizations to vote in support of desired decisions	· undue influence is used in elite circles to promote specific interests · defuse ability to criticize/take consolidated action against opponent country · able to access sensitive research data · able to gain access/deny to competitors target countries that have strategic value (e.g., locations, resources) · potential to alter discourse/ public perception

Table cont...

13	**BLACKMAIL** · sell state debt · undertake actions that can undercut an adversary (e.g., flood market with commodities to lower prices, restrict access to commodities/markets · target key decision-makers (leverage their vices)	· coerce targets to adopt desired behaviour/make decisions conducive to blackmailer requirements
14	**USE OF PROXIES** · direct to conduct acts of terrorism · provide money, equipment, logistics, weapons and training to proxies/surrogates	· target opponent countries (with plausible deniability) · ability to achieve political objectives indirectly
15	**MILITARY ACTION** · Special Warfare (Note 1) · confrontations without engaging with firepower over political issues (e.g., aircraft testing air defences/ reactions; border disputes; weaponizing the Spratly Islands, Maritime Militia to overwhelm opponent coast guard/navy capabilities) · overt testing of new military technology · widely publicized military exercises · escalate actions to de-escalate tensions	· strengthen allies ability to resist interference/maintain stability · disrupt adversaries' internal stability · disrupt adversaries' international initiatives · exhaust opponent resources · create fear of escalation prompting opponents to become paralyzed with inaction

NOTE 1: Special Warfare (SW) is defined as "the execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and non-lethal actions taken by specially trained and educated forces that have a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, subversion, sabotage and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain or hostile environment." Its activities range from influence operations and political action to economic sanctions and diplomacy. SW can improve a government's contextual understanding of potential partners and the situation on the ground before it commits to a course of action. SW strategic advantages:

1. Improved understanding and shaping of the environment;
2. Cost Effective/cost Imposing strategy – small footprint for you; opponent needs to spend disproportionate amounts of money;

3. Managed escalation and credibility risk – make no promises of larger commitments;
4. Sustainable solutions – sustainable two parts – fiscal and political.*

SW Limits and Risks

1. Divergent partner objectives;
2. Ineffective partner capability;
3. Unacceptable partner behaviour;
4. Policy Fratricide; and
5. Disclosure.

* Dan Madden, Dick Hoffman, Michael Johnson, Fred Krawchuk, John Peters, Linda Robinson, Abby Doll, "Special Warfare. The Missing Middle in US Coercive Options," RAND Research Report, 2014, 3.

CHAPTER 7

ENHANCING SMALL STATE CAPABILITIES IN NATIONAL RESILIENCE AND RESISTANCE

Colonel (retired) J. Paul de B. Taillon, PhD

While resistance as a strategy of warfare has been utilized throughout military history, its manifestation in the present-day Ukrainian-Russian conflict is a stark example of its effectiveness as an important military and psychological weapon. Resistance is the weapon of the weak that relies upon imposing a high attritional cost targeting enemy personnel, materiel and infrastructure, while focusing and eroding the moral and societal support thereby impacting international and national prestige. To undertake an effective resistance strategy, many contemporary proponents argue that it must be embedded within the citizenry writ large before an adversarial conflict commences.

Since 1939 and the start of World War II, there have been a spectrum of follow-on studies[1] that provide the modern historian with details as to how to orchestrate a partisan movement, ascertain the threats to its survival and how best to promulgate the chances of success. On the tactical and operational side, there is a litany of books and documentation available, outlining partisan and anti-partisan tactics and techniques, operating with regular Army formations, highlighting the importance of airpower to resistance movements, as well as outlining the treatment of partisans and the supporting population.[2]

Despite being predisposed to embrace a resistance strategy, many countries quickly realized that it takes time to plan and implement in terms of complexity in building extensive clandestine underground networks to enable a nation to conduct effective resistance operations. Interestingly, in the Ukrainian case this can be observed in real time. The Russian February 2022 second invasion provides a real time example of how a nation can adopt and conduct a nascent but growingly effective resistance strategy in occupied zones while concurrently conducting widespread conventional military operations.

THE BEGINNING

The creation of Ukraine's resistance began some months before the Russian escalation and invasion. On 16 July 2021, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed the law entitled *On the Fundamentals of National Resistance*, thereby creating a formalized national resistance initiative. Zelenskyy's signature provided the legal basis for Ukraine's national mobilization program which had drawn much from the study of the Estonian-based national resistance strategy.[3]

According to Otto C. Fiala, a recognized expert in special operations and resistance, who authored the seminal study *Resistance Operating Concept* (ROC), he explained:

> The law defines national resistance as measures that organize, conduct, and promote the defense of Ukraine through the widest possible involvement of Ukrainian citizens. Its purpose is to ensure the military security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the state, while deterring and if necessary, repulsing aggression and inflicting unacceptable losses on the enemy, in order to force him to cease armed aggression against Ukraine.[4]

Fiala further states that the law defines the "…Resistance Movement as a system of military, informational and special measures, organized, planned, and prepared to restore state sovereignty and territorial integrity during armed aggression against Ukraine. Its tasks are to "form Resistance Movement cells with the necessary relevant capabilities to obstruct actions of enemy forces, participate in special operations focused on intelligence, information, and psychological operations, and prepare citizens to participate in this organization."[5]

Hence, this resistance strategy was neither unique nor summarily conjured up by the Ukrainian governmental bureaucracy, nor military high command. The strategy was aimed at addressing the threat of growing Russian aggression since the invasion of 2014. The concept was created and promulgated by the United States Special Operations Command-Europe in tandem with NATO allies that had come together to formulate a new concept and accompanying doctrine which was entitled the *Resistance Operating Concept* (ROC)[6] and published in 2019 by the Swedish Defence University. This concept, in its earlier forms, was employed to inform

and educate Ukrainian military officers in the spectrum of resistance requirements and activities.

The ROC concept is well formulated and laid out, and is an interesting read with specific chapters comprising topics pertaining to national resilience, resistance, the importance of interagency planning and preparation, as well as appendices that focus on legal considerations, methods of nonviolent resistance, and Russian hybrid warfare tactics. It contains case studies drawn from resistance organizations from World War II and contemporary studies, as well as lessons learned and other germane topics that would prove very useful for planning staffs responsible for designing and implementing a comparable resistance model.

The writing, publication and promulgation of the ROC was both a subtle, yet salient signal to the NATO-Baltic states and non-members (Sweden) that NATO command was prepared to assist in facilitating and implementing a comprehensive resistance strategy. Resistance operations are embraced under the rubric of unconventional warfare (UW), which is defined as:

> A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in various degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery. Also called UW.[7]

The definition of a guerrilla force (for the purpose of this paper termed as a resistance movement) has been defined as "An organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability."[8]

To undertake this new mission, the Ukraine government assigned the Special Operations Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (UKR SOF) to provide the necessary resources to recruit, train, organize and equip resistance members to effectively contribute to the national strategy.

OTHER NATIONS HAVE INVESTED IN A SIMILAR STRATEGY

Ukraine is not alone in its pursuit of a national resistance strategy as Finland, Sweden, Switzerland and the Baltic nations of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, amongst others, have embraced or are embracing this strategic initiative. Described by some analysts as the "indigestible hedgehog,"[9] this resistance doctrine has reportedly followed a similar resistance strategy being incorporated in Taiwan's defence planning,[10] employing the descriptive term "porcupine defence." As military analyst Prakash Nanda points out, "It may be noted that even though China is a gigantic power, tiny Taiwan has not been overawed by it. Taipei has adopted an asymmetrical warfare method known as the 'porcupine strategy,' which aims to make the invasion very difficult and costly for the enemy."[11]

Nanda further notes that "The main idea here is that it is only through the sea (Taiwan Strait) that China will transport its soldiers, arms, and supplies since airlifts and fleets of planes have limited capacity. And Taiwan can make sea operations very difficult."[12] He explains, "Secondly, Taiwan has also prepared its cities for guerrilla warfare in case the PLA [People's Liberation Army] succeeds in getting boots on the ground. Man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS) mobile anti-armor weapons, such as high mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS), have been created for urban fights."[13]

This resistance strategy focuses upon the issue of deterrence in the form of the anticipated costs awaiting any belligerent who threatens or intends to undertake an incursion or occupation of sovereign territory. As a deterrent, the seizure of sovereign territory would prove to be at such an exponential cost that the antagonist would ascertain that there would be little to gain through any territorial aggression. As one noted analyst pointed out, "The utility of the strategy is that it might theoretically deter through denial. That an adversary knows that their invasion and occupation intentions will prove untenable is also a persistent deterrent to aggression."[14]

Embracing a resistance strategy may not always be successful, as illustrated in the Ukrainian case where it was not developed and fully operational. Russia was not deterred or dissuaded and proceeded to launch a fulsome three-pronged invasion on 24 February 2022. In the wake of the invasion, Ukraine and the international community came together to address this unwarranted invasion of a recognized sovereign nation. This action soon brought about a global response as the international community came

together to "impose physical, financial, temporal and reputational costs [that] is seemingly achieving deterrence by punishment, retaining the threat to impose further costs should Russia chose to further escalate the conflict."[15]

THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN BOLSTERING RESILIENCE

From a societal point of view, there are several aspects that facilitate bolstering national resilience. As Fiala articulated, "among them are national identity, psychological preparation, identification and reduction of vulnerabilities, and identification of and preparation against the threat."[16] He further contends that "a society's resilience contributes to deterring an adversary from invading its territory and supports national defense planning, to include engaging in resistance to regain national sovereignty. Generally, it is a description of a society's survivability and durability. Essentially, resilience is the will of the people to maintain what they have; the will and ability to withstand external pressure and influences and/or recover from the effects of those pressures or influences."[17]

Ukraine's national identity has been evolving for hundreds of years, suffering from being a vassal state dominated by the kingdom of Poland-Lithuania and later by Muscovite czars who defeated the Poles, thereby inheriting Ukraine which further exacerbated nationalistic frustration and resentment. Local Slavic dialects evolved through the decades into the Ukrainian language, further enhancing national pride and identity. Subsequently, the Ukraine was embraced by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and, due to the Soviet five-year plan for agricultural production, soon witnessed a mass famine throughout the early years of the 1930s known historically as the Holodomor. This famine reportedly killed an estimated three and a half million Ukrainians through starvation.[18]

The Russian enmity continued unabated during World War II, with "Ukrainians initially welcoming the German invaders in 1941. However, in the wake of Germany's defeat, the Soviets rapidly reasserted firm control in Ukraine. Between 1945 and 1955 however, Ukrainian nationalists joined partisan groups and fought Soviet occupation forces, reportedly killing over 30,000 Soviet soldiers, secret police, and bureaucratic functionaries.[19] In the wake of the breakup of the Soviet Union, Ukrainians sought to distance themselves from their former Soviet masters, predicated

upon their unique culture, history and language, further accentuating and emphasizing their cultural differences between these two nations. This cultivation of Ukrainian national identity has become more apparent since the fall of the Soviet Union, with an increasing identification by younger Ukrainians with the democratic West, including the political aspiration to join the European Union and NATO.[20] This evolving national identity has brought about a self-awareness of Ukraine's uniqueness enhancing their national resilience in the face of Russian aggression.

SHAPING RESISTANCE THROUGH SOUND PREPARATION AND PLANNING

The law entitled "*On the Fundamentals of National Resistance*" created a national resistance system consisting of three distinct but mutually supporting elements. First and foremost, a *Territorial Defence Force* (TDF) was raised, comprising a full-time cadre with units based on districts and subsequently divided into three separate components military, civil-military and civil.

Within the civil military component, the law established *Voluntary Formations of Territorial Communities* (VFTC) with units intended to enable Ukrainian citizens to join the TDF and national *Resistance Movement*. If these were in occupied territory (Luhansk-Donbas-Crimea), both the units and personnel of the TDF, as well as the VFTC are subject to direction by the Resistance Movement.[21] The law was written so that it was in keeping with the resistance concept and, concomitantly and importantly, advocating for a national legal framework to *legitimize resistance both domestically and internationally*. The law identifies two aspects, firstly, national resistance in which the whole of society is enjoined to participate, which includes the TDF. The second is a Resistance Movement which is authorized to use 'cover' and is specifically designed as a clandestine cellular organization that for operational security (OPSEC) is numerically smaller.

THE NECESSITY OF PEACETIME PREPARATION

The resistance law stipulates that the creation of a Ukrainian Resistance Movement is to be carried out in peacetime. It notes that the building of a movement can be done during a "special period," in those 2014 occupied territories. Moreover, the Resistance Movement is specifically targeted against a foreign aggressor occupying Ukrainian territory. Acknowledging

operational security concerns, the composition and identification of the membership, its structure, training and acquisition of materials, as well as other services allocated to it are under the rubric of a state secret. Moreover, all materiel provided is designated as military property.[22] To further enhance operational security, the law "…specifically authorizes the use of cover for the organization's funding, property, and activities."[23] Furthermore, general military training is organized by the TDF and, as specified by Article 11 of the law, the national resistance is non-partisan, and is not to involve political parties or influence of any type.

To address the likely tasks of the resistance, "The law also authorizes the acquisition, storage, and maintenance of unspecified material as well as the conduct of exercises."[24] To facilitate the development of an effective national resistance, UKR SOF have been directed to organize, prepare, regulate, support, and orchestrate the activities of the Resistance Movement.[25] This direction by law is critical as it clarifies the command-and-control chain under the auspices of UKR SOF. Furthermore, UKR SOF has been clearly directed by law to undertake the responsibility of organizing, training, and equipping of the mandated resistance program, and, in tandem, provide the operational authority to control and direct all resistance activities against an occupation force.[26]

Strategically, the purpose of conducting thorough planning for a resistance organization is an important layer in forming a credible national deterrent. This resistance movement forgoes any secrecy, as the knowledge of its existence a functional resistance organization nested within the nation's defence strategy provides a further degree of deterrence. The perception of having an effective and committed resistance organization clearly signals to any potential aggressor that any foreign occupation of the sovereign homeland would not be sacrosanct from resistance operations targeting the occupiers.

TRAINING OF RESISTANCE OPERATORS (PARTISANS)

Under ideal conditions, any resistance planning, equipping, training and organization would be conducted prior to a conflict, enabling those partaking to be trained and capable of conducting the tasks assigned. The development of a resistance movement would incorporate informing and educating those partisans how to develop personal and family resilience. This requirement could be in the form of stocking food, understanding

various means of clandestine communications, first and second aid, as well as how to utilize various means of securing transportation, weapons, demolitions and expertise during an occupation. This would include the introduction of employing both peaceful/passive resistance methodology and how best to conduct and facilitate such activities. In a more aggressive form, some resistance operators can be selected, trained and properly exercised, enabling them to effectively plan, organize and execute aggressive 'direct action'[27] operations in support of UKR SOF or conventional operational initiatives.

Prior to the 2022 invasion, several Ukrainian citizens had commenced their resistance schooling in anticipation of an invasion. Fortuitously, there were reportedly up to 4 million weapons privately owned and registered in the hands of Ukrainians. Some of the rudimentary military training was conducted by registered non-governmental organizations that were permitted to conduct government approved military and weapons training. Those Ukrainians who completed these courses became a part of the TDF.

It should be appreciated that there were several veteran organizations and civilian training establishments that were overseeing rudimentary military training in the wake of the 2014 invasion.

Auxiliary trainees were instructed on the importance of providing target information, taking covert photographs for use in targeting purposes or for psychological operations, as well as how to address adversarial misinformation and disinformation activities amongst other passive partisan activities. In some cases, this could be extended to more functional roles such as accessing safe houses, facilitating communications, providing medical expertise and logistical supplies, as well as the provision of secure transportation. The subgroup of partisans – essentially an auxiliary – would be schooled in providing both passive and functional assistance when required.

The functional group within the resistance would be the armed partisans schooled in a spectrum of skills relating to the more violent aspects of partisan (guerrilla) warfare. Trained in weapons handling, demolitions, resistance to interrogation, survival skills, intelligence tradecraft, combined with tactical skills such as assassination, sabotage, ambushes and the conduct of raids. Individuals trained in this functional group would also be capable of training other personnel. The objective would be to train aspiring

partisans and geographically expand the resistance network into both rural and urban areas, thereby operationally challenging the occupation forces.

HOW EFFECTIVE CAN PARTISANS BE?

From a historical point of view, the British Special Operations Executive's (SOE) "F" France Section conducted a spectrum of operations from July to September 1943. During this period, members of the French resistance, with support from the SOE, reportedly killed 650 German officers and men, wounded 4,000, destroyed 150 locomotives, 1,200 railway wagons and 170 trucks, conducted 445 attacks on Axis personnel or premises, conducted 171 train derailments and acts of railway sabotage, and orchestrated 289 incendiary operations and 219 acts of sabotage against factories or public works. As well, there were 141 acts of subversion, the destruction of the Lannemexan aluminum factory in July 1943, the sinking of a minesweeper in Rouen and the destruction of 3,600 tires at the mission and works in Clermont-Ferrand. Lastly, French partisans destroyed 1 million litres of precious aviation fuel in tandem with 10 million litres of valuable oil.[28]

Subsequent employment of special operators in the form of allied Jedburgh teams[29] consisting mainly of an American, British and French members, were dropped into France prior to, and in the wake of the 6 June 1944 Normandy landings along with American Operational Groups (OG)[30] that were dispatched closer to the frontlines. These teams provided communications, equipment through supply drops as well mentoring nascent leaders, and in some cases provided the leadership and planning capability to facilitate operations to destroy German lines of communication, attack logistical bases, assassinate collaborators and provide intelligence for Allied forces.

As with any nascent partisan group, aspiring partisans can access a litany of 'how to' historical or contemporary books and articles, study personal experiences and garner a substantive appreciation for the myriad of organizational, technical, and tactical challenges that would likely be encountered in raising a resistance movement. For example, the German post-operation reports on anti-guerrilla operations[31] are available, as well as studies focusing on the Norwegian resistance movement,[32] and lessons derived from the German Army training in partisan/anti partisan warfare.[33] There is a popular Swiss study on national resistance[34] and a noteworthy analysis of modern irregular warfare.[35] As well, there are a number of

publications that an aspiring partisan should scrutinize, including a comprehensive survey analyzing the strategic and operational aspects of partisan and anti-partisan tactics.[36]

PREPARING THE MODERN-DAY UKRAINIAN PARTISAN

Interestingly, the Ukrainian military has made accessible on the Internet a 'how to' handbook on partisan warfare. This document provides detailed instructions in the conduct of basic acts of sabotage. Moreover, it provides the aspiring partisan a list of alibis that could be employed should they be stopped and queried as to their 'activities' or challenged by occupying authorities. The set of instructions covers issues of personal and operational security and incorporates a spectrum of passive methodologies aimed to interdict daily work, create confusion, facilitate miscommunication, create language issues, thereby providing a degree of friction in day-to-day activities for the occupiers. It also provides guidance on sabotage methodology that spans simple arson, to details as to incapacitating industrial equipment, power and sewage lines. These activities can prove to be highly problematic for functioning of occupation forces.

This handbook, combined with a website entitled *Centre for National Resistance*, was created as a resource to assist partisan activities and as a venue to communicate with the Ukrainian military. The Centre provides both passive nonviolent scenarios to be explored and employed by partisans such as orchestrating strikes, boycotting events, and other traditional nonviolent activities. The objective is to exacerbate and disrupt Russian and collaborating local authorities in their governing of occupied areas. In parallel, the handbook provides detailed tactical instructions to instruct the reader in effectively developing and conducting ambushes and other fundamental tactical techniques. The Centre argues that to become an effective partisan, individuals must have a sound understanding of basic tactics and how they may be applied to various scenarios.

In tandem, modern partisans must be well versed in nonviolent and violent resistance methodologies that would disrupt an occupation force. The modern partisan must have a comprehensive appreciation of personal and Internet security. This necessity is to counter modern investigative and technical techniques that could be employed by occupying security/intelligence services to compromise personnel, organized resistance cells, plans and the partisan support apparatus. Furthermore, partisans must be

innovative and tactically knowledgeable, innovative in the fabrication of homemade weapons, as well as capable of creating and employing a spectrum of improvised explosive devices.

CAN SOF ASSIST SMALL STATES IN MAKING A MORE EFFECTIVE PARTISAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT?

For many nations like Great Britain,[37] and the United States,[38] amongst others, SOF has been the "go to" force predicated upon their traditional and inherent capabilities to leverage the effectiveness of resistance movements. This task is based upon their command-and-control capabilities, integral operational security protocols, historic experience in aiding and abetting resistance movements and knowledge of operational resistance requirements, ability to access air support and resupply, provide secure communications, and having an integral appreciation of planning, coordinating and conducting discreet operations. SOF can effectively instruct resistance operations and, in many cases, incorporate important local language capabilities within their teams. Their SOF training, in many cases, enables them to plan and organize attacks, subversion, sabotage and psychological operations, all designed to maximize the physical and psychological damage upon the occupying forces. As a strategic asset SOF can guide resistance elements to ensure missions assigned are focused at achieving the political end-state. To that end, fomenting resistance, in this case against Russian occupation, UKR SOF and their nascent resistance force of partisan have seen some success.

In August 2022, several Western media reports surfaced various activities that were identified as sabotage in Russian occupied areas of Ukraine.[39] Some of these reported attacks targeted Russian ammunition dumps and airbases, destroying, in one reported case, a dozen Russian aircraft, as well as conducting targeted bombings and assassination. These were reportedly orchestrated by Ukrainian special forces and supported by local partisans. As one partisan noted "The goal is to show the occupiers that they are not at home, that they should not settle in, that they should not sleep comfortably."[40]

To date, due to security concerns, it is difficult to ascertain from media reports if these targeted attacks were the work of UKR SOF or partisans or both. Notwithstanding, the November 2022 destruction of two Ka-52 and the damaging of two other Russian Ka-52[41] attack helicopters at the Veretye

base in the Pskov region, 500 miles from the Ukrainian border, and less than 15 miles from the Latvian border, demonstrates the reach of UKR SOF and partisans operating behind Russian lines.

Compounding the destruction wrought by UKR SOF and partisans is the unease and notable psychological impact of having such personnel operating throughout occupied Ukraine, as well as beyond its borders. Moreover, such incidents have flooded social media channels along with uncomfortable images of the destruction of the equipment, facilities and the targeted assassination of Russian soldiers and Russian appointed leaders. These incidents are further disillusioning Russian supporters and challenging Moscow's increasingly unsupportable explanations as to President Vladimir Putin's failure and dearth of success of his "special military operation."

Reflecting upon the wake of Russia's second invasion of Ukrainian sovereign territory in February 2022, several initiatives to develop an effective resistance movement in small sovereign states, as well as larger ones, that could be targeted by an aggressor nation, have been undertaken. Military history is replete in the spectrum of conflicts that witnessed the exploitation of partisan forces against an occupier. Moreover, the experience garnered, particularly during World War II, Algeria, Afghanistan, Iraq, amongst others, provides sound insights and recommendations into resistance movements. These highlight the importance of employing SOF in small teams to assist friendly partisans. Such partisans are invaluable in providing targeting information, orchestrating raids and ambushes, interdicting lines of communication, as well as destroying important facilities such as logistical bases, while providing on-site intelligence for SOF and supporting activities for conventional forces as required.

Any nation/state pondering the recruitment, organization and incorporation of a resistance organization within its national defence structure should consider a whole of government approach. This requirement is predicated upon the multifaceted nature of full spectrum modern conflict in all its machinations, both kinetic and non-kinetic. Police and intelligence organizations, for example, could provide insight and practices to frustrate questioning/interrogations through instruction in Resistance to Interrogation (R to I), which would include Conduct after Capture. Government and industrial expertise could provide examples for exercises and planning purposes regarding important targeting information to maximize the inconvenience for an occupying force while minimizing

costly infrastructure destruction. Rendering the electrical grid inoperable for a period of time without seriously crippling the infrastructure would have substantial effect upon the occupiers while minimizing the impact on the population at large and future reconstruction. Understanding such industrial targets, public and private infrastructure and their respective systems, would ensure that personnel selected for partisan training would have the insights and capability to effectively undertake such clandestine operations should they be assigned or ordered to do so.

The organization and manning of partisan forces could be facilitated by employing former military and intelligence personnel while talent spotting a broad range of other government/nongovernmental employees, present, former, retired. These individuals could have important skill-sets that could be utilized in performing reconnaissance, providing target information, providing intimate knowledge of the technical/communication systems that may be targeted, including the provision of useful military/intelligence planning skills.

Historically, partisan forces were organized and enabled by intelligence organizations operating in enemy occupied countries. The command of partisan operations within SOF, have been a subject of much discussion by interested observers, as well as military and intelligence professionals, amongst others. In the Ukrainian case, the government decided that partisan forces should operate under the command-and-control umbrella of the UKR SOF. This approach would logically facilitate the training of partisan forces whilst providing an important command-and-control function facilitating operational requirements for the UKR SOF and, in turn, the partisan organization writ large. Moreover, this would expedite coordination of partisans, as well as any support to SOF and conventional military operations, if and when required.

CONCLUSION

The Ukrainian-Russian war has demonstrated that a well-trained territorial defence, dedicated partisan forces and their auxiliaries, combined with rudimentary skills in unconventional warfare, can be a force multiplier and provide an overt and explicit warning to aggressors who wish to seize or occupy the territories of large or small states. Small states can, if well-organized, delay, disrupt or deter a military opponent from undertaking a planned aggressive action. This combined conventional/unconventional deterrent strategy would arguably be cost-effective, acting as a national

unifying force, enabling the citizenry to partake. Should an invasion occur, Territorial Defence Forces, alongside their partisan and auxiliaries, could facilitate and support NATO forces to liberate occupied areas. Moreover, in the wake of liberation, these forces can facilitate stabilization/security efforts and reconstruction initiatives.

For nations that are intent on constituting an effective resistance initiative NATO incorporates a distinct advantage, as a number of founding members have significant experience in undertaking successful resistance movements in their respective histories.

The experiences and best practices can embrace talent spotting specialist personnel, recruiting and training of potential partisans. Each of the foregoing would likely require an appropriate level of training to achieve the requirements of their respective mission. This requirement would likely fall to SOF trained and experienced in the conduct of discreet, unconventional warfare and capable of providing the variety of training necessary to embed a resistance/partisan capability as envisioned by respective governments.

To galvanize and coordinate resistance initiatives, NATO governments, their respective SOF and intelligence personnel, along with selective government agencies, could expand their support to the respective national resistance mission by undertaking appropriate planning and training of participating nations. This would facilitate a more effective NATO deterrence capability while garnering an expanding expertise in the field of national resistance movements. This task would logically fall under the auspices of the NATO SOF School, located in Chièvres, Belgium. From the School, NATO SOF personnel could be educated and trained in resistance requirements, methodologies and an array of topics germane to creating a functional and effective resistance program for small states. Once this has been enabled NATO SOF teams could be assigned to assist in training small states that seek a multifaceted defence and security strategy that would incorporate an effective resistance movement aimed at enhancing small state deterrence.

An effective resistance organization may not by itself deter territorial aspirations and activities by an aggressor nation. However, combined with an effective conventional force and an alliance network like NATO, resilience and resistance capabilities will provide a significant contribution in bolstering a strategy of deterrence against aggressive outside forces.

CHAPTER 8

A CLASH OF SHADOWS – THE REQUIREMENT FOR COUNTER-SOF OPERATIONS

Colonel (retired) Bernd Horn, PhD

No country or region is exempt from the current state of strategic competition, namely the struggle for influence, leverage and access to allies, partners, territory, resources, etc., in the global quest to attain political, military, economic and geographic advantage. Importantly, antagonists focus their efforts and activities below the threshold of armed conflict to avoid creating situations where a competitor would resort to military action. In essence, the new competitive landscape, blends conventional, irregular, asymmetric, criminal and terrorist means and methods to achieve political and economic objectives. Whether a state (great, large or small) or a non-state actor, adversaries will make use of the proliferation of technology and information that has accompanied globalization. Instruments such as cyber warfare, economic coercion or even blackmail, exploitation of social/societal conflict in a target country and the waging of disinformation campaigns and psychological warfare are all in the inventory, as are terrorism and cooperation with criminal organizations. Notably, General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, accurately identified the weakness of modern states. He insisted that history has shown that "a perfectly thriving state can, in a matter of months and even days, be transformed into an arena of fierce armed conflict, become a victim of foreign intervention, and sink into a web of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe, and civil war."[1]

In this murky struggle in the shadows and margins of international affairs, much of the activity is conducted by special operations forces (SOF) working in a clandestine and covert manner. Strategic reconnaissance, espionage, subversion, sabotage, assassinations, influence activities, to name a few actions, are continually conducted by many international actors both friends and foes. No country is immune to becoming a target. Geographic location, wealth of resources, economic and political disposition, are just

some of the reasons that may stimulate foreign interest in interfering with a specific state. Depending on circumstances, priority of the target, urgency, or maliciousness, actors will deploy the necessary resources, including highly trained and specially equipped SOF, to achieve their political objectives.

What makes this possibility acutely dangerous is that law enforcement agencies and even conventional militaries may not be adept or capable of taking on SOF actors, as was witnessed in the Ukraine in 2014. Foreign entities, particularly the Russians and Chinese, have studied Western SOF – their organizations, training, equipment, as well as their tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and have made strides in modernizing their own forces. Although home defence and rear area security have never been a focus or priority for SOF due to their limited numbers, a focus on strategic offence and an emphasis on expeditionary deployments, the nature of the current strategic competition fought in the "gray zone" of international affairs, may require SOF to dedicate effort to both offensive and defensive counter-SOF operations.[2]

THE THREAT

Threat is often difficult to measure. Factors such as intent, opportunity and capability always weigh in. Intent can be determined by an adversary's words and action. Opportunity is basically at the discretion of an opponent as globalization, the openness of the West and the plethora of possible "targets" is seemingly unlimited. As for capability, advancements of adversary SOF make this factor increasingly worrisome.[3] Although U.S. and NATO SOF have dominated the Western media with coverage in books, on-line, in cinema and TV depicting their exploits and effectiveness, what is worthy to note, however, is that our adversaries also have SOF elements and they have been busy modernizing those forces to replicate Western SOF. This capability can, and will, pose a substantial threat to Western nations.

This modernization effort is significant. General Gerasimov, understanding SOF's key contribution to strategic competition, insisted, "Asymmetrical actions have come into widespread use, enabling the nullification of an enemy's advantages in armed conflict. Among such actions are the use of special-operations forces and internal opposition to create a permanently operating front through the entire territory of the enemy state, as well as informational actions, devices, and means that are constantly being perfected."[4]

Dmitri Trenin, a Russian defense analyst, observed, "Moscow has long been looking at U.S. Special Operations forces as a model for its own SOCOM." He added, "the Russian MoD [Ministry of Defense] takes its cue from the Pentagon – whenever the circumstances and the means allow it."[5] Not surprisingly then, on 6 March 2013, General Gerasimov announced the creation of Russia's own Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and SOF units, which had been under development since 2009. The Russian SOCOM was constructed based on capability modelled directly on the American Delta Force and the British Special Air Service (SAS). The Command is divided into five special operations divisions with about 50 service personnel in each, totaling approximately 1,500 personnel inclusive of support troops.[6]

General Gerasimov revealed, "Having studied the practice of the formation, training, and application of special operations by the leading foreign powers, the leadership of the Ministry of Defense has also begun to create such forces." He continued, "We have set up a special command, which has already begun to put our plans into practice as part of the Armed Forces training program. We have also developed a set of key documents that outline the development priorities, the training program, and the modalities of using these new forces."[7]

The Russians also have Unit 29155, a branch of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, consisting of deep-cover intelligence operatives who operate abroad. Joseph Fitsanakis, professor of intelligence and security studies at Coastal Carolina University, asserts, "Unit 29155 has been in existence since at least 2009. It consists of a small number of personnel, possibly around 200, with an additional 20-40 operations officers."[8] The origins of the unit are rooted in networks of Soviet agents who "were at times tasked with developing and maintaining plans for large-scale sabotage, behind enemy lines, which would become operational during a conventional war between the [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics] USSR and the West. They included acts of sabotage against energy networks, public utilities, civilian or military harbours, telecommunications systems."[9] Although dated, and additional means exist today (i.e., cyber) infiltration of operators to support and/or lead disenfranchised/rebel elements, or to act independently to cause physical destruction can create chaos in target countries. The objectives of Russia's SOF, according to Fitsanakis, are:

> intended to achieve political and economic goals in any geographical part of the world of interest to the Russian Federation…. They come in cases when diplomatic methods are no longer active. Distracting forces and the attention of certain countries by external problems, problems creating them inside, rocking the political systems of these countries, destabilizing the situation, including through a "third hand." [Russian] Special Operations Forces create, train, and supervise foreign guerrilla movements, eliminate unwanted leaders without any sanctions on foreign soil, and so on… Russian experts' main task is the protection of our citizens abroad, the release of Russians who have fallen hostage somewhere in distant areas, and protecting the interests of our country.[10]

In essence, Russian SOF are combat units that can deploy quickly, operate independently and can conduct a spectrum of counter-terrorism (CT) and combat missions on Russian territory and abroad.[11] The greatest distinctions between U.S. SOF missions and activities and those of their Russian counterparts are the Russian inclusion of sabotage and counter-sabotage operations. Most other missions are similar.[12]

The Russian also have special purpose regiments, or *Spetsnaz*, which is a general term for "special forces" in Russian, literally "special purpose." These Russian special forces can specifically refer to any elite or special purpose units under subordination of the Federal Security Service (FSB) or Internal Troops of Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as units controlled by the GRU (military intelligence service). A Briefing Paper for the UK parliament described Spetsnaz as "a cross between US Rangers and the British SAS." The report noted that they have a wide repertoire of uses: combat; intelligence gathering; establishing insurgencies; conducting counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, arms smuggling, and waging guerilla warfare. The report also assessed that they were not as effective as some Western special forces.[13]

Russian SOF are not the only concern to Western nations, their allies and friendly countries. The Chinese have also worked at modernizing their SOF capability. Although China's current SOF units are a relatively recent addition to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) they have been carefully monitoring Western SOF. As a result, the PLA has increased its focus and resources in its SOF.[14] The U.S. Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) reported that China's first army SOF units were created in the 1990s.

It added that "Additional units have continued to be stood up, with the other services of the PLA establishing SOF units with specialized skills sets throughout the 2000s."[15]

The Chinese view their emerging SOF as "new type" units that receive priority for development. SOF units are deployed in all military regions and Services and are estimated at a strength of 20,000 to 30,000 personnel, which is approximately one per cent of the entire PLA.[16]

The Chinese consider special operations as an "important campaign activity" that must be integrated into operations along with information warfare, firepower, manoeuvre, and psychological warfare capabilities. The Chinese PLA textbook, *The Science of Campaigns,* defines Campaign Special Operations as "irregular operational activities conducted by specially formed, trained and equipped crack units (and small units) using special warfare to achieve specific campaign and strategic goals. The main purpose of its objectives is to assault enemy vital targets, paralyze enemy operational systems, reduce enemy operational capabilities, and interfere, delay, and disrupt enemy operational activities to create favorable conditions for main force units."[17]

The U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) assessed, "Chinese special forces warfare doctrine consists primarily of special reconnaissance, attacks and sabotage, integrated land-sea-air-space-electronic combat, asymmetrical combat, large scale night combat, and surgical strikes." The DIA noted that "all [Chinese] SOF possess the ability to infiltrate undetected behind enemy lines and maintain a three-dimensional, all-weather infiltration approach capability using sea (submarine, high speed boat, open water swim, and SCUBA), air (airborne, powered parachute, and helicopter), and land (long-distance movement and rock climbing)."[18]

Unlike U.S. SOF, Chinese SOF do not conduct unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, counterinsurgency, hostage rescue, civil affairs, and psychological operations.[19] Chinese SOF units concentrate on special reconnaissance, raids, sabotage, and harassment while other non-SOF units conduct most special technical warfare tasks such as computer network attack.[20]

Currently, Chinese SOF do not have the specialized support infrastructure (i.e., strategic airlift, specialized close air support aircraft, and long-range

sustainment capabilities) necessary to transport and support SOF units in long-range operations.[21] As such, most Chinese SOF units resemble highly-trained light infantry with capabilities that are like those found in U.S. Army Ranger units. They are capable of insertion behind enemy lines, but not too far from friendly units and the support system they entail. Although some units could attempt limited, short-duration operations in an enemy's strategic depth, they would do so at great risk.[22]

Importantly, Chinese SOF have more than doubled in number in the last two decades, indicating that China's political and military leadership have understood the low-cost, high-reward strategic utility of SOF.[23] The FMSO observed that Chinese SOF have "been growing in size, sophistication and global reach." Moreover, since 2018, "Their [Chinese SOF] command structure has been streamlined and training has become more realistic.[24]

Aside from great powers, rogue state actors and non-state actors have also demonstrated an ability to conduct special operations that may require counter-SOF operations. For instance, Iran has come to rely heavily on its light infantry and special forces. Although Iran does not have an independent special operations command, its Armed Forces structure consists of two major independent branches, the Armed Forces (Army) proper, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards (IRGC). Both of these branches have their own special forces units in both their land and naval Services.

In addition to special forces units, the Revolutionary Guards also have a separate division called the Quds Force that deals with special operations abroad.[25] The Quds Force is a specialized intelligence branch of the Revolutionary Guards, which serves primarily as an instrument of exerting covert influence and conducting sensitive foreign-policy missions. In particular, it provides organizational, financial, training, and technological assistance to various pro-Iranian parties and movements, as well as Iran's international allies. The Quds Force is considered the best-trained and the most capable of the Iranian special forces.[26]

The Revolutionary Guards also created their elite Saberin Takavar Brigade, commonly referred to as Saberin. They analyzed eleven different SOF organizations, including Britain's SAS prior to creating Saberin. To join, volunteers must undertake grueling fitness tests, as well as psychological and intelligence examinations.[27]

In addition, the Revolutionary Guards also operate special naval forces that are separate from the Iranian Navy. The Revolutionary Guards and the Iranian Navy units have their own areas of responsibility. The Revolutionary Guards are responsible for the Persian Gulf, whereas the Navy has the Strait of Oman and the Caspian Sea. The Revolutionary Guards' naval units are specifically geared for asymmetric warfare. They rely on a large fleet of light missile, torpedo, and gun boats. Their training includes operations to plant booby traps on, and seize, enemy ships and oil platforms using speedboats and divers.[28]

Given that adversaries have constantly improving SOF capabilities, it is only prudent to develop contingencies to deter, disrupt or destroy hostile actions, even those below the threshold of armed violence. Our opponents have demonstrated a ruthless aggressiveness in pursuing their political objectives. They reject and ignore the international rules-based order when it fails to coincide with their desires and they are not restrained by domestic or international protest. In short, they have the intent, opportunities and capabilities to conduct special operations to achieve their political objectives at the expense of other nations. Importantly, small states are exceptionally susceptible to these aggressive actions.

WHY SOF?

SOF are a limited resource. For small states, their SOF organizations are especially restrained due to a number of factors such as scarce resources (e.g., fiscal, equipment, deployment platforms), size of the respective military institution, shallow recruiting pools, and the institutional focus on general purpose military capability. Furthermore, disruptive or hostile (but non-combat) actions during a "peacetime" or competition environment are normally deemed the domain of law enforcement. Moreover, rear area security tasks during conflict are traditionally handled by conventional forces. As such, the suggestion that SOF be used for counter-SOF operations is usually dismissed off-hand.

However, SOF are exactly the force that can be used to best advantage to deter, disrupt or destroy adversary asymmetric and irregular warfare operations during all phases of the spectrum of conflict. Undeniably, SOF have been able to demonstrate their strategic utility through their ability to deal with crises in a timely and responsive manner. Traditional SOF tasks (e.g., Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, CT, COIN, Military

Assistance, High Value Tasks) provide the knowledge, skill and experience to tackle counter-SOF operations. Central to this capability are individuals with the cognitive dexterity and agility to assess a situation, often with incomplete information and/or in conditions of ambiguity and chaos, and devise creative solutions not constrained by doctrine or convention. But, in a more macro sense, SOF characteristics lend themselves to being the ideal counter. SOF provide:

1. High readiness, low profile, task-tailored Special Operation Task Forces (SOTFs) and/or SOF Teams that can be deployed rapidly, over long distances and provide tailored proportional responses to a myriad of different situations;

2. Highly trained technologically enabled forces that can gain access to hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas;

3. Discreet forces that can provide discriminate precise kinetic and non-kinetic effects;

4. A deployed capable force with a generally lower profile and less intrusive presence than larger conventional forces;

5. A rapidly deployable force that can assess and survey potential crisis areas or hot spots to provide "ground truth" and situational awareness for governmental decision makers;

6. A highly trained, specialized force capable of providing a response to ambiguous, asymmetric, unconventional situations that fall outside of the capabilities of law enforcement agencies (LEA), conventional military or other government departments (OGDs);

7. A force capable of operating globally or domestically in austere, harsh and dangerous environments with limited support. SOF are largely self-contained and can communicate worldwide with organic equipment and can provide limited medical support for themselves and those they support;

8. A culturally attuned SOTF or SOF team that can act as a force multiplier through the ability to work closely with regional civilian and military authorities and organizations, as well as populations through Defence, Diplomacy and Military Assistance (DDMA)/ Security Force Assistance (SFA) initiatives;

9. A force able to work with, and foster, inter-agency and inter-departmental cooperation.[29]

In essence, SOF characteristics, capabilities and effects are best suited for conducting overt, covert or clandestine operations in the murky gray zone of strategic competition, particularly under the threshold of armed violence. Importantly, the counter-SOF fight will continue during conflict/war as well. For small states, the ability to counter veiled aggression by opponents is critical, especially if the desire is to keep the confrontation(s) as low visibility as possible. During conflict/war, counter-SOF operations will be equally important to resist enemy attempts at shaping the environment or working with insurgent/rebel forces.

Specifically, SOF skill-sets, based on their traditional tasks, provide the foundation for their employment. Whether kinetic or non-kinetic responses are required, SOF can navigate both expertly. Their Direct Action (DA) abilities allow for precision in executing raids or countering adversary action. Their ability at surveillance, observation and reconnaissance, in urban and rural settings, allows for continual situational awareness and the proficiency to spot and identify potential threats. In addition, SOF's ability and experience in working with other government departments and agencies, increases the effectiveness of interdepartmental cooperation and the conduct of operations.

Although in no way a criticism, with conventional forces, who have a vital role to play in national defence, whether in the strategic competition or open conflict, deployment is normally "loud" with a large footprint and a rigid hierarchical and doctrinal approach that kills any attempt at subtly dealing with a situation. In addition, conventional forces are less likely to deal well with ambiguity and/or harsh environments. Finally, they are not conversant with SOF TTPs and as such are less likely to be able to anticipate hostile SOF actions.

POTENTIAL TARGETS

The requirement for counter-SOF operations is potentially substantial when one examines the possible targets that exist to cause political, economic and social chaos within a state. As General Gerasimov asserted, "a perfectly thriving state can, in a matter of months and even days, be transformed into an arena of fierce armed conflict."[30] These were not just words,

as the Russian invasion of Georgia and Ukraine demonstrated what can be accomplished in a short period of time. In both cases, Russian special operations prior to the larger conventional incursions/invasions shaped the environment to allow for the degradation of the respective nations.

The vulnerability/priority of targets for an adversary will depend on the situation, namely during times of peace/competition or conflict/war. During strategic competition adversary action will be covert and clandestine.[31] Therefore, targets will be those linked more to economic and political objectives. During conflict and war, targets will be related more to military objectives/capabilities, as well as political.

Some possible targets/activities that adversary SOF may attempt to exploit are:

1. **Environmental Disasters** – environmental matters in the current environment are a hot button topic. Environmentalist groups, particularly the more extreme, create significant social and economic upheaval with protests and violent action to "save" the environment. Environmental disasters quickly become a rallying point. In addition, society at large becomes outraged at environmental disasters, especially if they could have been avoided. If the event can pit different interest groups or demographics against each other the issue becomes even more complex and disruptive. Moreover, these disasters devastate environments, impacting the economy, quality of life and require massive efforts for clean-up. Targeting a nuclear facility would be cataclysmic. Environmental disasters become a political, economic and social nightmare for governments. They are also a significant distraction. As such, creating such events in a target country is relatively easy to accomplish. Sabotaging pipelines, oil refineries, chemical storage facilities, etc., is easily done. Contaminating water and food growing operations is yet another possibility, as is dumping oil or other contaminants in the littoral. Aside from the cost of clean-up and recovery of affected industry, the government can lose credibility and face protest over its inability to prevent the disaster, the speed of which it reacts, or its culpability in not ensuring proper safeguards (particularly if combined with a robust disinformation campaign by adversaries).

2. **Pipelines** – are an obvious and abundant target. Their destruction creates economic and political fall-out. The example of the

sabotage of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that was detected on 26 September 2022 in the North Sea demonstrates the ease with which an attack can occur without positive attribution to the responsible party. The deliberate destruction of the pipeline dumped up to 400,000 tons of methane into the atmosphere.[32] Cyber-attack, much like the assault on the American company Colonial, which transports more than 100 million gallons of gasoline and other fuel daily from Houston to the New York Harbor through 8,800 km of pipeline, representing approximately 45 per cent of all fuel consumed on the East Coast, is another method of taking pipelines off-line.[33] However, physical destruction remains an equally effective means of disrupting, if not destroying, an opponent's economy and political credibility.

3. **Power Grids** – or rather the destruction thereof, are another means of creating pressure on governments. Society has become addicted to energy to drive the economic and social engines of society. The inability to provide this life-blood to its citizens can create not just hardship on the population (particularly in winter months) but also destroy the faith and support in the government in its ability to provide basic needs to its citizens. The ease of which the power grid can be damaged was clearly shown in attacks in the U.S. by right wing extremists who simply used high-powered rifles to shoot and shut-down power stations in North Carolina, Oregon and Washington in 2022.[34] The vulnerability of the power grid is evident in a U.S. analysis of the threat, which determined that saboteurs "could cause a blackout coast-to-coast if they took out only nine of the 55,000 substations in the U.S. The American electrical grid is vast and sprawling with 450,000 miles of transmission lines, 55,000 substations and 6,400 power plants."[35] Small states are equally at risk, particularly those that have remote hydro-electric generating plants (such as in Northern Quebec, Canada) with the requirement for transmission lines and towers to bring the power to populated areas. Once again, cyber-attacks can also be used to disrupt the power grid, but the ease with which a physical attack can be carried out requires attention.

4. **Communication Nodes** – are yet another means to cause disruption to a target country. Targeting cell towers, fibre-optic cables, or server farms can create massive chaos. For example, both

in the Russian interference in the Ukraine in 2014 and the invasion in 2022, Russian operations were supported by attacks on critical infrastructure knocking out banking, defence and communications systems. The disruption was achieved by cyber-attacks but also by sabotaging physical components such as cables, switches, routers and network centres.[36] Of note, Alexander Downer, a former Australian foreign minister, calculated that 95 per cent of the world's internet traffic passes through just 200 undersea fibre optic cable systems. He revealed, "There are estimated to be as few as 10 global chokepoints where these cables converge or come ashore. If you wanted to cut off Britain from the world, it would not be very difficult to sabotage these chokepoints."[37] In addition, incidents in Western Europe, in apparent retaliation for its support to Ukraine, have underlined the vulnerability of key digital communications and energy infrastructure to attacks. For example, the day after the Ukrainians blew up a section of the Kerch Strait Bridge on 7 October 2022, trains across northern Germany ground to a halt after cables that enabled train drivers to communicate were sabotaged.[38] Two days later, the Danish Island of Bornholm went dark as the undersea cable that supplies it with electricity from Sweden was severed. Then, on 19 October, internet cables were simultaneously severed in the south of France at three locations. Cyber security company Zscaler explained the cut cables severed digital highways linking Marseille with Lyon, Barcelona and Milan and the damage had "impacted major cables with connectivity to Asia, Europe, U.S. and potentially other parts of the world."[39]

5. **Shipping/Ports** – represent prime targets and they are relatively exposed and accessible. Damaging port facilities, canal locks, shipping, or port infrastructure can create massive economic and political fall-out.

6. **Direct Action (DA)/Sabotage of Important Infrastructure** – As noted above, along with the aforementioned targets, foreign SOF with the intent of causing internal disruption, chaos and fear, as well as to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of a government, can conduct DA operations within a target country. This line of operation can include creating an insurgency. Examples abound. During the Russian operations in Ukraine in 2014, the Ukrainian security service arrested its first GRU agent and three accomplices

while they were gathering intelligence on Ukrainian military positions on the Chongar Peninsula just north of Crimea.[40] Another Russian-GRU agent was killed in Kharkov in September 2014, during the execution of a sabotage mission. He was suspected of blowing up railway cars loaded with aviation fuel at the Osnova railway station. Ukrainian officials also claimed a combined group of rebels and Spetsnaz-GRU agents were active in Ukrainian rear areas in the summer of 2015. This activity included mine-laying and attacks at poorly guarded Ukrainian transport convoys.[41] Ukrainian oligarch Serhiy Taruta also revealed that Russian SOF most likely had a role in the initiation of the rebellion.[42]

The 2022 Russian invasion of the Ukraine has also provided examples of why counter-SOF operations are potentially critical. On 7 October 2022, a section of the strategic Kerch Strait Bridge was blown up by Ukrainian special forces, interrupting Russia's ability to supply Crimea, an attack Russia blamed on Ukraine's military intelligence. In addition, Ukrainian special forces-supported partisan attacks are forcing the Russians to divert resources away from the frontline operations to help secure rear areas, which is hindering Russian ability to defend against ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensives, much less conduct offensive operations.[43] Furthermore, a spate of suspicious fires targeting fuel depots, engineering plants, and infrastructure in both Russia and Russian occupied Ukraine also detracted from Russian operations.[44] As one analyst revealed, "in May 2022, military outposts, recruitment centers, and defense industrial complexes across Russia started suffering mysterious explosions or fires. In all, there have been dozens of incidents at facilities throughout Russia. The targets include oil refineries, ammunition-production and -storage facilities, aerospace and defense companies, and communications infrastructure. The attacks appear to be part of an effort to undermine and degrade the Russian military's offensive capabilities."[45] The ongoing sabotage has prompted the Russians to task Rosgvardia and Federal Security Service (FSB) special forces elements to conduct counter-SOF operations to ensure rear security in occupied Ukraine.[46] The problem set is also why U.S. Navy SOF operators regularly work with U.S. Coast Guard personnel to practice defending critical infrastructure, particularly in remote areas.[47]

Notably, Ukraine and Europe are not the only playing fields. Iran has been the target of numerous sabotage events. The most recent incidents include a major fire at an oil refinery in an industrial zone near the northwestern city of Tabriz and a drone attack (carrying bombs) that destroyed a "military workshop" in Isfahan, which is the home to both a large air base built for Iran's fleet of American-made F-14 fighter jets and its Nuclear Fuel Research and Production Center.[48]

7. **Supporting Rebel Factions/Insurgents/Resistance Movements/Extremists** – SOF can also actively work with resistance cells and/or local populations and host nation forces to disrupt and deny adversary attempts at gaining a foothold/access to areas of interest.[49] U.S. and NATO SOF are focusing on creating resistance networks that make invasions by Russia or China too costly for those powers to even attempt. The successful efforts of Ukrainian SOF demonstrate the value proposition of developing this capability. Not surprisingly, U.S. SOF are working with their Taiwanese counterparts to develop a similar capability.[50] Importantly, nothing stops adversaries from doing the exact same operations. Therefore, counter-SOF tasks are important. For example, American and European officials believe that Russia has directed associates of a white supremacist militant group based in Russia to conduct a letter bomb campaign in Spain that targeted the prime minister, the defense minister and foreign diplomats. Nathan Sales, a former State Department counterterrorism coordinator asserted, "This seems like a warning shot. It's Russia sending a signal that it's prepared to use terrorist proxies to attack in the West's rear areas." In fact, according to U.S. and European security officials, Russian Unit 29155, has tried to destabilize Europe through attempted coups and assassinations.[51]

8. **Radar Sites and Military Installations** – in times of conflict or escalation to the outbreak of war, key defense installations, particularly remote radar sites intended to provide early warning of attack become key targets for adversary SOF. For this reason, some steps have already been taken. Shemya Island, Alaska, which is in the Aleutian Islands and is home to the AN/FPS-108 Cobra Dane early warning and tracking radar used to spot incoming ballistic missile strikes provides an example. It possesses a strategic 10,000-foot airfield with associated infrastructure and

ample ramp space. Together, they would be a prime target during a conflict as it is also the closest military facility to Russia's eastern flank. With adversary SOF in mind, Special Operations Command NORTH (SOCNORTH) operators, in conjunction with Army Green Berets from the 10th Special Forces Group, deployed to Shemya to practice defending the island in cooperation with the local security forces.[52]

9. **Assassination Of Personnel** – removing key leaders, technicians, facilitators, financiers, etc., is another effective means of disrupting an adversary. These attacks are carried out both in an overt (i.e., send a message) and covert (i.e., remove a threat) means. Research has shown that decreases in leader availability and communications undermine organizational cohesion. The reductions in senior leader activity undermined al-Qaeda's organizational effectiveness, including its ability to retain personnel.[53] In a speech at the National Defense University in 2010 outlining his administration's counter-terrorism strategy, President Obama argued that al-Qaeda's "remaining operatives spend more time thinking about their own safety than plotting against us."[54] All major international actors conduct these operations.

   For example, the U.S. military has targeted the Islamic State's top tier leadership cadre with raids and strikes at least five times since the beginning of the summer of 2022. U.S. forces killed the ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2019, his successor ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi in Syria in February 2022 and two Islamic State group "officials" in an overnight raid in eastern Syria, on 11 December 2022.[55] U.S. SOF eliminated Bilal al-Sudani on 25 January 2023, who allegedly played a central role in ISIS financial networks and "was responsible for fostering the growing presence of ISIS in Africa and for funding the group's operations worldwide, including in Afghanistan."[56] The Americans also killed Qasem Soleimani the commander of the IRGC Quds Force in 2020.[57]

   The Israelis have also conducted a program of assassinations. In 2013, they liquidated senior Hezbollah operative Hassan Lakkis, who was considered the mastermind of the group's drone program.[58] Additionally, Israel was responsible for the assassination of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the chief of Iran's nuclear program in November 2020. They also eliminated IRGC Colonel

Sayyad Khodaei, who was the deputy commander of the IRGC Quds Force "Unit 840," which is responsible for planning cross-border assassination and kidnapping operations against foreigners, including Israelis.[59] In addition, they killed IRGC Colonel Davoud Jafari who was a drone and air defense expert.

The Ukrainians used assassination to further their political objectives as well. Since Russian forces invaded in February 2022, approximately 20 Kremlin-backed officials or their local Ukrainian collaborators have been killed or injured in a wave of assassinations and attempted killings. They have been gunned down, blown up, hanged and poisoned by "Ukrainian hit squads and saboteurs often operating deep inside enemy-controlled territory."[60]

The Russians are infamous for their assassination program. Not surprisingly, Russian SOF entered Kyiv, some dressed in Ukrainian military uniforms, far in advance of their invading forces to both storm the government district and capture, or kill, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his entourage.[61]

10. **Strategic Reconnaissance/Advanced Force Operations (AFO)** – adversaries will continually attempt to gather as much information as possible to build target lists, develop plans and determine weaknesses. This activity will be done in peace, competition and conflict. The openness of the West makes these activities extremely easy for our adversaries. Examples include the lead-up to the Russian operations in Ukraine in 2014. The first GRU operative was arrested on Ukrainian soil by the Ukrainian security service in March 2014. He was arrested together with three others while gathering intelligence on Ukrainian military positions on the Chongar Peninsula just north of Crimea.[62] More recently, Norwegian authorities accused Russia of deploying drones to fly over the country's infrastructure facilities. In fact, Russians were arrested on Norwegian territory for deploying drones.[63] Lithuania also reported an increase in unauthorised drone flights over military sites.[64]

11. **Agitation/Subversion** – finally, a difficult action to defend against based on the Western pillar of an open, free society that values free speech and assembly, is agitation and subversion. Adversary SOF can easily penetrate protest movements, join in on-going protests/

rioting, support activists financially and physically, attempt to create division within society by feeding existing grievances and cleavages or committing acts that will inflame existing tensions.

During the Russian operations in Ukraine in 2014, in a matter of a few days, Russian forces were able to seize power, block, disarm and even win over significant portions of the Ukrainian military. They then conducted influence activities to legitimize their actions and presence. They identified disenfranchised ethnic Russians and sympathetic locals to cobble together a proxy force comprised of a variety of groups that consisted of local hooligans, want-to-be political leaders, and even Russians. When the opportunity allowed, "unidentified men in black uniforms" seized government buildings, including the Crimean parliament. An "emergency session" of the parliament was then held and Sergei Aksyonov was chosen as the new Prime Minister of Crimea.[65] Importantly, GRU spetsnaz forces took a leading role in the occupation of Crimea, storming the Crimean parliament.[66] They later surrounded Simferopol airport and Belbek military airfield.[67]

The Russians emphasized agitation and the sowing of internal discord in Ukraine in the lead up to their 2022 invasion as well. The Russians had been extremely successful in infiltrating Ukrainian political, military and police institutions prior to the invasion. For example, Colonel Yuriy Goluban of the Ukrainian National Police, was a former member of Russia's SBU's Alpha unit, responsible for direct action. Ukrainian officials arrested Goluban, who the Russians had tasked with creating internal discord by organizing agitation and protests. The intent was "to infiltrate these protests with paid criminals and agent provocateurs to spark violent confrontations with the police."[68] Moreover, the plan was to stage the protests as an attempted "far-right coup," which would provide justification for the "special military operation."[69]

CHALLENGES

Theoretically, SOF taking on a counter-SOF role makes pre-eminent sense. However, there are a myriad of challenges:

1. SOF are a scarce resource – for small states their SOF organizations are relatively small, yet their task list is large. As such, assigning

SOF to counter-SOF operations can impact other requirements. Therefore, clear priorities must be set on the employment of SOF. What potential targets/activities warrant SOF deployment? How dependable is the intelligence on foreign SOF involvement? Are there other assets that can achieve the same results? What are the potential costs of employing/not employing SOF in the counter-SOF role? Importantly, an in-depth study of potential targets must be undertaken, followed by wargaming of various scenarios to determine potential options and outcomes.

2. Jurisdictional concerns – many states have limitations on the use of military forces in a domestic setting. Therefore, discussions with political and military decision-makers are required to determine the tear-line for employing military resources, particularly SOF, in a domestic setting. In addition, law enforcement agencies and other national security organizations may take umbrage to the military/SOF "trespassing" on their turf. This reaction would be especially strong in cases of what appears to be simply agitation, protests and demonstrations. Foreign SOF, embedded with protestors, would be hard to identify as hostiles. However, they could act as agitators, protest leaders, and/or operatives trying to hijack a demonstration to create violence that would force government agencies to use force to suppress the protest. Whole-of-Government planning, discussions and wargames are required to determine roles, tasks, tripwires to trigger SOF intervention, inter-agency cooperation, etc. A framework must be in place prior to any crisis.

3. Identifying foreign SOF – one of the greatest challenges is determining whether Foreign SOF are present. For example, within a mass of protestors all dressed in civilian attire it is difficult to determine foreign operatives. Moreover, within the relatively free Western societies it is easy for foreign SOF operators to travel to conduct reconnaissance and/or agitation, as well as sabotage (e.g., infrastructure, power grid, pipelines, communication network) as there is relatively unhindered freedom of movement. As such, determining who is a visitor/tourist, curious citizen, protestor or just someone who just happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time can become a vexing problem.

4. Risk of escalation – in the aftermath of the 2014 Ukraine crisis, a leader of another Baltic country was asked what he would do

if "little green men" came over the border. His glib response was "shoot them." Although arguably legal and appropriate, counter-SOF operations have a risk of escalating a situation. For example, in this scenario, the Russians could use the killing of their personnel as proof that they are required to protect ethnic Russians from genocide in the target country. Apprehending or killing adversary SOF, despite the fact they are in the process of committing a hostile act, can always carry the consequence of retaliatory action or escalation of the situation. This reaction is particularly worrisome for small states pushing back against a great or large power. A careful risk analysis and appropriate Rules of Engagement are critical prior to conducting counter-SOF operations.

5. Identification of Targets – determining possible targets, whether infrastructure, personnel or events, becomes a major problem for counter-SOF operations. With literally a plethora of possible targets in any country, deciding when and where targets warrant SOF engagement is a daunting task. SOF resources are too scarce and important to task for anything less than critical targets important to the national interest.

6. Intelligence driven operations – as noted previously, the difficulty in identifying adversary SOF as well as potential targets requires precise intelligence. In essence, counter-SOF operations must be intelligence driven. To maximize effectiveness inter-agency cooperation must be paramount. Silos of information/intelligence cannot be allowed to exist. All intelligence agencies and streams must cooperate and share their data to ensure the most complete picture is available.

7. Political Will – counter-SOF operations contain a degree of risk. Deploying military, particularly SOF in a domestic context can create societal angst and discontent. Engaging foreign SOF can also create an international incident. Nevertheless, to protect a nation's sovereignty and plant a marker that no foreign interference will be tolerated, means there must be political will to take on the risk and deploy SOF to protect the national interest.

SUMMARY

Counter-SOF operations require a disciplined focus. The myriad of potential targets/activities is far too large to suggest that SOF, which are a limited national resource, become the force responsible for protecting the myriad of critical infrastructure within a small state or act as the disrupter of adversary activities within a country. Law enforcement, the conventional military and private security for commercial establishments, all have their role to play. SOF involvement would require specific, precise intelligence to indicate a threat is looming or present. Coordination with all government agencies, as well as private security, where applicable, is required.

This coordination cannot wait for "game day," as that will be too late. Our opponents have studied Western SOF and gained lessons of how to improve their capabilities, as well as how to counter the West. Similarly, the West must study our opponents, understand how they operate and then take the necessary steps to mitigate the threat. Importantly, inter-agency discussion, whole-of-government wargaming and Red Teaming must be conducted to determine roles, tasks, tripwires, cooperation and coordination methodologies.

As the examples of Georgia and Ukraine, to mention only two, have demonstrated, future conflict will begin with the attempts at weakening and dismantling target societies from within before a shot has been fired. Cyber-attacks, disinformation, subversion, agitation and sabotage will all be conducted both to initiate and commence the assault on a target country but continue until the aggressor political objectives are attained. As adversary doctrine and experience has demonstrated, their SOF will be a key capability thrown at their objective.

The West must be prepared to counter these threats. Counter-SOF is one important task that may be required.

CHAPTER 9

SPEARHEADING INFLUENCE: PSYWAR IN SMALL STATE SOF

Captain Adam de Bartok

The most critical lesson the history of Special Warfare[1] can teach us is that *will*[2] is the centre of gravity[3] that transcends all human conflict.[4] In essence, all war is a war of wills. The impact of will on the morale, resilience, momentum, and commitment of a fighting force has consistently overcome vastly asymmetric disadvantages in firepower, logistical proficiency, and manoeuvrability. The distinctive ability to effectively forge, or subvert, the will of significant groups is the key to victory in both conventional and unconventional warfare[5]. The side with the strongest "why," a combination of how they see themselves, identify with their purpose, and relate that purpose to the conditions around them, usually emerges victorious.[6] Renowned author, psychiatrist and holocaust survivor, Viktor Frankl, may have best captured the significance of the "why" to willpower in his bestselling book *Man's Search for Meaning*, where he claimed, "He who has a why to live for, can endure almost any how."[7]

Small state Special Operations Forces (SOF), particularly those associated with Western[8] military alliances, are at a unique place in the evolution of their "why." They are looking beyond the horizon of the Global War on Terror that followed the 9/11 attacks on the West, a period that was characterized for SOF by decades of Direct Action (DA)[9] and support to counter-terrorism (CT). In the contemporary context of Great Power Competition (GPC) between the West and its competitors Russia and China, focus has shifted towards the establishment of more traditional Special Warfare[10] (SW) capabilities that better enable SOF elements to contribute to strategic effects.

Small state SOF units that may not have a great deal to offer to their alliances by way of large-scale, force-on-force attrition warfare against peer adversaries, have found new value in the strategic effects that can be generated by small, but exceptionally potent, elements waging precision

influence in contested areas. Small SOF elements executing traditional SW influence programs are finding success where larger, conventional efforts have failed. This outcome has been achieved by magnifying SOF presence through the recruitment and mobilization of local resources and personnel, but it remains an approach that can only be effective when the full Triad[11] of traditional SOF capabilities are employed. For this reason, small states are investing in the development of SOF influence capacity, to retain relevance, increase value and amplify leverage within their military alliances, so that they may advance with confidence into the arena of contemporary GPC.

Many state defence policies have been refocussed from Counter Terrorism to address the threats and opportunities inherent in GPC. In one illustrative example, the Government of Canada (GoC) assessed in their 2017 defence policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged,*[12] that GPC is likely to be conducted primarily in the Gray Zone[13] below the threshold of conventional warfare, utilizing hybrid[14] combinations of conventional and unconventional forces, which may include both state and non-state attributed actors.

The Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) responded in their own 2020 strategy publication, *Beyond the Horizon*,[15] by stressing the urgent necessity to develop traditional Special Forces (SF) capabilities, designed to directly affect the will of partner and adversarial elements. The challenges faced by CANSOF in confronting Gray Zone operations in a GPC context, and the Canadian assessment that the best solution lies in traditional SF capabilities, are not unique. In order to directly affect the will of key targets and audiences, arguably their operational centre of gravity, small state SOF must explore the generation and employment of Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), a traditional SOF capability, and indispensable enabler of Special Warfare.

SW and PSYOPS mandates are mutually reinforcing. Both are population-centric, influence enabled, strategically oriented, and produce distinct asymmetric advantages.[16] Whereas SOF are a force-multiplier for policy-makers, operational commanders and conventional forces, PSYOPS are an influence-multiplier for SOF.

GREAT POWER COMPETITION AND THE GRAY ZONE

Gray Zone competition is increasing in intensity across the globe, with small states presenting particularly vulnerable targets for subversion and

destabilization efforts waged as part of GPC. This reality leaves many small state SOF units responsible for both domestic security roles, and expeditionary missions. When deployed, SOF units often become part of a combined, joint special operations task force (CJSOTF), working shoulder-to-shoulder with other allied SOF elements, to confront challenges presented across the continuum of competition.[17] Member states across NATO,[18] and the major Western alliances, face deliberate campaigns aiming to destroy their individual domestic cohesion. Hostile information and disinformation[19] are disseminated with unprecedented access by Russia and China, designed to undermine internal confidence in Western cultural and democratic foundations. These influence offensives are part of larger destabilization campaigns that seek to destroy the cohesive "why" that unites Western states, and widen existing fault lines to divide their populations, nations, and alliances.

Hostile influence campaigns are also deliberately targeting neutral state audiences, not currently insulated by alliance membership, and seek to isolate them from the West. These efforts are evidenced in part by the focus Russia has demonstrated throughout the course of its invasion of Ukraine. Russian SOF PSYOPS have repeatedly attempted to reduce external support for Ukraine's defence, utilizing information and influence tactics. "Given Ukraine's critical dependence on military-technical assistance from foreign partners, and above all assistance from the U.S., Russian special influence operations to worsen Ukraine's relations with partner countries, and especially with the U.S., are a constant priority of the Russian special services."[20]

The Gray Zone approach being applied by Russia and China will appear instantly familiar to any student of Special Warfare theory. While their specific tactics may differ, both ambitiously expansionist nations seek first to divide social groups within individual Western states, and irreparably fracture the social cohesion required for a democratic state to take decisive action. Once paralyzed by inner turmoil, the offensive then seeks to further separate those states from their defensive coalitions and render any credible resistance to adversary objectives ineffective.[21]

This age-old strategy of divide and conquer is not new, nor is its foundational reliance on the weaponization of influence. The scope of that influence however, provided by contemporary advances in information technology, and the unprecedented access it provides to the collective will

of the West's domestic centre of gravity is, to put it mildly, revolutionary. The military applications made possible through this unfiltered access to the minds of targeted audiences, particularly in the context of GPC, represent a significant turning point in the history of warfare, and SOF PSYOPS have a critical role to play in it. However, the West, as one researcher noted has not been as effective in its application:

> Arguably, we in the West have appeared slower to appreciate the power of the psychological impact – whether when used alone or to reinforce physical acts – than have our foes. As a result, while many modern armed forces include Psy Ops units in their Order of Battle, their actual effect upon the battlespace arguably has not been exploited to its full potential.[22]

The SOF spectrum is intended to function by utilizing an inextricably interwoven combination of both violence and persuasion. As population-centric problem solvers, influencing audiences and partner forces are at the very core of the SOF *raison d'être*, yet after decades of focus on optimizing kinetic action to counter terrorism, many SOF units remain equipped solely with kinetic capabilities. Small state SOF elements lacking integrated PSYOPS personnel have historically relied on American forces to backfill their lack of Information Related Capabilities (IRC). This tendency to show up "empty handed" to the influence fight has left those nations reliant on U.S. SOF to both defend them against hostile influence activities (IA), and deliver the entirety of allied informational effects. In the consistently expanding operational terrain that characterizes GPC, this benevolent provision of American PSYOPS support to allied SOF is likely to become extremely strained, and U.S. PSYOP elements increasingly prioritized in support of American mission sets. How then, are small state SOF units to continue to make meaningful contributions towards securing the support of contested populations, while restricted solely to reliance on their kinetic capabilities?

The foundation of the enemy's will to fight, their "why," cannot be defeated solely through the application of violence. In some cases, SOF use of kinetic force can unintentionally provide the enemy with added credibility in the eyes of neutral audiences, and increase support for their cause. The existing political, economic, and/or sociocultural grievances that adversaries seek to exploit cannot be adequately solved by munitions-based solutions. Logical and emotional objections to friendly narratives must also be addressed

with argumentation, and occasionally tangible incentives to win support. Hostile narratives cannot be killed, they must be invalidated. Adversarial ideologues can be eliminated, but their ideologies will reproduce, spread and rear up anew. Like in the classical Greek myth of the Hydra,[23] whose serpentine heads replicated when severed, hostile narratives cannot be solved solely by violence. Like in this Herculean analogy, SOF must wield both the blade and the torch to be victorious. DA to sever key nodes and kinetic threats and PSYOPS to cauterize the spread of hostile influence by defeating their foundational arguments and appeals. Only once the source of adversarial will, their venomous "why", has been cauterized at its source, will lasting effects be achieved, and the spread of their cause enduringly defeated. Small state SOF must adapt and embrace PSYOPS as a key enabler that balances their kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities, and acknowledge that the faction with the greatest ability to influence through PSYOPS will possess a decisive advantage in Gray Zone Operations.

Developing SOF PSYOPS within small state elements allows them to remain competitive in the information saturated environment of contemporary GPC. Influence is not a novel concept to SOF, in fact, task-tailored psychological warfare (PSYWAR) elements, designed to bolster or undermine willpower, are an original part of the triad upon which contemporary SOF are founded.[24] In the American context, arguably the largest, and most mature SOF element in the West, PSYOPS form the basis of their original SOF capability, and remains one of three key SOF elements. The fundamental reasoning for the inclusion and retention of PSYOPS within SOF is their pivotal role in influencing the will of key competitors and contested populations, conditions that are critical in the shaping phase that precedes conventional armed conflict.

PHASE 0 – SHAPING THE SOF OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The American way of war[25] promotes a phased approach to conflict that is useful when conceptualizing SOF operations. It is particularly in phase 0, the shaping phase,[26] that conditions are set by SOF for success in subsequent military operations. Many small state SOF units have followed the U.S. and reprioritized shaping operations, but few have fully invested the personnel and skill development required to complete the institutionalization of their influence capabilities. Numerous SOF elements have stopped short of achieving the SOF Triad model, and remain trapped within their DA comfort zone. Without integrated PSYOPS, SOF shaping operations can

be restricted to reinforcing the kinetic capacity of a partner or degrading the kinetic capacity of a target. Assisting and advising partners solely on the of delivery of kinetic effects against *physical* capacities, while lacking the capability to train or deliver the *psychological* influence that shapes the will of adversaries and contested audiences, leaves SOF units in a static position, having solved only half of the shaping puzzle.

The competition does not have this problem. Russia, China and others have been quick to evolve their SOF, and seek to achieve influence using a comprehensive arsenal of capabilities. Adversaries are now armed with economic, political and information capabilities to inform, influence and coerce contested populations, while many SOF elements remain entirely dependant on munitions-based interventions.

When considering the monumental costs associated with conventional armed conflict, which are acutely exacerbated in the context of GPC, it becomes painfully evident that the need for effective deterrence is of grave importance. Enemies can be deterred, in part, by SOF reinforcing the real, or perceived, threat of a partner's military capacity. This deterrence is best achieved by the combination of SOF training, advice and assistance to increase the potential lethality of partner forces, and influence capabilities ensuring that key audiences hear about it. Confidence in their ability to perform kinetic activities is also a key factor for reinforcing the will of partner forces to initiate armed resistance against a mutual enemy when conflict cannot be avoided. Small state SOF must become capable of enhancing or degrading kinetic abilities, while reinforcing or degrading audience will, throughout the continuum of competition. It is this value inherent in SOF ability to achieve both physical and psychological effects to deter opposition to alliance objectives that has prompted their rising primacy in Gray Zone, partner-led operations.

Military history, from the ancient to the modern, continuously demonstrates (but is seldom heeded), that all the weapons, equipment and training in the world are useless without the will required to use them in the crucible of combat. Buttressing or undermining capacity is most effective in shaping an operational environment when both physical and psychological characteristics are deliberately targeted simultaneously. It is for this reason that SOF must invest in their ability to shape both the physical and psychological aspects of their operating environments by including PSYOPS capabilities in their force packages. SOF teams must be capable

of enabling a partner force's psychological will to fight, and their physical ability to execute combat operations, while degrading the enemy's physical and psychological capacities simultaneously. Many SOF units remain focused solely on their ability to enhance or degrade the *physical* capacity of their targets, while neglecting any ability to shape the *psychological* capabilities of their allies or adversaries. One SOF leader explained:

> We need to just open up our aperture, the future of urban warfare when we're not in a kinetic environment, when we're not … in a complete state of war is very psychological operations oriented. The MISO (Military Information Support Operations) aspect is important. How are you influencing? As Special Operators, that's what we do, we influence. For us, where the dirty deed's done dirt cheap, we influence. We need to wrap our heads around that not everything is Direct Action, not everything is Counter Terrorism anymore.[27]

Small state SOF that posess organic PSYOPS elements, capable of shaping both psychological and physical targets, are regarded as highly valuable within a Task Force, and present significantly amplified value propositions to the coalition. That increased value to the SOTF provides their national policy-makers leverage within a coalition that is often denied to smaller states. It is not the size of the force that determines their value, but rather the impact they are able to deliver on operations. The added ability to influence willpower through the delivery of psychological effects provides small states with a diversification and flexibility that many other allied SOF units either will not or cannot bring to the Joint table.

Willpower is particularly susceptible to influence in the earliest stages of pre-conflict, where hybrid methods of competition are waged in a Gray Zone[28] below the threshold of conventional war, and where Special Forces (SF) are historically of greatest utility.[29] That will, the internal engine driving all human behaviour, is affected primarily in the psychological domain, by kinetic and non-kinetic means that determine the subsequent behaviour the will drives. The intensity, duration, commitment, and resilience with which those behaviours are performed can depend on how the will has been either reinforced or degraded by external intervention. These interventions are intentionally introduced in support of the achievement of military and political objectives primarily during operations in the information environment (OIE). PSYOPS forces are specifically generated, educated,

and tooled to influence human will as a first order effect, making them an indispensable element of Special Warfare.

SPECIAL WARFARE

Special Warfare is the "execution of activities that involve a combination of lethal and non-lethal actions taken by specially trained and educated forces that have a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language, proficiency in small-unit tactics, subversion, sabotage and the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in a permissive, uncertain or hostile environment."[30] Special Warfare is referenced here to include those military programs conducted by SOF during specific activities such as Unconventional Warfare (UW),[31] the use of Guerilla tactics by a resistance force seeking to influence or overthrow a regime, Irregular Warfare (IW)[32] the employment of proxy forces comprised of state and non-state actors across a spectrum of attribution, and the implementation of combined influence and kinetic activities through a SOF-enabled partner force.[33] Special Warfare activities in relation to conventional warfare are intended to "…fill the missing middle for exerting influence between the costly commitment of conventional forces and precision-strike options provided by drones, aircraft, missiles, and special operations forces' direct action."[34]

SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

The physical domain is where SOF have traditionally excelled at delivering strategic effects, by reinforcing or degrading physical capabilities. Comprised of tangible geography, objects, people, and capacities,[35] the physical domain may seem straightforward. Physical objects have reliable characteristics and, when targeted properly, produce reasonably predictable effects. The psychological domain can prove significantly more difficult to navigate, which is why PSYOPS specialists are required to gain a competitive advantage in this pivotal aspect of operations. Psychological effects are primarily achieved through messaging or activities, that take place in the information environment (IE). Described succinctly as "the sum of the wills of each actor, where the will is the composite of convictions, perceptions, and influences that drive toward action,"[36] the IE requires clear policy, deliberate strategy, and detailed synchronization between the SOF Ground Force, PSYOPS, and supporting information capabilities. IRC supported initiatives are coordinated by Information Operations (Info

Ops), which employ both traditional kinetic methods, such as physical destruction and direct action, as well non-kinetic methods like influence and persuasion.

Non-kinetic methods are where the real opportunity for SOF evolution resides. That is not to say that will and behaviour cannot be influenced solely by kinetic means. Certain target audiences (TA)[37] will not be suitably susceptible to non-kinetic forms of persuasion and, where appropriate, may be best addressed by the precision strike capabilities for which SOF is already world-renowned. However, any ethical military force that hopes to maintain the moral high ground in opposition to less scrupulous adversaries, must possess non-kinetic enablers in its SOF toolkit.

SOF are universally hierarchical military organizations, but many promote highly meritocratic internal cultures. Merit in DA is measured by skill in planning, moving, shooting and communicating. In Special Reconnaissance, merit is determined by ability to move, acquire and report without being observed. In Special Warfare, merit manifests in ability to advise, assist and influence; where lethality remains only one, and not even the primary, method to generate that influence.

CANADIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES – A CASE STUDY

The Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) is a talent-packed, mature, and hard-hitting organization, that delivers a series of specialized capabilities to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and their partners in the CJSOTF context. Despite being significantly smaller in size, when compared to its American and British SOF counterparts, CANSOF's healthy reputation in the SOF community speaks to their ability to deliver effects on the battlefield that far outweigh what they may lack in numbers. CANSOF units retain extremely high readiness; consistently deploying agile, special operations forces on very short notice to protect Canadians and Canadian interests. CANSOF operates to "best serve the Government of Canada in its operations, and in alignment with departmental objectives outlined in *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy,*[38] CANSOFCOM leverages innovative thinking to anticipate, deliver, and adapt capabilities more quickly than adversaries."[39]

CANSOF currently consist of a command element and five subordinate units: Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2), Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit

(CJIRU), Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR), 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (427 SOAS) and the Canadian Special Operations Training Centre (CSOTC).[40] Their core tasks[41] are listed as:

1. Hostage rescue (HR);
2. Direct action (DA);
3. Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) crisis response;
4. Sensitive site exploitation (SSE);
5. Combating weapons of mass destruction (CWMD);
6. Maritime special operations;
7. Support to non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO); and
8. Special protection operations.

When contrasting the list of core tasks identified by CANSOFCOM, a small state element compared to that of the U.S. SOCOM[42], there are several key elements missing in the Canadian version. Most notably absent are: Unconventional Warfare (UW); Civil Affairs Operations (CAO)[43]; and perhaps most significantly, Military Information Support Operations (MISO), an American term for activities conducted primarily by PSYOPS. The differing prioritization of SOF core tasks is undoubtedly affected by the significant disparity between the scale and resourcing of American and Canadian SOF, however the absence of PSYOPS and CIMIC in CANSOF also indicates a difference in their value appraisals of operational influence. As the U.S. SOCOM Commanding General Richard Clarke emphasized, "It is in the cognitive space where we must prevail."[44]

In the execution of its core strategic capabilities,[45] CANSOF "enables conventional military forces to operate more effectively through access, **i**nfluence, understanding, and the delivery of precision effects,"[46] presumably using the three CANSOF units with operational access to the human domain,[47] namely JTF2, CJIRU and CSOR. While JTF2 retains the lead for domestic and international CT and HR response, and CJIRU is responsible for "detecting, identifying, and mitigating CBRN risks"[48] and certain aspects of SSE, CSOR remains tasked to conduct Special Reconnaissance

(SR), DA, and SW. As such, CSOR is uniquely positioned and mandated to spearhead the strategic influence efforts of CANSOFCOM.

CANADIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS REGIMENT

The CSOR mandate has evolved from supporting JTF2 DA missions, to leading their own independent DA against increasingly complex enemies. More recently, CSOR has adapted to training and leading partner forces to bring precision violence against mutual adversaries through Security Force Assistance (SFA).[49] CSOR Ground Forces have trained and mentored partner forces on heavily contested battlefields against the Taliban in Afghanistan, Daesh fanatics in Iraq, and al-Qaeda in Africa. They have managed thus far by employing concepts of cultural intelligence (CQ),[50] technical expertise, and indomitable will; but have also faced the normal frictions that come with working alongside partner forces. This unnecessarily encumbering partner conflict is potentially mitigated through the positive influence support generated by an integrated PSYOPS element. PSYOPS "masters of influence" pave the way for SOF partner-led operations with the socially lubricating effects that only a bespoke influence capability can deliver, but CANSOF has, thus far, been forced to do without. "[Dr. Emily] Spencer emphasizes that SOF's greatest strength lies, not in its advanced technology, equipment, or weaponry, but rather in the quality of its personnel and their ability to establish relationships. It is this ability to develop and leverage these relationships that is at the heart of their operational success."[51]

Of the core CANSOF activities, it is in the conduct of Special Warfare by CSOR[52] where the ability to conduct PSYOPS becomes intrinsically essential. As identified by CSOR, "Effective Special Warfare requires a combination of lethal and non-lethal effects, the generation of critical and unique specialty skillsets … and a deep understanding of cultural and integration requirements."[53]

If the CANSOFCOM vision is to "advise, enable and lead in the detection, pursuit and defeat of asymmetric threats to Canada across all domains,"[54] and "excel … within the gray spaces of conflict," where the ability to wield influence better than one's competitor often determines the victor, what non-kinetic effects are CANSOF units currently resourced to deliver in the psychological domain? What personnel has CANSOF specifically attracted, selected, equipped, educated and trained to produce influence

effects on the will of adversaries, partners and select audiences whose support is contested? If kinetic methods alone are not capable of destroying ideas and defeating narratives, how does CSOR deliver the best that only a combination of influence and force can produce? Dr. Spencer explained:

> The non-linear and asymmetric approach of the contemporary operating environment, particularly with respect to insurgencies and counter-insurgencies, demands that soldiers act as warriors and technicians as well as scholars and diplomats. Kinetic solutions are no longer the panacea of warfare.[55]

CSOR provides a useful example, and is comparable to many small state SOF elements, in that it must evolve beyond the technical aspects of its Special Warfare programs and explore the potential that resides in SOF oriented psychological operations.

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

NATO doctrine describes PSYOPS as "Planned Psychological activities using methods of communications and other means directed to approved audiences to influence perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours, affecting the achievement of political and military objectives."[56] While many operational initiatives seek to generate influence, it is specifically the intent to achieve a first-order psychological effect in the mind of a target, which exists on the psychological plane, that differentiates a psychological operation from any other military activity. In other terms, the first goal for PSYOPS is to make a target think differently. The intermediate goal is for that altered thought to affect their will to behave in a desired way. And, the ultimate goal is for that change in the target's behaviour, which was caused by a military interdiction, to then directly contribute to the achievement of a military objective.[57]

PSYOPS specialists are attracted, selected, educated and trained as "masters of influence," employing persuasion through a combination of kinetic and non-kinetic activities, via synchronized and coordinated multimedia campaigns. Those campaigns are comprised of messages and activities, directed at targeted individuals and groups assessed to have the greatest potential to either contribute to, or oppose, the achievement of military goals.[58] Those target audiences are selected based on their abilities, whether the force can gain access to them, and how likely they are to be susceptible to persuasion. PSYOPS can be conducted throughout the continuum

of competition, from humanitarian assistance and disaster response, through stability operations, or as an integral part of combat operations. PSYOPS supports all forms of military operations, be they conventional, unconventional or hybrid. Support to the latter is referred to as psychological warfare (PSYWAR) by American SOF and is focused on degrading enemy will to employ violence, and to denying them the support of contested populations.

The attribution attached to SOF PSYOPS products can be easily referenced by thinking of the associated colours, and how easily they might be to see through to discover the source of the message. Products overtly attributed to their true origin (a leaflet from NATO labelled with "NATO") have historically been classed as White PSYOPS; products whose attribution is left intentionally unclear (a critical message, spray-painted on a foreign government building, but lacking any form of signature) as Gray PSYOPS; and those activities and messages intentionally attributed to a false source (the same spray paint attributed to a local rebel group, when it was actually done by pro-government forces, in an attempt to discredit the rebels) are referred to as Black PSYOPS.

In most Western militaries, Gray and Black PSYOPS are either avoided entirely, or held to a much higher degree of scrutiny, requiring extensive risk/benefit analysis resultant from the potential damage their use could pose to the credibility of the force. As a result, non-attributed or falsely attributed activities are much less likely to gain approval for execution in the West, than states like Russia or China, who place less strategic importance in truth or credibility, and regularly employ the darker side of influence to achieve their objectives.

Information can be an area weapon, with as much destructive potential as combat aircraft or artillery. Information can be weaponized through the deliberate application of psycho-social influence techniques[59] and intended to directly affect the will of targeted audiences, decision-makers, combatants and non-combatants, to behave in potentially lethal ways. Like the employment of their kinetic weapons systems, Western SOF influence activities adhere to strict legal and moral guidelines, based in international law, that guides their ethical application of warfare. States, armed groups and non-state actors who do not abide by international law or moral restrictions on their wielding of influence weapons, become capable of generating tragedy of epic proportions.

Hateful propaganda filled local radio airwaves throughout Rwanda in 1994, inciting Hutu tribal members to commit widespread acts of ethnic violence against their Tutsi neighbours. This pathological rhetoric, which exploited all of the most vehement elements of persuasion, was considered a primary causal factor[60] in the horrendous genocide that followed. Unchecked propaganda inspired countless heinous acts of brutality, performed primarily by machete wielding mobs, and required little in the way of additional weaponry or coordination once the ideas had been provoked in the minds of the perpetrators. It is also worth noting that, in this infamous case of Rwandan genocide, the hostile propaganda promulgated was not countered by moderate or United Nations coalition messaging. In fact, the information environment was left completely uncontested. This complete ceding of the information environment to the enemy is not limited to past conflicts, it remains a common characteristic of many current operating environments (COE) within which small state SOF units find themselves today, as they continue to deploy absent the critical organic PSYOPS capabilities required to compete, much less secure advantage in the IE.

DOES IT WORK?

During the 1990-1991 Gulf War, coalition SOF PSYOPS were appropriately integrated into the earliest planning stages of Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Urban Freedom. These PSYOPS aimed to shape the will of the Iraqi invasion forces occupying Kuwait, with great emphasis placed upon an extensive shaping during Phase 0, prior to the initiation of physical hostilities. That return on investment in PSYOPS paid off in dividends. According to Colonel Jeffrey Jones, Commander of the U.S. 1st Special Forces Command's 8th PSYOP Battalion during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, "By encouraging coalition solidarity, reducing enemy combat power and deceiving the enemy about allied intentions, PSYOP contributed to the success of coalition operations and saved tens of thousands of lives on both sides."[61] But how are the measures of performance (MOP) and effectiveness (MOE) assessed, and causation proven beyond mere correlation?

Some effects are easier to gauge than others. For example, "if a PSYOP instructs people to surrender, military officers can measure success by how many surrendered and attributed their surrender to the PSYOP instrument, such as leaflets, as in the case of the Gulf War, where PSYOP messages were credited for the surrender of 87,000 Iraqi soldiers."[62] Coalition SOF

PSYOPS engaged in a multi-media barrage of messaging, and, once contact was made with Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces, those messages were then painstakingly coordinated with supporting kinetic fires, in order to reinforce their credibility and effectiveness.

The main themes were the righteousness of the coalition cause, and inevitable coalition victory, resultant from overwhelming numerical and technological superiority. PSYOPS activities also contributed to the military deception that succeeded in convincing Iraqi commanders that the Coalition main effort would come from the sea, which never materialized. Colonel Jones explained:

> They provided radio and TV support, broadcast tactical loudspeaker messages and produced 29 million leaflets. The leaflets were delivered by everything from balloons to B-52s; some were even smuggled into Baghdad itself! PSYOP messages persuaded approximately 44 percent of the Iraqi army to desert, more than 17,000 to defect, and more than 87,000 to surrender. Integrating their efforts with those of the U.S. Central Command, 21 PSYOP soldiers, working with their Turkish counterparts in Joint Task Force Proven Force in southern Turkey and using radio broadcasts and leaflets, helped cause the defection, desertion and surrender of some 40,000 Iraqis - all without firing a shot.[63]

Perhaps most impressive was the occasion where 1,405 Iraqi soldiers on Failaka Island, off the east coast of Kuwait City, surrendered to a single Tactical PSYOPS Team, who appealed to them through a helicopter-mounted loudspeaker system, and resulting in zero casualties. One can only imagine the possibilities, given the right conditions, for related applications by other small state Special Operations Aviation assets. Impact indicators of the causal effectiveness of these PSYOPS influence activities included:

> A 500-man battalion surrendered in the XVIII Airborne Corps' sector prior to the start of the ground war. After the ground war began, more than 87,000 Iraqis surrendered, including the 1,405 soldiers on Failaka Island. Ninety-eight percent of all EPWs [Enemy Prisoners of War] either carried or had seen PSYOP leaflets. Fifty-eight percent of all EPWs reported hearing the "Voice of the Gulf" and trusted the broadcasts. Eighty percent of those followed the instructions or actions encouraged by the

> broadcasts. Thirty-four percent of all EPW reported hearing loudspeaker broadcasts, and more than half of those complied with the surrender message.[64]

One common barrier to assessing the probability of PSYOPS effectiveness is the cultural and cognitive bias that exists within the supported elements. Each PSYOPS activity and message is the product of extensive target audience analysis, and reviewed by an approval board, where legal, cultural, policy and language advisors weigh-in beside Info Ops coordinators and public affairs representatives. A common sentiment communicated by non-practitioners of PSYOPS, especially military professionals, manifests in some variation of the "No way, that wouldn't work on me" response. This repetitive egocentric bias is perfectly natural, if incredibly misguided. In many cases, the detractors may be correct, it may not work on them. At least, not in the comfortable, secure, and predictable conditions of the headquarters, or garrison boardroom. The point is that it is not *supposed* to work on them, the message or activity was not crafted to target *their* vulnerabilities under the conditions present in the review board. As members of some of the best trained, led, equipped, most highly paid, and well-fed militaries in the modern world, they ought not be susceptible to the same appeals designed to exploit the psychological vulnerabilities of an adversary facing combat conditions. In contrast, Russian conscripts, forced into the voracious teeth of frontline combat in Eastern Ukraine, armed with defective and crumbling equipment, starved of reliable information, and surrounded by comrades who are dying in their thousands, have proven exceedingly susceptible to offers of food, water, life-saving medical-aid, and the relative safety communicated in the Ukrainian SOF PSYOPS appeals for their surrender.

PSYOPS STRUCTURE

PSYOPS force structures vary across both large and small state Western militaries, with some distinct variations, but the majority are organized to perform four core functions: planning, analysis, media production, and dissemination. Often designated a SOF or Joint function, small state PSYOPS units often draw from their Reserve Force talent pool of their military to recruit members with advanced pre-existing civilian competencies in psychology, marketing, analysis, communications and media design. These civilian-based skills are rarely present at levels considered competitive in comparison to market standards in full-time military units, but may

be present within the ranks of the part-time soldiery that can be attracted into full time service with PSYOPS.

Small state SOF tend to deviate from the massive SOF PSYOPS force generation pipeline at the U.S. Special Operations Center of Excellence (SOCoE) at Fort Bragg, arguably the most extensive and mature producer of PSYOPS forces in the world, but one that few other nations can match in terms of scale or expertise. One example of a relatively small military that aims to make meaningful contributions to its several military alliances, including the provision of PSYOPS forces, exists in the Canadian Armed Forces. In Canada, PSYOPS currently reside solely within the Canadian Army (CA). Force generated (FG) primarily from the CA Reserve force, they are employed in a single high-readiness unit, the Influence Activities Task Force (IATF), and are trained at the PSYOPS Centre of Excellence, the Peace Support Training Centre (PSTC), located in Kingston, Ontario.

PSYOPS forces are generally organized into Companies at the CA Division level, Detachments at the Brigade level, and are task-tailored into PSYOPS support elements (PSE) for Operations. PSE normally consist of a command function, planning function, analysis and production cells, and one or more Tactical PSYOPS Teams (TPT) responsible for the execution of influence activities. When the right level of talent is available, all four functions can be performed by the same personnel within the PSE. This approach is often the preferred grouping in support of small state SOF missions, due to their extremely low cost, minimal footprint, and exceptionally high potential for meaningful impact.

PSYOPS ANALYSIS

Effective PSYOPS must be a deliberate enterprise, performed by professionalized influence and dissemination specialists, supported by sound analysis of the IE and target audiences. PSYOPS Analysts are the "targeteers" of the capability, who begin with intense study of the history, culture, media and human landscape relevant to an area of operations. They assess TA accessibility, capability, and susceptibility to determine which individuals or groups are best capable of supporting or hindering the mission, and investigating assessed vulnerabilities to determine how to best motivate their performance of desired behaviours. They also dissect adversary information campaigns and influence activities, to generate

informed recommendations on how to defeat attempts to subvert the support upon which friendly mission success depends.

Lastly, this function is responsible to predesignate *impact indicators* that are closely monitored in all phases of the operation, allowing them to measure whether influence activities are hitting their targets as intended, and whether they are producing the desired effects. PSYOPS analysts are the talented group of intellectuals responsible for the employment of behavioural and psychosocial techniques to enable disseminators in securing the will of potential partners and degrading that same vital resource to their competitors.

PSYOPS PRODUCTION

If analysis provides the targeting function for PSYOPS, prioritizing where, when and how to influence, then their production specialists are the "munitioneers," crafting media and activities tailored to affect specific psychological vulnerabilities and increase influence effectiveness. Responsible for building on the design guidance derived from mission objectives, vulnerability analysis, and CQ, these media specialists generate products to convey bespoke argumentation or stimulation to the minds of an approved TA. While all activities and messages generated by PSYOPS forces are considered PSYOPS products, it may not always be feasible for those activities and media to be performed or disseminated by PSYOPS elements. Influence activities and products can be performed or disseminated by non-PSYOPS forces in extremity, however the final stage of the influence chain is often best left to personnel with the proven ability to close the deal. For the same reason that civilian businesses rarely task their marketing analysts or product engineers to conduct sales, SOF influence products are most effective when delivered by influence specialists.

TACTICAL PSYOPS TEAMS

PSYOPS Tactical Operators (TACOPs) are "the vanguard of PSYOPS forces. They operate as the eyes, ears, and voice of the battlefield Commander. TACOPs employ weapons of influence to create effects across the full spectrum of operations that far outweigh their relatively small team and limited equipment."[65] Grouped into Tactical PSYOPS Teams responsible for collecting information relevant to influence activities, and the dissemination of PSYOPS products, TPT employ influence to secure support, cooperation, or compliance.[66] They are experts at executing negotiations,

applying argumentation, persuasion and wielding the weapons of influence. Persuasive appeals are communicated through face-to-face conversations, broadcast from loudspeakers[67] or radio,[68] print products[69] or a myriad of physical and virtual communication media. These masters of influence generate effects by affecting the will of key individuals and groups to behave in ways that are desirable to the Ground Force commander.

They also capture media at the tactical level, using PSYOPS specific cameras, recorders and other equipment, for deliberate use in Web Ops,[70] capable of creating effects across the operational spectrum, from tactical to strategic. Captured media can take the form of a carefully sanitized video message from a resistance movement operating behind enemy lines, packaged for the consumption of the wider world, and aimed to generate support. A soundbite recorded during a TPT engagement with a local leader and broadcast over mobile PSYOPS radio stations, can communicate hope to their people, or encourage cooperation with partner forces. PSYOPS camera systems can capture stock imagery for virtual or print media, while select imagery or video can also feed the intelligence and targeting cycles, resultant from the rare access Teams are often capable of negotiating during engagements.

Whereas some Small state PSYOPS elements remain restricted to the Reserve force of their conventional Armies, American PSYOPS forces exist in both their conventional and SOF elements. An indispensable part of the American SOF Triad, operationally paired U.S. SOF TPT and SF Operational Detachment Alphas (ODA)[71] have the combined ability to strike the will *and* capacity of their adversaries, on both the psychological and physical planes simultaneously. TPT enable ODA partner-led initiatives by contributing PSYOPS social and cultural intelligence, audience analyses, and influence efforts to reinforce rapport, interest alignment and help to mitigate any interest conflicts. They promote the coalition "why" in terms that contested populations can understand, and align with. When it comes to kinetic action, integrated TPT can magnify the intended negative psychological effects of Direct Action against enemy nodes and networks. For enemy TA assessed by PSYOPS as unsusceptible to persuasion during the SOF targeting process, TPT can add deliberate psychological amplification of combat actions for a compounded effect on enemy morale.

Tactical PSYOPS integrated into the SOF Ground Force can also mitigate those same negative psychological effects, indivisibly associated with DA,

on audiences that should be shielded from preventable traumatization or demoralization. If these audiences are left unattended, and the IE ceded to the enemy without a fight, unforgiving adversarial "interpretations" of events will dominate the perceptions and attitudes formed in the psychological domain. Uncontested enemy influence will reliably result in unnecessarily difficult conditions for population-centric (and at times dependant) SOF missions.

If SOF employ PSYOPS, TPT can deliver targeted and culturally relevant argumentation by conducting face-to-face, loudspeaker, or media-based engagement with affected persons or populations. They can explain the necessity of the raid or strike, and addressing that audience's grievances, while framing argumentation specific to their psychological needs, wants and desires. This process can support audiences who are unavoidably exposed to the harsh realities of military operations to become more understanding, empathetic to the mission, and leave them significantly less vulnerable to enemy appeals.

Combined physical and psychological elements form the core of the U.S. SOF model because they are proven to deliver the most potent grouping of effects. The introduction of rewards for the performance of desired behaviour, and punishments for undesirable conduct is a foundational concept in behavioural psychology.[72] In the SOF Triad approach to the behaviour modification process, SF DA becomes the stick, tangible CIMIC support is the carrot, and PSYOPS messaging manages the desired reception, and perception, of both. Without integral influence activities capabilities, SOF are left with only the stick to conduct operations, in a hybrid COE where influence is king.

PSYOPS SUPPORT TO DIRECT ACTION

The employment of argumentation, influence, and persuasion by PSYOPS is designed to mitigate the unnecessary loss of life and collateral damage in the achievement of military objectives. The provision of influence options to achieve military effects are not merely ethically, morally and legally superior to munitions-based methods, PSYOPS also enable economy of effort and the concentration of force against legitimate targets not accessible or susceptible to persuasion. During the same DA, PSYOPS can seek to degrade enemy will to fight, by highlighting the lethal consequences or futility of resistance, while softening the perceptions of supportive or

neutral audiences by explaining why violent or invasive actions were required, and explaining why the enemy is to the blame for any unavoidable application of violence.

PSYOPS can degrade enemy freedom of movement and action, by magnifying their perceptions of SOF capabilities, and sowing anxiety and apprehension among their combatants and support networks. Destabilizing the will of the enemy can leave them hesitant to manoeuvre out of trepidation, and reluctant to conduct hostile activities that might elevate them on a SOF target list. Opportunity to degrade enemy willpower exists inherent in every lethal effect achieved by SOF. This Kinetic exploitation can be achieved on the psychological domain through a variety of methods, ranging from the discreet to the public, depending on the suitability of the conditions and the intended effects.[73]

PSYOPS SUPPORT TO SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE

Securing lasting effects, reducing operational costs, and mitigating risk to coalition and civilian lives are of optimal importance in the conduct of current and future military operations. Working "by with and through"[74] allied forces has been increasingly regarded by policy-makers as the preferred method to address these concerns, making SOF the contemporary force of choice. Establishment of credibility in the eyes of partnered elements is an essential first step for SOF, who must consistently prove their expertise before their assistance, training, and advice will be accepted by forces they are tasked to enable. Given the depth of technical expertise, operational experience, and relentless tenacity usually inherent in SOF, this is rarely a significant issue. That foundational credibility, and the subsequent working relationship it supports, can be severely damaged if it is not tempered with a foundational capacity within SOF to employ CQ and exemplary communication skills towards the establishment and maintenance of influence.

Superior technical move, shoot and communicate skills will not necessarily smooth over an insult to honour or tradition, whether it was born of intent or neglect. Allied elements are less likely to cooperate or perform as desired if they do not like and respect their advisors; and that regard is not dependant on technical ability alone.[75] According to one particularly insightful paper on "Recalibrating SOF for phase 0," written for the Canadian Staff College's Joint Command Staff Program, "Expanding tactical competencies

in non-kinetic areas such human intelligence (HUMINT), Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs will provide a variance of tools required to maintain persistent and purposeful engagement."[76]

In addition to reinforcing SOF engagement, PSYOPS can also provide training to partner forces. SFA programs capable of training allies to conduct independent PSYOPS provide defence policy-makers with flexibility when determining the types of military support they are willing to provide. Like logistics or medical capability development, PSYOPS training can be reasonably considered a "non-lethal" military aid option.

There are two fundamental means that small SOF elements will be forced to do without when "advising and assisting" that they would traditionally rely heavily upon when conducting independent operations, namely command authority and the option of compelling compliance using force. Many SOF Ground Force elements are accustomed to achieving results through command authority, where they order their elements to act; or the use of force, where they compel their targets to act (or refrain from acting) via the threat or application of targeted violence. Neither method is suitable for generating the desired performance from an allied force, regardless of how much their objectives may deviate from those of the SOF element, or the larger coalitions they represent.

The home team makes the rules and calls their own plays; this is something that can take a great deal of flexibility to adapt to, and may require a specific set of competencies to make work. Because SOF are unlikely to be granted the command authority to legally order their allies to conduct activities in the priority or method that SOF may recommend, and accepting that SOF are equally unlikely to be able to force their allies to do, or refrain from doing anything, only one recourse remains for the production of the performance required from allied forces – influence.

How does this influence process work? It begins with understanding the baseline of the target audience, addressing their interests or vulnerabilities, and introducing stimuli or appeals to create or reinforce the will to behave in ways that support your objectives, or at the very least degrade will to oppose them. These are precisely the methods that PSYOPS forces specialize in and bring to the SFA program.

PSYOPS SUPPORT TO IRREGULAR WARFARE

When SOF conduct irregular warfare,[77] they rarely get to pick their partners. Similar to the conditions in SFA, SOF will usually lack the option of executing command authority over their partners, and will instead be forced to rely on communication, influence and persuasion to maximize the alignment of actions and interests. According to the Modern Warfare Institute at West Point, "The United States has succeeded at building specialized units like special operations forces and helping other countries that share US interests; where it has failed, it has often been where countries lack the will to build capable militaries. Interest alignment and local will are key."[78] The purpose, or "why" of the SOF element and the partner force need not be identical, but to endure the "how" of combat operations in unison, they must not be perceived to be in opposition. Absent an influential approach, SOF risk that partner forces may become distracted by insignificant characteristics in culture, ideology or methodology that differentiate them from their SOF allies, rather than focusing on the common objectives that bind them together. This avoidable fragmentation will inevitably lead to suboptimal cohesion and degrade the IW program performance.

To enable the organization of fighters for employment with SOF, PSYOPS deliver tailored messaging and demonstrations to magnify interest-alignment and mitigate interest-conflict; communicating SOF objectives to a prospective resistance group in ways that they can relate to both culturally and ideologically. These appeals are tailored to make the greatest possible desired psychological impact by way of the Target Audience Analysis process, and the subsequent development of targeted arguments and lines of persuasion.

PSYOPS SUPPORT TO COUNTER INSURGENCY OPERATIONS

Counter Insurgency Operations (COIN) rely on PSYOPS to isolate the contested population from enemy propaganda and to defeat their narrative. No ethical military force can kill its way out of an insurgency. It is essential to understand the population and their culture in the communication of the national interests of the SOF element, and the building of trust between the population and the COIN force. "To explain, if the COIN campaign is working well, irregulars' sanctuaries and foreign support will not much matter. The struggle will be won or lost not by harassing the irregulars'

logistics, but rather by shaping the minds and convictions of the target people."[79] Without an integrated influence capability, the information environment remains uncontested, meaning the insurgents write the narrative, and are solely responsible for explaining to the people why foreign military forces are conducting operations in their homeland.

Village Stability Operations (VSO) are SOF programs commonly used in COIN, where SOF employ "ink spot" theory,[80] by securing villages and investing in relationships with their population, in the hopes that their positive impacts will spread to other areas in the region, and lead to wider stability. PSYOPS analysis into the development of key messages, argumentation and demonstrations using culturally relevant references and symbols can resonate with locals. These influence activities can then be reinforced by TPT-led relationship building with local key communicators, facilitating the two-way exchanges of ideas that serves as a foundation for trust and mutual support.

> The third tenant of Effective Foreign Internal Defense Operations is Synchronized Use of – CMO [Civil-military Operations] and Military Information Support Operations (MISO). The effective use of CMO and MISO, fully coordinated with other operational activities, can enhance the legitimacy of HN [Host Nation] forces and, ultimately, the stability of the HN.[81]

Relationship building with partner forces will always be a vital aspect of SW, not only in COIN, but across the spectrum of SOF programs. Integrated PSYOPS support can reinforce the performance of SW by allowing influence activities to be deliberately planned at the operational level by the PSE, and purposefully conducted at the tactical level by the TPT, allowing the supported Ground Force to focus on their expertise, building the partner force capacity for warfighting. The importance of influence and counterpropaganda that PSYOPS contribute to COIN operations is not lost on the larger state SF community, it is encoded in their foundational doctrines. The U.S. Army's Counter-guerrilla Operations handbook states emphatically that "PSYOP officers must be involved in all planning."[82]

Persistent trends in global urbanization, and the migration of people from small, rural communities towards larger, built-up areas, continues to swell population density in cities across the globe. This has very real implications for SOF in how they prepare to fight contemporary and future campaigns, but also for how they intend to deter, shape, or incite how

those populations act. The relevance of PSYOPS in urban-centric COIN is increasing. Contested populations, and therefore insurgent activities, are more likely in future conflicts to exist in cities and urban developments. This reality is a distinct departure from COIN of the past, waged in the remoteness of rural villages and affecting isolated audiences.

Increasing audience proximity allows for information, and influence, to spread more quickly than in preceding COIN efforts, and can dramatically increase the tempo of contemporary operations. Sergeant Major Charles (Chuck) Ritter, Deputy Commander of the U.S. SOCoE Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Academy and Urban Warfare expert explained that "The urban insurgent understands how to influence the people to impose power outside of what used to be considered the insurgent's primary tool [violence]. Information is the primary tool of the insurgent; and the information is influencing these massive populations."[83] This shift in where populations reside means that certain aspects of traditional COIN strategy will be less effective. Physically segmenting portions of a population to isolate it from insurgent influence may no longer be possible.

This strategic evolution is compounded by another pivotal development in how people and insurgents communicate. The relentless and proliferate advancement of information technologies provide for the propagation of ideas at a rate unprecedented in human history. Without PSYOPS integration into any SOF COIN effort, only the unchallenged and unfiltered insurgent narrative will be accessible to a population earnestly seeking information and understanding. If SOF cedes the IE to the insurgents, they are unavoidably yielding the information war, the people, and ultimately the mission.

Securing the will and support of the population is the defensive focus of COIN. Support from key audiences relies heavily on their "why," or how they see themselves in relation to the situation; and that psychological concept is susceptible to influence. PSYOPS allow the SOF Ground Force the ability to promote their "why," and shape the way the population perceives the campaign in ways that can reinforce their will to support the mission.

Offensive SOF COIN activities rarely seek to destroy an adversary, they aim instead to undermine their will to resist the accomplishment of

friendly objectives. When targeting an insurgency, the integration of PSYOPS provides SOF a decisive advantage by attacking the adversary's will to fight on both the physical and psychological planes. If SOF fail to employ PSYOPS in COIN programs, and continue to rely solely on direct action against the physical capacities of the insurgency, they fall short of Sun Tzu's "supreme excellence…to defeat the enemy without fighting."[84] Many small state SOF units are not even trying *not to fight*, because unlike the largest nations in the SOF community, who deploy complete with PSYOPS and CIMIC, most small state SOF have historically only ever been resourced for the kinetic battle.

PSYOPS SUPPORT TO SPECIAL WARFARE

The contemporary security environment places unprecedented emphasis on the need for SW. Cooperation with partner or proxy forces for Gray Zone activities can secure the foreign policy interests of small states, while ensuring the operational costs in both treasure and blood remain relatively low. These conditions mean that the value proposition for small state SOF investment in improving its influence effects continues to increase.

According to a 2020 Strategic Plan from the Canadian Government that illustrates their priorities for their relatively small SOF element, CANSOFCOM "… helps preserve the CAF's and the Government of Canada's freedom of action to counter the asymmetric threats of adversaries and competitors, by translating access and understanding into influence, options, and effects via attribution, projection, and protection."[85] It is specifically in projection and influence that SOF stand to benefit the most from PSYOPS capability development.

> Projection – The power to hurt opponents at points of vulnerability through asymmetric SOF capabilities and the threat of the power to do so allows for a level of control in grey space conflict. When adversaries know how a scenario will end before it ever begins, they are deterred from engagement or escalation, whether through the threat of use of information; the creation of strategic leverage; or precise kinetic action. In this way, the projection of SOF Power helps preserve national freedom of action.[86]

What countermeasures are available to a SOF Ground Force to counter adversarial economic warfare? One tactic used with increasing frequency

is the introduction of predatory loans and investment by foreign adversaries, which are then used as leverage to coerce key audiences to resist, or at the very least withdraw support for friendly objectives. These hybrid measures steadily bleed away the local support required for SOF mission success, but are unlikely to meet the threshold required for SOF to respond with force.

If the Ground Force in this hybrid scenario includes a PSYOPS support element, it can work to shift popular opinion to oppose collaboration with the adversary. Information initiatives can educate key audiences on the risks they may be accepting when entering into business agreements that are more than they seem. A SOF PSYOPS element can initiate a campaign to harden the population's will, reinforce their psychological "why" to support the mission, and help to inoculate them against enemy influence. PSYOPS messaging can contrast the value inherent in sovereignty to the legitimate risks hidden within the competitor's offer. PSYOPS efforts to illuminate shadowy adversarial economic warfare techniques can expose the true cost of doing business with the enemy, and further isolate critical audiences from their exploitive influence.

PSYOPS SUPPORT TO NON-COMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATIONS

U.S. SOF employ PSYOPS as an integral part of their NEO force package, showcased recently during the high-profile 2021 evacuation of citizens and allies from Kabul, Afghanistan. This rapid effort included cooperation between SOF elements from across a global community, from the largest SOF units to some of the smallest, but only a few brought PSYOPS. The influence contingent responsible for this task often includes a scalable PSE to liaise with key communicators, employ integral loudspeakers to manage crowd expectations, reinforce control measures, and address the grievance and concerns that can lead to crowd confrontation. TPTs used PSYOPS loudspeakers to communicate with the desperate crowds at the besieged Hamid Karzai International Airport, during the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban in August of 2021.

This challenging, and at times desperate mission, was the largest NEO in American history, with over 120,000 Afghan citizens supported by American military.[87] U.S. Army SOF and Marine Corps PSYOPS elements supported the mitigation of crowd confrontation using key communicators, cultural

expertise and loudspeaker operations. Messages and appeals, crafted using influence techniques and broadcast in local languages, reinforced the NEO forces' ability to control access to the airfield, and reduced necessity for the use of force to maintain security. Had NEO elements relied only on use of force to secure their evacuation efforts at the airfield, had they neglected to employ TPT to influence the crowds frantically attempting to gain unauthorized access, this already tragic situation could have been much, much worse.

CHALLENGES TO SOF PSYOPS CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

"There are two thousand years of experience to tell us that the only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old idea out."[88]

The qualification crucible SOF operators pass through is designed, in part, to instill a level of confidence and belief in their ability to overcome any challenge. This self-assurance can be empowering when it provides operators the decisive impetus required to prevail in the most daunting situations. Such confidence must also be consistently tempered by objective assessment to prevent it from drifting into hubris, and preventing SOF from addressing significant capability gaps.

SOF are conditioned to forge solutions from whatever means available in their immediate arsenal, but when facing SW OIE, Ground Force operators cannot do it all. In addressing PSYOPS force development, the path may be found in the SOF truths[89] that most special operations require conventional support, and that it is too late to force generate capabilities after an emergency has occurred. Surprisingly few members of the SOF community, outside the American Triad, have had previous exposure to PSYOPS. This shortcoming leaves small state SOF units struggling to institutionalize SW influence capacity, and for many, PSYOPS remain an unknown-unknown.[90]

SOF MANDATE

SOF are traditionally characterized as *the* population-centric force. This rings true in the U.S. SOF Triad example of the cohesive grouping of Psychological Operations, Civil-Affairs,[91] and Special Forces. In many other nations, particularly in the small state context, SOF units remain oriented, selected, trained, and tooled specifically to detract from populations, not to win their support. This approach may prove counterproductive, as it is

small state military elements that stand to benefit the most from a PSYOPS capability, designed specifically to magnify the impacts delivered by their smaller footprint on joint operations.

CHALLENGES

SOF are not immune to trending personnel FG and retention challenges facing many Western Armed Forces. Limited personnel means that those in the ranks must shoulder the extra weight, tasks must be abandoned, or new efficiencies created. This reality results in an increase in already frequent SOF deployments, and the assignment of additional roles for operators that would otherwise have been shared broadly across a larger team. This challenging tempo can negatively affect SOF personnel retention, and further aggravate the existing rates of "burnout" among their best and brightest. There may be legitimate risk in adding PSYOPS initiatives to SOF elements already experiencing FG challenges, and introducing a requirement for influence specialists could exacerbate demands for already scarce personnel. Despite these relevant challenges, if small state SOF choose to maintain their kinetically oriented status-quo, they risk negating their ability to compete in the contemporary IE. By continuing to prioritize DA and kinetic effects over IA and psychological effects, they are abandoning a key operational advantage required to secure their centre of gravity in GPC, the vital support of contested populations. These single-faceted SOF units may rapidly lack the ability to provide distinguished contributions to their alliances, or deliver the strategic influence effects required for combined mission success.

RISK

SOF participation in OIE cannot be achieved without risk; and any decision to deliberately employ or neglect SOF PSYOPS will require risk management. There is no escaping the fact that contemporary special operations occur within the arena of information competition. While influence effects can be difficult to control, any window of time that may have previously allowed for the avoidance of IA has definitively closed. Information Operations[92] are integral to SW theory and cannot be relegated solely to conventional elements. Influence opportunities must be embraced, managed, and deliberately harnessed by SOF. Small states would be best situated by approaching OIE with the deliberate, daring, and inventive attitude for which their SOF are so renowned. SOF are resourced with

the best and brightest personnel that their militaries have to offer because they are expected to deliver when it comes to difficult tasks. SW PSYOPS capability development must occur to achieve the next step in the evolution of small state SOF.

VIAM INVENIEMUS – WE SHALL FIND A WAY

SOF culture tends to embrace the Darwinian principle that one must constantly adapt or perish. *Survival of the fittest* is particularly relevant to GPC, where fitness is achieved primarily through adaptability to change, and competitive advantage through the implementation of innovation more rapidly than the adversary. Gray Zone Special Warfare features an evolved enemy, capable of harnessing revolutionary information technology to penetrate all defensive barriers between their influence munitions and the minds of targeted populations. The attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of expeditionary audiences are increasingly vulnerable to the seduction and influence of competitors, who relentlessly seek to isolate SOF programs from popular support.

The war for influence is raging, with domestic and foreign populations taking considerable casualties. Rising domestic trends towards political and social polarization are being aggressively magnified and exploited by adversarial influence campaigns, but all hope is not lost. Western military policy and strategic communications have begun to respond. New joint authorities and doctrines for OIE are being instituted, and tasks to develop IRC have been initiated, including specific direction to many small state SOF commands. The time has come for SOF to provide the spearhead of influence for these alliances within GPC, by expanding their arsenal of information weapons, starting with Psychological Operations. SOF must "...embrace judiciously pursued risk. This means that it must accept the risk of mistakes and missteps in certain contexts, such as experimentation and new ideas, in order to ensure that it is always fail-safe when it comes to operational matters."[93] SOF are recognized as the premier problem solvers for good reason, and the time has come for them to solve the influence enigma. SOF must seize the initiative to secure means of strategic influence. In their pursuit of developing organic Psychological Operations capabilities, an indispensable enabler of Special Warfare, SOF must either find a way, or make one.

CHAPTER 10

REMOTE WARFARE AND SMALLER WESTERN COUNTRIES

Major Cedric Craninx

Low-intensity conflict should be the domain of special operation forces (SOF) with other service components in support.[1] According to Michael Noonan's *Irregular Soldiers and Rebellious States*,[2] as a type of low-intensity conflict, irregular warfare has the features of Major Fernando Luján's "light footprints"[3] and Captain (Navy) Rob Newson's "MINFORCE."[4] Light-footprint operations often substitute for massive "boots on the ground" engagements. They instead rely "on a small number of civilian and military professionals to work patiently over many years to prevent and contain security challenges."[5] Renowned strategist and author David Kilcullen also emphasizes the importance of light, indirect, least-intrusive intervention in long-term, low-profile engagements wherever possible.[6] These notions support strategist Colin Gray's first master claim on the economy of force: "*Special Operations can achieve significant results with limited forces*."[7] Luján asserts, "In the simplest terms possible, the light footprint is fundamentally based upon working indirectly through indigenous actors to achieve national security objectives."[8] SOF use these types of operations against non-state actors, insurgents, and criminal and terrorist networks.[9]

In the final years of the President George W. Bush's administration, a new form of "remote warfare" was pursued by the United States that involved many of the characteristics of light-footprint operations. Mainly characterized using drones in the early stages, remote warfare aims to counter threats at a distance. Moreover, the notion of remoteness denotes that militaries do not have to operate on the contact line any longer.[10] As a result, kinetic operations are carried out without exposing Western military personnel to the risks normally associated with armed conflict in a warzone.[11] Remote warfare instead focuses on "'shaping' the international security environment through technology, flexible operations, and military-to-military partnerships."[12]

The spectrum of remote warfare is very broad. It encompasses unilateral operations, partner operations, train/advise/assist, and security assistance.[13] Air support, intelligence operatives, private contractors, and SOF training teams are features of remote warfare intended to assist local forces in fighting.[14] Researchers Abigail Watson and Alasdair McKay state that this model involves the following measures:

- Supporting local security forces, either official state forces, militias or paramilitaries; for example, through the provision of training, equipment or both;
- Special operations forces, either training or sometimes even working alongside local and national forces;
- Private military and security contractors undertaking a variety of roles;
- Air strikes and air support, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or "armed drones" and manned aircraft; and
- Sharing intelligence with state and non-state partners involved in frontline combat.[15]

Since the early 2000s, remote warfare has become a central instrument in the U.S. counter-terrorism toolbox.[16] From the coalition fighting the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq to the saturation of Western light-footprints in Niger,[17] kinetic actions are choreographed and often controlled from a distance.[18] Under this model, military outposts and operational capabilities are being built by Western countries throughout Africa to monitor, disrupt, and contain potential threats.[19]

Following this pattern, many other Western nations have adopted the model.[20] Smaller Western countries' policy-makers engage their military in remote warfare, hoping to decrease the risk to the force, counter threats at a distance, and limit budgetary costs. Problems arise, however, for smaller Western nations when they cannot access the full spectrum of remote warfare features. Due to a lack of resources, such as drones, geospatial intelligence (GEOINT), or human intelligence (HUMINT), these nations cannot or do not deploy even the minimum number of remote warfare features available when not operating under a coalition umbrella.

Executing remote warfare while lacking adequate resources increases the force's exposure to risk, jeopardizes mission success, or both. These deviations from the original remote warfare model therefore often led to added force-protection measures and increased footprints that can adversely impact building a relationship with the population and a partnership with local forces during low-intensity conflicts.[21] Moreover, without the right deployed capabilities, smaller countries' SOF may have very limited freedom of action (FoA) and consequently may not be able to measure their remote warfare operational effectiveness. Without such measures, SOF may not receive the necessary support and funding at the strategic and political levels. This problem mainly manifests organizationally due to the hierarchical governmental and military planning and decision-making process.

Therefore, this chapter seeks to answer the question, "What forms of support make the remote warfare system effective?" by analyzing the impact of remote warfare components on operational MOEs. The study employed system dynamics modeling and simulation to analyze the effectiveness of two types of remote warfare support to a local partner: training support and intelligence support. Using insurgent force size and information availability as key MOE the model simulated multiple ways in which the characteristics of remote warfare may impact the dynamics of a substate conflict. Data from the Islamic State insurgency case study was used to validate the model's fit over a simulated 36-month run and draw conclusions.

This research found that small Western nations should more carefully consider the proportion of different forms of remote support provided to the local partner in a conflict. Growing the partner's force size through training is ineffective if remote intelligence support is not provided. By contrast, intelligence support to a partner nation's force routinely enhances its ability to find and fix the insurgent force, reducing the latter's size and effectiveness. The study recommends three internal and one external strategic approach for SOF to collect more intelligence to more effectively help partner nations.

In the first internal approach, SOF and intelligence operatives work together under an inter-service umbrella. In the second internal approach, small Western SOF enhance their organic intelligence capability. The third internal approach represents a combination of the first two approaches.

Finally, the external strategic approach stresses the importance of smaller countries joining efforts in a coalition to build partner capacity and provide a broader spectrum of remote warfare support options, most importantly, more types of intelligence.

SYSTEMS DYNAMICS MODELING AND ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

Remote warfare, at the broadest end of the spectrum, supports a local partner. That partner is often an actor engaged in an internal conflict in which two opponents confront each other for control of the political space.[22] In those conflicts, local forces, also called counterinsurgents (COIN), fight against a guerilla force called insurgents.[23] When a third-party state provides military support to a local partner's counterinsurgency, that state also becomes part of the COIN force.

To combat insurgencies effectively, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the characteristics and capabilities of the opposing forces. Typically, insurgents have an information advantage, which means that they are better able to gather and disseminate information about their opponent's activities and objectives. However, they often have a disadvantage in terms of the size and strength of their forces compared to counterinsurgents. Conversely, counterinsurgents typically have a force advantage, meaning that they have greater numbers and resources at their disposal. Nevertheless, they often struggle with an information disadvantage, which means that they may have limited knowledge about the insurgents' activities and objectives.

Balancing these advantages and disadvantages is essential to achieving success in COIN operations.[24] The full-scale support is a very broad spectrum of support. It is operationally effective as evidenced by its contribution to the U.S.-led coalition militarily defeating the IS insurgency in a three-year period. Full-scale support is most effective due to the range and synergy of capabilities deployed that allow not only for a high level of intelligence, knowledge, and understanding of the OE but also a high level of protection provided by dedicated air support. Unfortunately, such comprehensive support is not achievable for countries with limited resources and risk appetites when they do not operate under a coalition umbrella.

It is therefore critical to determine how smaller Western countries' SOF can allocate their limited resources to training support and intelligence support during remote warfare to better help local partners fight insurgents. This

study used system dynamics modeling and simulation to analyze the impact that these remote warfare components have in a counterinsurgency. Using force size and information availability as MOEs, the model determined the COIN size, the insurgents' size, and the COIN find and fix capability by turning on and off the training support and adding different levels of intelligence support.

In the model, there are three levels of possible intelligence support, grouped by ease of sharing. Sharing open-source intelligence (OSINT) products, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) images, and geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) with a partner is the minimum and easiest remote intelligence support to provide. Therefore, they are modeled as Level 1 support. Human intelligence (HUMINT) involves more risks for the agents and the sources, so it requires more risk acceptance from the supporting nation. Therefore, HUMINT is added to Level 1 inputs to constitute Level 2 support. Finally, signals intelligence (SIGINT) is expensive and often requires a higher security classification. Therefore, SIGINT is added to the sources in Level 2 to constitute Level 3 support.

This system dynamics model was intended to demonstrate the impacts of these different types of remote warfare support provided by a Western country to a local partner force during an insurgency. Data from the Islamic State insurgency case study was used to validate the model's fit over a simulated 36-month run and draw conclusions. The results demonstrated the degree of impact on the size of the counterinsurgents, the size of the insurgents, and the counterinsurgents' find and fix capability for each type of support provided. Most importantly, the results showed which type of support is the most operationally effective in decreasing insurgent size.

FINDINGS

The remote warfare model shows the high effectiveness of intelligence support and the relative lack in effectiveness of training support when the latter is mainly focused on increasing the COIN size.

Information as a Function of Force Size and Multi-Source Intelligence Gathering

Many insurgent competition models measure the tradeoff between information and force according to various levels of conflict or stages of

insurgency.[25] One of the central assumptions of such models is that the level of information available to each party is a function of the COIN size and the insurgents' size. In this study's results, training support primarily increases the COIN size, while intelligence support dramatically increases the information component (COIN find and fix capability). These outcomes are accomplished through a synergistic effect of multiple intelligence activities including sharing intelligence with the partner, OSINT, and GEOINT (manned and unmanned aircraft included), HUMINT, and SIGINT. Information remains a function of COIN size and insurgents' size, but it is *more* a function of the added synergy of multi-intelligence provided by the remote warfare intelligence support.

Impact of Remote Warfare on Insurgent Size

Within the model's variables, the maximum support is the most effective form of remote warfare in terms of decreasing insurgent size: training support and Level 3 intelligence support.

That said, intelligence support is the only type of support, to a lesser or a greater degree depending on the level, that is alone able to decrease the insurgent size. The main difference between the simulations with and without intelligence support is the capacity of the COIN force to "see" the insurgents. The analyses for the three levels of intelligence support demonstrated the relationship between an increasing find and fix capability as a result of greater intelligence support and the decreasing insurgent size. The more the COIN force can find and fix the insurgents, the more the insurgent size decreases.

However, intelligence support cannot completely defeat an insurgency on its own.[26] A complete COIN win also involves gaining control of the political environment and addressing the underlying social and political issues that gave birth to the insurgency in the first place.[27]

Growth in COIN Size, Limited Impact of Training Support on Insurgent Size

Finally, the growth of the COIN size is mainly dependent on the training support provided to increase or sustain the force and reduce the force attrition rate. Still, this finding is aligned with the literature because the model shows that a growing COIN size has little to no impact on insurgent

size if the insurgents are relatively invisible to COIN forces.[28] Lastly, the analysis revealed that without external intervention in the insurgent conflict, the insurgents' information advantage counterbalances their size disadvantage such that insurgent size continues to grow. Without proper intelligence, the COIN force cannot locate or target the insurgents. So only employing training support to grow a partner size produces a similar outcome to not intervening at all.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SMALLER COUNTRY SOF

Based on the findings of this study, when Western countries decide to support a partner nation, they should carefully consider the type of support they will provide if they want to impact the conflict. Decision-makers and SOF should recognize that training support mainly focused on growing the size of the partner force should be avoided as a stand-alone option in bilateral agreements between a small Western country and a partner nation fighting insurgents. This limited support is not operationally effective because it does not help the partner find and fix the insurgents and so does not significantly diminish the size of the insurgent forces.

Intelligence support as a stand-alone option, while not ideal compared to full-scale support, would be preferable for small countries with limited resources and a strategic culture that is averse to direct military interventions. In such cases, this approach is more operationally effective because it counterbalances the local partner's information disadvantage by increasing the COIN force's find and fix capability, thereby significantly reducing the size of the insurgent force. In the context of limited resources and budget, smaller Western countries should shift their policy from training to intelligence support, or both. If SOF must prioritize, it should direct its resources and efforts towards intelligence support instead of training support.

To do that most effectively, smaller Western countries need to generate actionable intelligence that is based on multiple sources. While major powers have the luxury to run a multi-source apparatus exclusively within SOF or the intelligence service, the interservice approach is necessary for smaller states to attain the multi-intelligence fusion level. The least expensive way for them to produce multi-intelligence today is undoubtedly by combining the three "INTs" (i.e., HUMINT, OSINT, GEOINT).

To that end, this study recommends three internal and one external strategic approaches to collect intelligence to better support partner nations. The first internal approach proposes that SOF and intelligence operatives work together under an inter-service umbrella. In the second internal approach, small Western SOF enhance their intelligence capability by developing a broader organic spectrum of INTs. In the third internal approach, the country opts for a combination of the first two approaches. Finally, the external strategic approach stresses the importance of smaller countries joining efforts in a coalition to build their partner capacity and provide partner nations with a broader spectrum of support options.

A Level 2 Intelligence Support, Multi-Int Concept

One of the most cost-effective ways to produce multi-source intelligence is by combining three intelligence sources, or the three INTs: HUMINT, GEOINT (which includes manned and unmanned aircraft imagery and videos and OSINT. Coupled with an agreement to share intelligence with the supported partner nation, this concept has the capability to significantly impact the insurgent conflicts that smaller Western countries could be involved in. To illustrate the utility of this multi-int concept, some details about the different types of INTs are useful.

OSINT has transformed over the last decade. As Lauren Zabierek, the former Executive Director of the Cyber Project at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center, has observed, the growth in data volume, variety, and velocity has been exponential.[29] The internet has become a sensor. We can easily refer to the internet as multi-int because it provides access to news, commercial satellites that can do imagery analysis, commercial signals, and snippets of audio and video and it even makes judging the veracity of human-derived information possible.[30]

HUMINT provides insight into opposing forces' intent as well as actions. Depending on the HUMINT type (i.e., clandestine, covert, or overt) and the information required, HUMINT can take time to develop because of the sources' placement and access to information. Therefore, HUMINT in many cases is less responsive to immediate needs. It remains, however, a unique capability by providing insights into the opponent's thoughts, plans, and intentions. Human sources can sit in leadership or inner circle meetings, report on the latest enemy decisions, future locations, or pattern of life and provide unrivaled insight into what an opponent wants.

When training, advising, and assisting a partner nation, the line between human intelligence collection and security cooperation is thin due to the trust built between partners. During these operations, SOF can help confirm or deny information collected by other sources or help identify sources that the intelligence service could further exploit. Even advanced technical intelligence operations often rely to a certain extent on HUMINT-derived information and cueing in denied areas, where friendly deployed sensor arrays require proximity to the target. Therefore, HUMINT is critical for intelligence and operational synergy.

GEOINT is "information about any object—natural or man-made—that can be observed or referenced to Earth and has national security implications."[31] Geospatial intelligence "consists of imagery, imagery intelligence, and geospatial information."[32] Earth observation, UAV technologies, and AI-enabled surveillance and collection have made incredible progress in the last decade. For example, UAVs may capture long-duration, close-up full motion video. As a subset of GEOINT, activity-based intelligence (ABI), also referred to as pattern of life, involves gathering intelligence by observing behaviours that are indicative of a specific activity occurring in an area.[33] It can detect unusual behaviours or patterns that can signal the presence of an activity that is particularly relevant to friendly operations, or an imminent threat, such as individuals emplacing improvised explosive devices.[34] While aerial intelligence is the most expensive of the three INTs discussed in this study, its costs have dropped while its capacities have grown.[35] These systems enhance GEOINT collection and often achieve "persistent surveillance."[36]

The combination of these three INTs is a multi-source concept intended to build and sustain the intelligence edge necessary during a remote warfare. The combined result can give a good sense of an opponent's capabilities and intentions. It is a practical and economical way to produce actionable intelligence before sharing it with a local partner. It thus provides a small country's SOF with the necessary intelligence foundation to support a partner force in finding and fixing the insurgents in their territory.

Internal Strategic Approaches

This multi-source approach can be implemented by combining SOF and intelligence operations. The collaboration level between SOF and intelligence services varies among nations large and small. The United States and other large allied and partner nations have made great progress

in intelligence sharing and collaboration since 9/11.[37] However, the smaller Western countries have not followed this trend. Small country SOF would do well to study different strategic approaches to the collection and sharing of intelligence to maximize the effectiveness of intelligence support in the context of resource-constricted remote warfare.

The first approach would consist of intelligence operatives and SOF supporting each other and pursuing the same objectives. Both actors would enable each other, cover each other's deficiencies, and would work towards the same national strategic objective, in this case related to the military defeat of an insurgency in a partner country. As an intel collection asset, SOF would participate in the current intelligence-gathering apparatus. A second approach would be to broaden SOF's own collection spectrum, develop organic capabilities and pool its intelligence with the intelligence services. A third approach would be a combination of the first two, ensuring the highest flexibility in terms of ways and means to reach intelligence end states. This inter-service approach encourages seamless coordination and information sharing, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the operational environment. By leveraging the expertise and capabilities of both entities, a more robust and efficient intelligence apparatus can be established.

Whether the intelligence service and SOF cooperate to provide actionable intelligence or whether SOF creates new capabilities and fills that gap, these paths will offer suitable solutions. All these approaches might be different in many aspects when looking at costs and benefits, at the necessary intelligence capability-building within the SOF community, or at the necessary structural inter-service collaboration, but they are all effective when it comes to gaining a better understanding of the operational environment, sharing it with a partner and effectively helping them in decreasing the size of their enemy. The optimal solution, in terms of quality, quantity, and flexibility, is taking the third approach in which both SOF and intelligence operatives work towards the same objectives, but the overall intelligence capabilities deployed are superior due to SOF efforts in enhancing its own. It is also the best way to guarantee the multi-source intelligence benefits in support of a partner nation that is unable to find and fix its enemy during an insurgent-counterinsurgent competition. That said, in the limited resource context of smaller Western countries, employing whatever method enables finding and fixing insurgents during remote warfare should be the primary concern.

External Strategic Approach

Multiple European nations often deploy to the same country, and each signs bilateral agreements to help the same supported country. Rather than each country individually offering support that meets its diplomatic, political, and economic standards, all parties should unite their efforts within a single alliance. This coalition would provide comprehensive support encompassing all types of support, most importantly intelligence support.

As observed in the Remote Warfare simulation, on the one hand, intelligence support is operationally effective. It is logical that counterbalancing the COIN disadvantage by providing COIN forces with actionable intelligence helps them better find and fix insurgents for operational effectiveness. On the other, something completely overlooked by the small Western European countries is another of this study's findings, i.e., the lack of effectiveness of training support focused on growing a partner force size to help them fight against insurgents. Here, it is important to distinguish the building partner capacity (BPC) often applied by smaller Western countries from the BPC used by major powers. For example, the BPC framework applied by the United States is an operational and fiscal authority to help build a partner's capacities across the different joint functions and to implement them by supporting the partner through their Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities and Policy.[38] Few smaller countries are able to provide the full capacity employed by the United States, such as persistent surveillance drone ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) coverage. Due to the relatively limited resources available, smaller countries mainly support training.[39] By providing their partners only training, small Western countries focus on increasing the COIN force size but too little on their effectiveness at finishing insurgents, and not at all on their find and fix capability.

Because of this tendency to provide more training support than intelligence support, discrete bilateral agreements by small countries usually result in a dearth of intelligence support. Most Western countries have bilateral agreements with African countries to support them by providing training to their troops. For example, many Western countries are involved in Niger. Whether their involvement is called capacity building, providing or guaranteeing security, or contributing to military education, it is often training support or some form of it that is provided.[40]

Among the European countries contributing to a find and fix capability in Niger are Germany, which is providing surveillance drones, and Denmark, which is providing intelligence units.[41] On top of the EU mission, five EU member states have bilateral agreements with Niger and support the same partner mainly with training. Meanwhile, Belgian SOF coordinate the SOF activities of other countries (i.e., United States, Canada, Italy, Germany, Belgium) with Nigerien demands.[42] There is not enough unclassified data to argue whether these supporting countries are merely growing the partner force size or increasing its overall effectiveness at finishing insurgents. In any case, Figure 10-1 shows that while Western countries contribute (albeit in an unbalanced way) to different forms of train and equip missions, there is little intelligence support provided.[43]

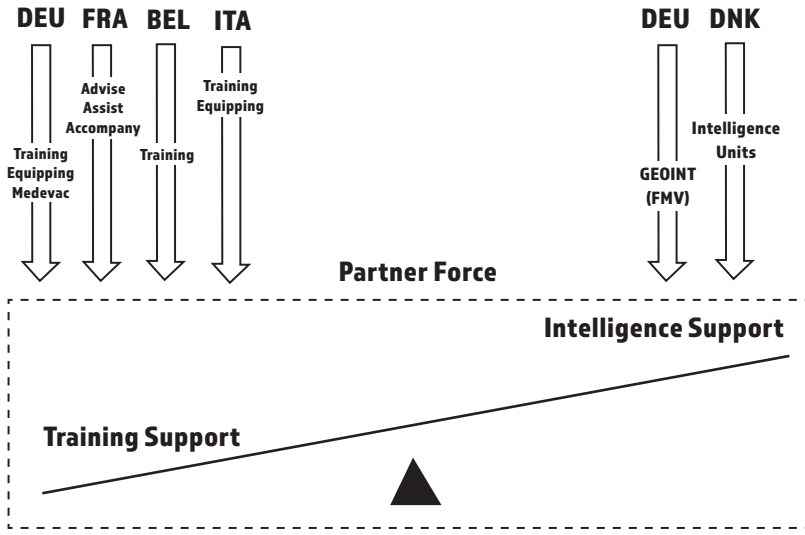

FIGURE 10-1. Multiple Bilateral Agreements with a Partner Force and the Disequilibrium between Training Support vs Intelligence Support[44]

The result of this imbalance is far from achieving something comparable to the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq in terms of the full spectrum of support provided. There are obviously budget and resource constraints that the U.S.-led coalition did not face, but the main question is, are small Western nations optimizing their engagement, not only bilaterally, but as a whole (i.e., as EU members)?

Instead of each providing a satisficing support that meets its diplomatic/political/economic criteria, to provide sufficient intelligence support

during remote warfare and thereby efficiently impact the conflict, small Western nations should combine their efforts under one alliance, a mosaic of supports. This approach would be a unique coalition offering the maximum support as defined in the model. A framework like the U.S. BPC, with its provision of complete ready-to-deploy capacities, would enhance the COIN finish component and the COIN find and fix component. Figure 10-2 shows that a coordinated spectrum of support under a coalition can provide a BPC framework and a better equilibrium between training and intelligence support.

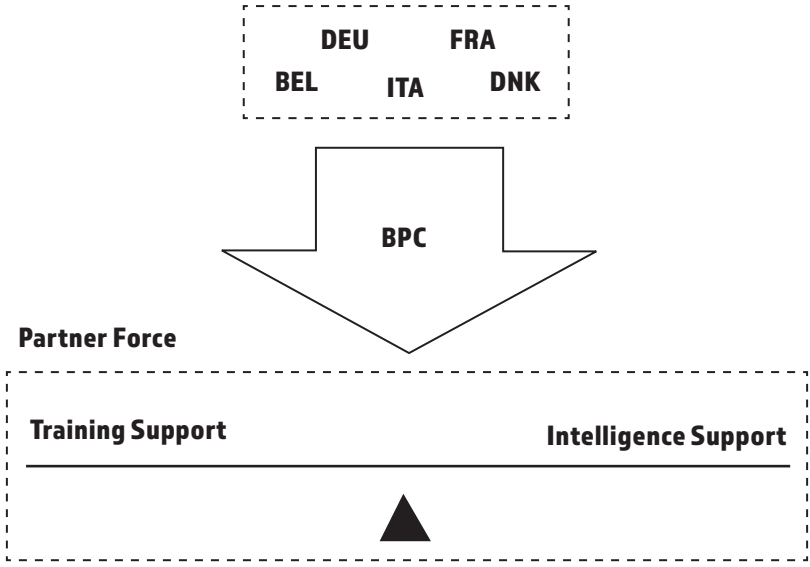

FIGURE 10-2. Streamlined BPC under a Coalition and the Equilibrium between Training Support and Intelligence Support

There would be multiple challenges associated with such a coalition. An obvious challenge would be to align the operational objectives with each coalition member's own security objectives. These alignments are crucial for participation and funding. However, no such challenge is too great to overcome. Belgium and the Netherlands operated under a binational Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) in Iraq during Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR). In 2018, Belgium, Netherlands and Denmark signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of a Composite Special Operations Component Command (C-SOCC) to participate in the NATO Response Force (NRF).[45] These cases show that smaller Western states can reconcile security objectives and reach successful agreements.

Smaller Western countries desiring to apply the remote warfare model should consider forming coalitions to increase the number of remote warfare capabilities, most importantly, intelligence synergy, to provide supported partner nation forces with greater FoA, improved MOE, increased situational awareness, and improved risk analysis. This streamlined intelligence and operational synergy could help the supported partner nation grow its force size but also significantly improve its coefficient of effectiveness and overcome an information disadvantage by finding and fixing the insurgents and reducing their force size and influence.

CONCLUSION

Today, the concept of remote warfare means that Western countries supporting a partner nation no longer need to operate directly on the front lines. However, smaller Western nations face challenges when they lack access to the full range of remote warfare capabilities. Without resources like air support, GEOINT, or HUMINT, these nations cannot deploy even the minimum remote warfare features. Unfortunately, the available means define how small Western countries are willing to help partners, whether that assistance impacts the substate conflicts or not. Executing remote warfare with limited resources often leads to training support focused on increasing a partner force size. Conducting remote warfare without adequate resources can jeopardize mission success or be inefficient.

To address these problems, a system dynamic model was used to examine the effects of training support and intelligence support on COIN and insurgent forces to assess remote warfare's effectiveness in insurgent competitions. Based on the assumption that insurgents have an information advantage and a force (size) disadvantage and that counterinsurgents have an information disadvantage and a force advantage, the model showed the impact of opponents' sizes and available information on the outcome of the conflicts.

The study found that training support bolsters a partner force's size advantage, while intelligence support balances a partner force's information disadvantage. Balancing their information disadvantage and enhancing a partner's ability to find and fix insurgents significantly decreases the insurgent size. Conversely, reinforcing a partner force size advantage does not substantially affect insurgent size. However, by shifting the allocation of their limited resources from training support to intelligence support

during remote warfare, smaller Western countries could better help local partners fighting insurgents.

The study proposes a set of strategic approaches, both internal and external, to augment data collection, enhance situational awareness, and effectively assist partner nations. The first internal approach involves empowering small Western SOF to bolster their intelligence capabilities. The second internal approach emphasizes close collaboration between SOF and intelligence operatives, operating under a unified inter-service umbrella. The third internal approach represents a fusion of the previous two approaches. It entails combining the efforts of small Western SOF with intelligence operatives under an inter-service framework. This integrated approach harnesses the strengths of both entities and maximizes their collective impact.

Lastly, the external strategic approach emphasizes the significance of smaller countries joining a coalition to strengthen partner capacity. By forming alliances and pooling resources, these nations can provide a broader spectrum of support options, particularly an expanded array of intelligence capabilities. This collaborative effort enhances the collective intelligence infrastructure and enables more effective assistance to partner nations. Overall, implementing these strategic approaches, both internally and externally, will facilitate the acquisition of actionable intelligence, allow partner nations to receive more effective forms of support, and increase the effectiveness of smaller Western countries' remote warfare, ultimately fostering greater security and stability.

These findings regarding how to maximize remote warfare operational effectiveness are crucial in persuading military leadership to advocate for the adoption of more SOF intelligence capabilities and an inter-service SOF–intelligence service approach to civilian bureaucrats at the national level. The findings should help them recognize the costs and benefits when considering the type of support, they aim to provide to local partners.

CHAPTER 11

A NEW ERA OF BI-DIRECTIONAL HUMAN-MACHINE INTERACTION: THE UTILITY OF AI FOR SOF

Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Bovet Emanuel

The near-future warfighting concepts for Special Operations Forces (SOF) necessitates an unprecedented collaboration between human and machine. Specialized and smart software, in this chapter referred to as artificial experts, will be augmenting human SOF, through various techniques, methods and purposes, at all levels of command and in most, if not all, mission types. Advancements within artificial intelligence (AI) create both the opportunities, and any latent adoption of such artificial experts into SOF business. In turn, efforts to innovate using emergent and potentially disruptive technologies will accentuate the importance of human judgement and generate novel collaborations. The chapter offers a reflection based on a predicted new era of bi-directional human-machine interaction. Moreover, it is a martial pursuit based on an appreciation of humans' cognitive limitation, and the general quest to tame uncertainty by building AI-models to predict using massive amounts of data combined with computing power. It may inspire contemplation to practitioners and policy-makers in their independent venues of approach to recognize the potential impact of these new technologies, as well as in adopting and implementing it into emerging concepts, methods and tactics. Ideally, it may also provide some ruminations on why human judgement is required amidst all these changes.

QUALIFYING THE ARGUMENT OF ARTIFICIAL EXPERTS AND HUMAN JUDGEMENT

The contention that future warfare will necessitate augmentation from artificial intelligence should not be perceived as an endorsement that all concepts will require high-tech integrations. So-called low-tech concepts are foreseen as important complementarians, and used whenever one

can, but are outside of the scope in this context. Instead, the scope of this chapter is to underscore the importance of human judgement when developing emergent concepts or strategies where artificially intelligent entities are intended to augment humans and solve intelligible problems. The formation of ideas orbiting human judgement are being brought to attention by various expert scholars from different research domains. For instance, International Relations (IR) scholars aim at the responsible use of artificial intelligence in the military domain,[1] or more general concern from philosophers revitalizing the lost concept of human judgement.[2]

Intelligence (cognition) is important. By using intelligence, humans can think (i.e., perceive, understand and predict) and by extension act. It is the interrelationship between think/act that is of importance in this discussion. How humans think affects how humans act. Yet, as leading AI-specialists Professor Stuart Russel and Professor Peter Norvig point out, researchers are still trying to understand how we think, whilst at the same time attempting to build artificially intelligent entities.[3] Although this may be an apparent paradox, military organizations seem forced to develop AI-enhanced capabilities on the idiom "building the plane while flying it." To be innovative or adaptive and overcome challenges requires creativity, experimentation and is, most importantly, associated with not-knowing. In the field of artificial intelligence, this is profoundly evident. It is an uncertain space filled with assumptions and conceptions. Nonetheless, near-future warfighting concepts will necessitate that SOF operators, staff and leaders integrate and collaborate with AI in their operations.

The conjecture of the argument is that the development of AI-integration within the military domain implies a requirement to complement human cognitive limitations. The reason for this is the amount of data retrieved by sensors, the speed of information and the interconnectivities that form both opportunities for an organization, but also pose challenges to the individuals within it. Scholars and military strategists have increased their attention towards the emerging technologies that are thought to provide remedies to contemporary challenges. Unfortunately, AI was not integrated to enable more sophisticated analysis on sensors, or weapon systems at the tactical edge a decade ago. Currently, it is perceived as a key to facilitate situational awareness in a multi-domain environment, support command and control and other vital warfighting functions.[4] As evident in a recent paper forecasting the Australian operational concepts for "future AI-enabled wars," the use and purpose of integrating AI may well fluctuate

in-between different services.[5] This observation indicates that each service has distinctive requirements based on their dominant domain. SOF, on the other hand, will likely need to reorient their *raison d'être* for the next generation of mission types and tasks, prior to conceptualizing for what purpose they need AI.

However, artificial intelligence will be required. Consistent with the majority of war studies scholars, the current technological advancements in AI are tangible incentives that will be adopted and implemented. The question is not if, or even when, but in what roles and how that will affect the existing concepts, methods and tactics.

Collaborations between humans and machine is not a new phenomenon. Rather this interaction has been developed throughout the last 80 years. The evolution of human-machine interactions stems from the quest of building intelligent entities,[6] and has transformed from innovation such as personal computers and the Internet towards a digitalization of society and the logical continuation of today's interconnected battlespaces and digital infrastructures (e.g., cloud-services). Yet, the way the interaction has evolved reveals both commonality in purpose and changes in our perception towards the machine (in this case computer).

Our post-modern historiography of human-computer relations elucidates three distinct ways of interaction – from physical to more cognitive. The first means of interaction was through a command line interface (CLI), which allows humans (users) to communicate with the computer using text commands from a keyboard instructing the computer to do specific tasks. The result humans got were either text information or specific action performed by the computer. Typing the right command was, and still is key. Today CLI is using modern standardized languages (or scripts) for programming (e.g., Python, Java).

The second method of interaction was via graphical user interface (GUI). This digital interface facilitates interactions with the computer through visually displayed images and elements (e.g., icons, buttons, or menu) that constitute similarities to objects in reality. This method also brought along innovations like the mouse, which made the interaction easier to work with and understand. Today the most modern way to interact is by using touch or voice to instruct the computer. This method is known as natural user interface (NUI) and though it requires more advanced technology it is alleged as being the most democratic of methods. In November 2022,

Open AI released their ChatGPT, a text generating AI-software responding to questions or instruction based on statistical inference from a massive amount of data. Since then, similar programs have arisen giving humans a sense of more realistic conversations, and a hint of what using all knowledge available might be in a future to come. By creating a conversational intermedium with AI (i.e., generative large language models) humans can co-create knowledge with such artificial systems in innovative forms. Even if this is a one-on-one conversation as of now, technology will in all probability continue to improve, permitting multilateral conversations supporting staff work where artificial experts are members of such a workforce.

WHAT IS THE PREFERRED BEHAVIOUR OF ARTIFICIAL EXPERTS?

Many decisions are made based on data. Contemporary military decision-making is likely to pursue the same approach to a distribution of intellectual workload as seen in the commercial sectors today. A recent report on the global AI-adoption index indicates that over 40 percent of the businesses claimed the need to automate key processes using AI.[7] Not all decisions are considered rational decisions – especially not in retrospection. Humans often strive towards doing the right thing, given what they know at that time, and the right thing may not always turn out to be the most rational. Our thought processes and reasoning support our decisions. But what we consider the right thing to do now may differ moments later. We changed our minds, to put it bluntly. We may change our opinion without even knowing exactly what brought us to a different decision later. Human behaviour is complex and involves emotion, but perhaps most importantly, values. We define and change our values as individuals and as a group for a plentiful of reasons, and researcher in the field of cognitive science are yet to figure out how human minds work.[8]

Meanwhile, psychologists claim to have some knowledge over human biases within decision-making,[9] which is important when discussing human-machine interaction as well as humans' involvement in building AI-models to support military problem-solving and decision-making. Nevertheless, instead of trying to mimic the human mind and build software that could resemble human behaviour, to include all our flaws, capriciousness and irregularly recurring irrationalities, it may be wise to adhere to the first principle of the logicist tradition – and build rational agents that takes actions based on logical reasoning.

Since logical reasoning and rational acting can be inferred and mathematically defined, this can be translated into computer programming. Software designed rationality must be built and verified against what human experts in the specific field would consider rational, given the data available. The artificial experts can then augment humans with analyses and advice based on human-defined ideal performance or behaviour. Over time, human experts' knowledge as well as their beliefs or values may change, giving reasons to adjust the computerized instructions accordingly.

Then again, real-life conditions often contain uncertainties and incomplete information or data. Yet, actions need to be taken. As a consequence, the software design may need to incorporate the ability for the artificial expert to reach a good enough decision or good enough performance. Using machine learning techniques on data from best practices and tailored scenarios may enable a fine-tuning of an AI-model to perform well even when the information or data is lacking.

The preferred behaviours of artificial experts are inherently subject to the desires of the designers and the context in which it set to work. It requires more fine-grained case-by-case analysis to identify the favoured behaviour, role and character of the AI-model. Instead, the attention is turned to three more granular collaboration challenges. These are seen as pervasive to any use-case related to human-machine interaction.

DECOMPOSING THREE CHALLENGES OF COLLABORATING WITH ARTIFICIAL EXPERTS

Collaborations with artificial systems may seem straight-forward. By and large, integrations of advanced technology have challenges that are known to most military organizations. Tallying artificially intelligent agents, to support intellectual work, solve problems or act in the interest of a mission, is different. Just the very thought that these experts could do intellectual work affects our imaginations on the matter. Hence, they shape us. It may lead to more effective planning and support dynamic mission outcomes, but there are a number of challenges associated with this collaboration. Three of those: control, data and biases, are brought to attention and discussed here as an example to accentuate the importance of human judgement.

Biases

Despite the efforts to mitigate for some general human biases by focusing on building rational agents, this chapter does proceed from a foundation

of increased bi-directional interaction. Consequently, humans will have to mitigate for, and be cautious of, their biases in not just building the AI-models but when operating them, since human biases may cloud any aspiration to use human judgement. Whether interpreting a recommendation or a predictive analysis from an artificial expert, humans will understand and act differently pending their experience, emotional state, fatigue or other factors that impact their comprehension and subsequent action. Envisioned conversational interactions with computers using natural user interfaces, may well increase the effect of our inherent biases. For that reason, some of the human biases are brought to attention, by referencing the groundwork of psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman[10] on human biases focused on judgement under uncertainties, and the comprehensive overview of the cognitive biases that can affect human judgement and decision-making by Kahneman,[11] which fits the purpose of this chapter well. Not least, because military endeavours in general, and especially SOF-mission work, encompass the premise that there are integral uncertainties within the practice of warfare.

A brief overview of these biases is presented here to support the understanding and the continuation of the discussion on human judgement:

- *availability bias*: the tendency to judge the probability of an event based on how easily it comes to mind. For example, overestimating the risk of a rare event because it receives more media coverage than more common risks;

- *confirmation bias*: the tendency to seek out and interpret information in a way that confirms pre-existing beliefs, while ignoring or discounting information that contradicts those beliefs;

- *anchoring bias*: the tendency to rely too profoundly on the first piece of information encountered when making decisions;

- *hindsight bias*: the tendency to perceive past events as more predictable than they actually were. For instance, after an event has occurred, humans may overestimate their ability to have predicted the outcome beforehand;

- *overconfidence bias*: the tendency to be overly confident in one's own abilities and overestimating the accuracy of one's own beliefs and judgements;

- *framing bias*: the tendency to be influenced by the way information is presented, rather than the actual content of the information itself; and

- *endowment effect:* the tendency to overvalue something just because it is one's own. For example, an idea originating from one's own thinking being overrated by oneself in comparison to others' ideas.

There are many ways in which cognitive biases can influence human judgement and decision-making. Before discussing potential mitigations to these biases, it is important to examine the two other factors intentionally chosen to support the main argument.

Control

For any artificial system to be of any support to a human, the human first needs to decide on what task or problem the artificial system is to solve. The decision is crucial in several aspects, though one may be of greatest importance – control – or more accurately defined, the reduction of human control. One could logically argue that the potential of intelligent artificial systems is in the direct proportion to the decrease of human control. This concept is similar to mission command, where the extent to which freedom of action is experienced is directly proportional to the higher commander's reduction of control (i.e., extent of constraints and limitations). On the other hand, as argued by Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics David Mindell,[12] it is important to maintain a balance in systems that involve human-machine interaction, and therefore vital to design these systems in a way that supports human decision-making and preserves human agency and judgement. In particular, he has emphasized the importance of keeping humans 'in the loop' to preserve their agency and judgement, rather than relying solely on artificial agents.[13]

However, what is considered 'in the loop' and thereby preserving human agency and judgement may fluctuate pending knowledge and experience, preferences, trust or the importance of the task or problem to be solved. This reality indicates that the design of every artificial system integration will be unique and will require considerations and decisions in relations to control. Furthermore, this implies that there are reasons to avoid getting trapped in the middle where neither the human, nor the machine has control. It could otherwise create an unfavourable ratio where the artificial system is

hampered to perform at its best by design and where the human operator may find it difficult to know who is actually doing what. It could also create negative consequences when humans want to retrieve full control, and find themselves unable regain control. Enabling reversibility by design could be crucial in some cases, especially for operations that presuppose contested environments where services are denied or disrupted.

Assigning tasks to artificial systems and even reducing the control completely, thereby making them fully autonomous in their execution, can be useful in many contexts, but should, following Mindell's argument, be designed in a way that supports human decision-making and allows for human intervention when required. Indeed, the main challenge is to know where, when and how to balance control. This requirement is also why human judgement and expertise are essential for many tasks, particularly those involving complex decision-making, uncertainty, and moral or ethical considerations. Since all AI-systems are defined as specialized (in contrast to general AI), any organization that involves in integrating these artificial systems into their concepts, methods and tactics will find themselves with a plethora of these systems. One for each specific task. This in turn, also emphasizes the importance of human over-watch and maintaining an awareness and understanding of the context in which these systems are operating.

Data

Whether artificial systems are integrated for swift analyses in urban surveillance modules supporting a Special Reconnaissance (SR) mission or used for retrieving and comparing comprehensive information on complex target systems within a dynamic targeting cycle, they all share the same need – data. The models need data as an input to produce an output. Consequently, the results are a product of the data humans feed into the system, and the instructions humans define. Hence, another reason for why human judgement will become one of the more critical skillsets for military organizations.

Importantly, there are several considerations with respect to data when developing (training), implementing (verifying) and operating (using) artificial systems. AI-models often require large amounts of quality data to train and improve the accuracy. However, acquiring the data that is required and cleaning the same data can be both time-consuming and expensive. In this context, quality of data refers to its representativeness to the problem to be solved as well as a general consciousness towards

any inherent biases within the data-set. Data cleaning (or data curation) is the process of identifying and correcting errors, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies in a dataset, in order to improve the data quality and ensuring that it is suitable for analysis or use in machine learning models.

Data quality is a critical aspect of developing and using AI-models, and it is important to ensure that the data used to train the model is accurate, relevant, and representative of the problem that the model is intended to solve. That is to say, if the purpose of the model changes, or new data is added that is inconsistent with the existing data that could degrade the performance and accuracy of the model. Such cases, may necessitate retraining or to otherwise modify the existing model to incorporate the new data. Similarly, if the organization receives data from an external trusted source (think of data fusion and data sharing), it is important to validate the data quality before using it to train or update the model. This approach could involve checking for errors, inconsistencies, and missing values, as well as verifying its relevance and representativeness including biases.

A rule of thumb when developing, implementing and using AI-models in general is to recognize their inherent sensitivity to changes outside of their pre-trained representation of the "world." Warfare and its relevant elements constantly modify and mutate. An AI-model may require to be "re-programmed" to ensure its ability to support relevant outputs. Establishing data quality processes and procedures might be desirable, including data cleaning, validation, and monitoring the data over time to ensure it remains relevant and representative. Unintended biases are common causes of unsolicited outputs, underlining the importance of data quality and data cleaning.

In addition to what has been discussed with regards to data, there could also be concerns and challenges concerning the data outputs due to the complexity of the AI-techniques used. For instance, machine learning and in particular deep learning might defy or at least have negative impact on the organization's ability to validate the data quality. The current obscurity into the reasoning behind complex models' data output (i.e., commonly referred to as black boxes) can make it difficult to understand how they work and why they come to certain conclusions or results. These issues are often raised as lack of transparency, interpretability or explainability. Regardless of which, it limits the possibilities to evaluate

the AI-models. Hence, it will challenge trust towards the artificial system and affect the interrelation between the human and the artificial agent working on their behalf.

This issue is particularly a concern in high-stake applications augmenting targeting or within command-and-control systems, where the performance of the AI-models can have severe but unintended consequences. Consequently, it becomes vital to deliberate and carefully balance the potential impacts the artificial system may have when developing, implementing and operating them in warfare practices. Applying human judgement during all the three phases will support being a responsible AI-development organization.

HUMAN JUDGEMENT

The growing dependency on artificial intelligence at all levels of warfare will increase the importance of human involvement.[14] There continues to be parts of the human trait of decision-making that requires human active involvement as extolled by IR-specialist James Johnson.[15] AI-technologies cannot effectively or reliably complement the role of humans in understanding and apprehending the situational conditions to make predictions and judgements. Consequently, the role of human agents, and their abilities to judge well, will become even more critical in the near AI-enabled future of warfare.

On the other hand, as argued by philosophy professor Jonna Bornemark, human judgement has been lost due to excessive paperwork, platitude productions, as well as a general striving for controlling circumstances.[16] Perhaps, our attempts to tame uncertainties by using largely linear-based predictions or the use of non-deterministic problem-solving artificial agents specifically designed to mitigate for uncertainty, has lured humans into what Bornemark is accentuating. Notwithstanding the degree to which humans need to revitalize their judgement to cope with decision-making in the 21st century, what does human judgement mean and consist of? How is human judgement defined and explained? Furthermore, how can it be applied and used to mitigate some of the challenges discussed in this chapter?

Human judgement is the cognitive process by which humans form beliefs, opinions, or decisions based on available information. It is a complex

process that involves reasoning, intuition, emotions, and past experiences. Scholars from different disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, and decision theory, have studied human judgement and provided various theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence.

One of the most influential models of human judgement, previously mentioned in the text, is the "rational model" for decision-making. The rational model assumes that humans make choices based on a careful analysis of available information including trade-offs (or cost-benefit calculus). The model is therefore built upon an assumption that human (or non-human) agents are rational and objective in their judgements and strive to maximize their expected utility.[17] This model has been criticized, however, for being too simplistic and unrealistic, as it does not account for the role of emotions, biases, and heuristics in decision-making.[18] Conversely, its relative simplicity continues to serve software development where specified instructions (i.e., algorithms) can be built to solve problems. However, the problems then need to be equally unsophisticated or naïve (which is the reason behind the term naïve AI).

Another influential approach to understanding human judgement is the "heuristics and biases framework," which posits that humans often rely on mental shortcuts to simplify complex judgements and make their decisions more efficient.[19] This approach can lead to biases (or errors) in judgement attributable to not accurately reflecting the reality of the situation when making the decision. The more common human biases have been introduced. A question that can be raised when comparing the rational model with the heuristics and biases framework is perhaps observably how these two could complement each other when designing human-machine collaborations.

Other scholars have emphasized the role of intuition and emotion in human judgement, arguing that humans often rely on their gut feelings or emotional feedbacks to guide their decisions. For instance, Gerd Gigerenzer and Wolfgang Gaissmaier's research[20] indicates that individuals and organizations often rely on simple heuristics in an adaptive way, and that ignoring some information can lead to more accurate judgements than accounting for all information. Situations where this "less-is-more" approach may be favourable,[21] are when there is low predictability, but also for small sample sizes. Indeed, cognitive biases allow humans to process information and make decisions quickly and efficiently. It is the

reason for their evolutionary existence. However, modern society, and therefore modern warfare, have been digitalized to the extent that all data and information are omnipresent, existing in cloud environments. The amount of data is massive and increasing. The speed by which the data is transported is equivalent to the speed of light. All this delimits humans' ability to comprehend, so it is important to mitigate their effects in order to improve decision-making outcomes.

By appreciating the strengths and limitations of the different perspectives that exist, it is possible to gain a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how humans make judgements and decisions in various contexts. Such knowledge can then be used to design systems of bi-directional collaborations in between humans and artificial expert systems. For example, when designing decision-support systems the organization can intentionally have policies (or methods) that strengthen the overall performance of the collaboration, so that the rational artificial experts mitigate any shortfalls made by human experts' inherent biases through more deliberative and rational analysis. Conversely, when the situation calls for intuition, ethical considerations or even requires imagination, then the human experts can rely on their judgement. Modern warfare appears dependent on artificial intelligence technologies. Recognizing that real-world decision-making is constrained by limited information, time pressure, uncertainties and other factors, military organizations must balance the human level of control with any mitigation offered by integrating artificial experts.

IMPROVING HUMAN JUDGEMENT AND THE 10TH MAN RULE

There are several strategies to mitigate the effects of cognitive biases. Some of them could potentially be turned into AI-models, thereby augmenting human decision-making and mitigating our shortfalls at the same time. Being knowledgeable and aware of the biases that can affect judgement and decision-making is perhaps one of the more effective strategies on both the individual and group/or organizational level. By recognizing the potential for biases in certain situations, steps can be made to counteract its effects. Knowing what type of decisions predominately permits more deliberate analyses and thoughtful decision-making processes, can support strategies intended to integrate artificial experts that for multiple perspective contributions. Such models may mitigate the effects of confirmation bias and other biases resulting from relying on a narrow set of information or viewpoints. Analytical tools, such as statistical

analysis or machine learning algorithms, can help to identify patterns or relationships in data that may be difficult for the human staff to detect on their own.[22]

Other approaches that could be inspiring to develop are AI-models that acts as feedback agents, provides reality checks, or assists in identifying blind spots. Pending the context, *groupthink*,[23] a well-known term introduced by research psychologist Irving L. Janis in 1971, and other related biases stemming from cordiality and 'membership' could be hazardous. The more homogenous a group is, the greater the danger of reducing independent critical thinking, and replacing it with groupthink and related biases. A potential role for artificial experts may for that reason be as a supplementary critical thinker – acting as the so-called 10th man.[24] In some situations, it may be crucial to put emphasis on critical thinking. The non-fictional term resembling the 10th man is the "devil's advocate," which in fact was established as an office within the Israeli intelligence agency AMAN, following the October 1973 Yom Kippur War, in which Israel failed to foresee an impending attack by Egypt and Syria.[25] According to Yosef Kuperwasser, the former Head of AMAN, the "devil's advocacy office" ensures creativity (thinking outside the box), diverse opinions, exploration of alternative assumptions, and ("…they proactively combat groupthink and conventional wisdom…")[26] by countering existing assessments.

The idea to have a person within a group who takes the opposite viewpoint, regardless of whether they believe it or not, to challenge group assumptions, is neither new, nor easy to establish. Whether called the 10th man or something else, the concept is based on the notion to confront conformity and introduce dissenting opinions. It could be an effective tool supporting judgements, but requires someone who is willing to embrace the role and argue against a perhaps widely accepted or dominant standpoint to expose the weaknesses. It may require more than just critical thinking skills.

However, if the production of unsolicited, though legitimate, counter-arguments could be generated by an artificial agent, the position of the 10th man could be arranged without having humans providing contrarian arguments for high-stake or otherwise delicate decisions. Devising AI to establish diversity would conceivably support the humans to accept and contribute in teasing out second opinions more readily. If successfully implemented, the AI-models acting as the 10th man could be integrated

and used whenever the group or staff necessitates that an argument, assessment, plan or similar is intentionally challenged, and from that strengthened.

THE IMPACTS ON SOF

Future warfare concepts will inflict changes and challenges. The impact on SOF will differ from one organization to another, although some requirements will be common to all. The three common denominators are presented below:

1. *Strategies for education and training:* AI-systems are already being implemented or envisioned to be an integral part of decision-support and the command-and-control apparatus on all levels of warfare. Integrating AI-technology will bring about modification to the methods of employment, and impact the tactics used when operating. To understand how the integrations should be designed as well as anticipating the effects on current practices, SOF operators and commanders need to be educated and trained accordingly. SOF need more technological skills to comprehend the phenomena. A precursor of what an educational strategy could consist of was visualized and described in 2020 in the U.S. Department of Defense Artificial Intelligence Education Strategy.[27]

2. *Calibrating trustworthy relations*: Turning the attention to cases where AI-models are developed to augment human decisions with advice, or other types of assistance, those models will probably be unsophisticated at the start. Along with the organizations potential quest to use the models for more advanced tasks, for instance optimization algorithms fine-tuned for specific conditions, these may be flawed by design if used under other circumstances, or in changing environments. More sophisticated models may also result in increasingly difficult outputs for humans to comprehend and, for that matter trust. Trusting the sources, in this case the organization's own models will equal trusting the data provided to the model by the organization. As alluded to in the previous section, data quality is, and will continue to be, either an enabler or a potential source of error that is hard to detect. Decision-support systems will inevitably be designed to automate most of the data analyses. As a deduction, trust between human-machine

needs to be resolved, and specifications defined as to under what circumstances recommendations from AI-models can or cannot justify actions.

3. *Refurbish professional judgement*: Regardless of the type of AI-adoptions an organization does, each implementation requires careful considerations. The ability to recognize and acknowledge the opportunities and potential advantages are perhaps more vital than identifying all the risks. Especially in an area that is relatively unknown, thereby characteristically uncertain. It will require anticipatory moves towards beliefs and creative thinking, rather than feeding the historically embedded well-nourished conservative culture that Colonel Bernd Horn[28] portrays as adhering to status quo, being intolerant to change which in turn "… blinds organizations to opportunity."[29] Failures are often the most tangible proof of innovation for an otherwise mature organization. Commanders must know enough on these technological matters to be able to take responsibility. Common sense is not enough – for good reason. AI fundamentally changes how war is fought and even where war is fought. AI will be a new way of working, with drastic changes to the distribution of workload between humans and machines. As mentioned, the unknowns are bigger than what is known, which should account for humbleness and discernment for any applied governance and management.

LOOKING BACK FROM THE FUTURE

How did we select soldiers and leaders for the challenges we faced? Imagine that your organization have an established enterprise AI-solution to support the data flow for command and control and other relevant functions. Your teams have successfully integrated AI into the core businesses including supporting mission rehearsals with augmented and virtual realities. Moreover, the planning and preparations are supported by machine learning using feedback loops from the mission rehearsals to visualize critical aspects of the scheme of manoeuvre and fires for the upcoming mission, and most of the collaboration with artificial experts are more or less an integrated daily routine and workflow. If this was true, what decisions were made to enable that? How was the education of s oldiers and leaders altered or changed to meet the requirements? What skills and co-creations were needed? Was the human factor and human

judgement as important as assessed? Questions like these, as well as others, may spark ideas, especially when approaching the challenges ahead from the solution and working backwards. Current research in generative models[30] are capable of presenting venues of approach to specified objectives that surmount human knowledge as of now by 'flipping' the traditional design process.

How do we shape what will come in the next five to ten years? This chapter was set out to explore and discuss the near-future warfighting concepts for SOF. In particular, the discourse commended an unprecedented collaboration between human and machine. This premise was based on the argument that future concepts and warfare practices implies a requirement to complement human cognitive limitations at all levels of command and in most, if not all, mission types. Whether future heterogenic teams are built from bringing artificial agents along, or these agents are engaged in enabling tactical autonomy, this is a new era. The changes it will bring about are not just affecting the warfare practices. It will affect the whole SOF apparatus, and perhaps even the core values. The collaborative approach implies that we get better at focusing on what humans are really good at and what AI is equally good, or better at. This clarification could lead to more optimization of the distribution of workload, tasking and decision-making.

The future of SOF depends upon continued innovation. There will be new concepts, methods and tools, new collaborations as well as capabilities against new mission types. If we need AI to win future battles and wars, we need to absorb all possible theoretical knowledge and practical experience to build military wisdom. Human judgement will be the greatest of resources on that journey.

CHAPTER 12

ROGUE SOF: A CAUTIONARY TALE

Robert MacDuff

Special operations forces (SOF) have been highly romanticized in Western culture, especially in the United States. The idea of commando units operating victoriously against the odds, behind enemy lines, has captured the imaginations of people for generations. Their appearance in countless books and movies adds to their mystique and plays a role in setting expectations within their societies of what these units are capable of. Expectations are important as SOF units are expensive to raise and maintain, they operate in secret, and are often tasked with sensitive missions that could have strategic implications. The government's and society's expectations of its elite soldiers, which have been trained and equipped to be the most effective, and lethal units within a nation's military, help to define their roles and responsibilities to their country.

Membership in a SOF unit represents an investment by the country in an individual and it comes with a trade-off. The individual often acquires high-level skills and opportunities they would otherwise not have access to, in exchange for service in high threat environments on behalf of the nation. Loyalty, courage, selflessness, service to others, forthrightness, intelligence, and integrity are essential qualities required and expected of operators at this level. They are the best of us.

Reality is somewhat different. These operators are human and as such they are subject to human frailties. Many small states are in the developing world, and when powerful circumstances overwhelm the political order of those states, SOF units can become a liability in some cases. When this occurs, and the confidence of the nation is lost, the capability can be lost. When developing, improving, and maintaining SOF forces in fragile small states, there can be an existential risk to the security of the state.

DEFINITIONS

The small state is hard to define. There are different parameters set by different observers, geography being the most obvious. The United Nations (UN) seems to define it by population, where the state has fewer than ten million people. It can also be viewed as a measure of military power, economic power or global or regional influence. Israel, for example, is small both from a geographical and population perspective, but they have a technologically advanced and powerful military, they have a superpower patron, and they unofficially possess nuclear weapons. Geographically larger states often have more resources than smaller states and often this leads to greater wealth. When it comes to building and maintaining a special operations capability, resources matter. There are many small states with strong governments, capable military forces with proven SOF units because of investments made and maintained. These small states are not the focus of this work. Instead, the focus will be on small states that are more politically and economically fragile, often in the developing world. In these states, the environment that SOF units are created out of, and operate within, can provide extremely troublesome.

It is also important to understand the distinction between SOF units and elite units. In resource deprived small states, there is often no difference. Generally, SOF units and elite units are often distinguished by their mission profiles, their equipment, and their selection process. This differentiation means that while all SOF units are elite, not all elite units are necessarily SOF.[1] From the small state perspective, there may be little distinction between the two. The country's history, outside influences and the government's relationship with the military can be key factors in defining these units.

Mercenary groups, or now more commonly called Private Military Companies (PMC), add an additional complication. While PMCs, like Academi (i.e., formerly Blackwater) and Wagner, are often heavily populated with former SOF soldiers, and while not current members of the military, they have all the knowledge and training to operate as such. PMCs often conduct the same types of training and operations that conventional forces, and even SOF perform. Also, like SOF, they often form close relationships with host nation military units. It is simply good for business.

Additionally, there have been mercenary units that have operated as elite forces or SOF for countries in the developing world, most notably in Africa.

This case was common during the independence period post-World War II, before many of these countries had their own militaries. In a more recent example, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Blackwater contractors, despite being a private corporation, operated as a de facto paramilitary force of the United States. In the current conflict in Ukraine, Wagner operates in a similar fashion for the Russian republic.

Due to their complicating nature, policies on the use of mercenaries have been debated in the UN and in the African Union (and its predecessor the Organization for African Unity) for decades. Executive Outcomes, a South African-based PMC, has been involved in numerous conflicts in Africa and around the world, and worked with a now defunct, and notorious, United Kingdom PMC called, Sandline International. There have been several high-profile problems with these units, notably in Papua New Guinea when Sandline became involved in an internal civil-military affair that led to the collapse of the government.[2] The issue gets even more complicated when considering that some countries use PMCs as adjunct forces to their own militaries and differentiate between "good" mercenaries and "bad" ones. Even the UN considered using mercenaries to secure its assets in "risky environments," but decided they would instead be a force of last resort.[3]

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

For any military unit to go rogue there needs to be a breakdown in discipline and the loss of control over the military by the civilian government. When considering the threat of a country's SOF unit(s) to its population, the central issue is the quality of civil-military relations. If the government is unpopular, weak and has poor control over its military, the military can become a liability to the country. If the country possesses a highly trained SOF force, even in relative terms, this can open a Pandora's box that creates instability, destruction and ongoing problems for the population. Some countries have suffered numerous coups by their military over the years. The renowned scholar Samuel Huntington in his seminal work, *The Soldier and the State*, points out that civil-military affairs is one component of national security policy, one that is central to the physical security of the state. The military policy created to facilitate that security is defined by quantity (the size, recruitment, and logistics), quality (organization, training, equipment, and weaponry) and the utility (under what circumstances the force will be used) of the military that is to protect the country.[4] And, in a warning to those that take this issue too lightly, he explains, "nations which fail

to develop a balanced pattern of civil-military relations squander their resources and run uncalculated risks."[5]

The civil-military relations aspect of national security holds a tension between a political entity that has specific expectations and requirements (whether legitimate or self-serving) and the military that likewise has its desired outcomes. For fragile small states, when these competing expectations are at loggerheads, particularly for many of these small states that have no history of a strong civil-military relationship, the military can, and in some cases has, usurped the civilian government. If the society from which a highly trained SOF unit originated does not have a robust, cohesive, and loyal culture, the risks of unintended consequences can be disastrous. For many of these countries, it's only a matter of time before their protectors become a threat.

Quality special operations forces are not an inexpensive or simple endeavour to create and maintain. The edifice upon which an organization of this ability is built is costly, complex, and nuanced. A country that is able to create quality SOF units must have resources and a clear understanding of what they want these units to accomplish. Culture matters. The United States, for example, has a history of special operations that goes back before the founding of the country. There are American cultural elements that are woven into the fabric of their SOF units that, despite a tumultuous history, have allowed these units to become some of the most sophisticated and effective SOF units ever.[6] The cultural elements include allegiance to the Constitution, dedicated military professionalism, high levels of patriotism and a strong sense of service to country. The screening process used to acquire personnel that demonstrate they have the attributes required to become an operator and have the character to embody this culture, is called selection. It is a process designed to select the best possible volunteer candidates available to the special operations community.[7] The selection process involves difficult physical and mental hardships that are shared by each member of the unit. This shared hardship forms a relationship of trust between the members of the unit and creates a strong cohesive bond. The selection process is one of the universally defining characteristics of SOF forces.

Within the U.S. military, clear and enforceable civil-military guidelines provide strength to the system.[8] It is important to note that, regardless of size, states with capable and effective SOF organizations must possess

these characteristics. The various units in the SOF community that regularly conduct training of SOF in fragile states, do so in order to strengthen the host nation's security and commitment to the rule of law. Ironically, it is often these very units that are trained that may turn on their compatriots. The same training that makes them so effective, is utilized against the people and government they have an obligation and responsibility to protect. While there may be good intentions for these training missions, the particular circumstances within the targeted host country can undermine this effort.

RULES

If there are risks in training fragile small state SOF units, then certainly there must be guidelines surrounding the deployment of SOF to these host nations. What are the rules? What should SOF in these states look like? What are their roles, responsibilities and capabilities? How do these small states access quality training and equipment for their nascent SOF units? The answers are often found in the guise of aid from wealthier nations that seek some advantage with the host nation.

After the end of the Second World War and the rise of the Cold War between the Superpowers, there came two factors that promoted the SOF concept within the developed world. The first factor was the advent of nuclear weapons. Conventional warfare between the great powers was considered to be non-feasible. The ideological separation between the two sides promoted highly adversarial relations, which made any military-to-military contact as a possible precursor to nuclear warfare. Therefore, direct military engagement between the two superpowers, or their allies, had to be avoided. This reality promoted the use of small units in low visibility or clandestine operations to achieve national objectives.

The second, and related, factor came in the wave of independence movements and the subsequent rise of guerilla and terrorist groups operating against Western interests and commonly supported by Warsaw Pact enablers. Proxy warfare and what has been called low intensity conflict (LIC), more commonly counterinsurgency (COIN), became the dominant pattern of conflict between the two competing sides. The violence was on a much lower scale compared to conventional warfare. While all warfare is political, this type of conflict was characterized by the weaponization of politics itself. SOF specialized in this type of operational environment and excelled at the prosecution of this type of warfare.

Terrorist groups using violence against civilians as an asymmetric tactic to achieve political goals against a much larger adversary also became a major threat. After the disastrous response to the terror attack on the Olympic Games in Munich, Germany, in 1972, it was realized that a new capability was needed. Counter-Terrorism and Hostage Rescue became a sub-specialty within SOF, but was also present within national level police units in the form of Emergency Response Teams and Hostage Rescue Units (HRU). In the developed nations these would often form the basis of what are called 'Tier One' units today.[9]

The Cold War environment framed geopolitical and economic interests in a zero-sum setting between the two competing sides. There was an effort made by both sides to gain as much support throughout the countries of the world to gain strategic advantage. It pays to have friends. There are various ways that countries acquire and maintain allies. One important method of building trust and friendship is to have military-to-military contacts, provide military aid and engage in training that is mutually beneficial for both countries. While the United States military, for example, can conduct these missions with a variety of military units, it is the specialty of their SOF forces. Within U.S. SOF, this mission is referred to as Foreign Internal Defense (FID). For the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), FID is a core task, and the Army Special Forces (Green Berets) were created in 1952, with this in mind. Their other main specialty was unconventional warfare (UW) defined as "a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery."[10] Depending on the host country's needs, and what SOF capability they are building/improving is, the assisting nation will tailor their training forces appropriately. While the most common branch to receive SOF training is the army, small maritime states will naturally wish to develop a naval SOF capability. With limited resources, small states must make sound economic choices around which units will benefit the most from the investment. Because the basic military branch for most countries is the army, in resource restricted countries, any SOF capability commonly begins there.

Decisions regarding the training of small, developing-nation SOF troops by the developed countries usually comes because of consultations by civilian

and military leaders of both countries. These training exercises are often part of a larger aid package to the host nation. The United Kingdom, France, Canada, Israel, Australia, Russia, China amongst others conduct this type of training globally. The United States, having the largest and best funded SOF capability in the world, has a long history of deploying SOF troops for training around the world. The decision-making authority regarding these deployments comes from a collaboration of the government and the military. While other countries make their SOF deployment choices through decisions from the executive level of government, the United States (the largest contributor of military assistance in the world), has specific regulations to follow, which may provide a model for small states conducting military assistance to follow.

In 1976, the United States created a program called the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. It was meant to shape training programs for foreign military forces by U.S. forces to emphasize democratic values and human rights.[11] The U.S. Government Accounting Office, partners with a third party non-governmental organization (NGO) known as Freedom House, to assess the effectiveness and impact of programs under IMET. IMET was, and still is, a cornerstone of decision-making for U.S. overseas training deployments.

After the Cold War, the U.S. Department of Defense established its new strategy, published in 1992, entitled *Peacetime Engagement*. Without its main enemy of the Cold War, it now focused on creating global stability. The Chief of Military History at West Point, Cole Kingseed, defined the program as "to deter aggression, and should deterrence fail, to defend the nation's vital interests against any potential foe."[12] The Clinton Administration preferred a varied approach called "Enlargement and Engagement." It was a plan intending to have American forces actively engaged in the world and promote democracy. This approach would have a heavy SOF focus. In 1991, a law was created that tried to establish guidelines, called the Joint Combined Exchange Training program (JCET). The United States Department of State defines JCETs as, "Joint Combined Exchange Training primarily allows host government forces to give area orientations to U.S. Special Operations Forces."[13]

JCETs are the legal framework for exercises created ostensibly for U.S. SOF to deploy on training missions in countries they may have to operate in at some future point in time. In reality, the host nation gets at least as

much from the exercise as the Americans do. The Americans train the host nation forces and often provide equipment, supplies and ammunition to them as well. During these exercises, the military-to-military contacts build mutual trust and create bonds that can have strategic consequences in the future. In a developing small state, someone from the host nation SOF unit, that benefits from the training that U.S. SOF provides, may become the civilian leader at some point, and a strong bond with the United States may prove beneficial to both parties.

A well-known JCET example takes place annually in Africa, involving multiple countries working with U.S. Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA), called Flintlock. United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) describes it as:

> Flintlock - U.S. Africa Command's premier and largest annual special operations exercise - has taken place annually since 2005 across the Sahel region of Africa among nations participating in the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership and are planned by African-partner nation special operations forces, Special Operations Command - Africa, and the U.S. Department of State to develop the capacity of and collaboration among African security forces to protect civilian populations.[14]

In a 1999 article, Cato Institute researchers, John Rudy and Ivan Eland, suggest that despite the intention of the law establishing the JCET program, these exercises are actually used by U.S. SOF as representatives of the U.S. government to create close contacts with the host nation which effectively "supplants the State Department as the primary instrument of US policy."[15] Rudy and Eland argue that despite the best intentions of lawmakers, USSOCOM can manipulate the mission parameters to seemingly abide by the JCET law and still deploy SOF wherever and whenever they want, essentially "militarizing US foreign policy" and "without congressional oversight or public debate," often to American and host nation detriment.[16] They believe that U.S. SOF are "spreading military know-how and sophisticated tactics," and "teaching techniques that could be used for oppression."[17]

Patrick Leahy, a Democrat from Vermont, and at one point the longest serving person in Congress, wanted to do something about the rules surrounding JCET deployments. He sponsored an amendment to a human

rights bill that he authored in 1996. It has become known as the Leahy Law and was passed in 1998:

> [the law] prohibited any weapon sale or training program involving a unit of the security forces of a foreign country if the Secretary of Defense has received credible information from the Department of State that a member of such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.[18]

This law was implemented to close loopholes for when the Pentagon is considering JCETs or other aid for units in foreign countries with poor human rights records. One country may have units that are disqualified from assistance due to infractions, and still have other units that may receive the aid. This allowance causes problems for the United States when making decisions on these matters because training to one non-offending unit can be passed on to the offending unit and so can equipment that should be restricted by the Leahy Law. According to Rudy and Eland, "although the legislation was well-intentioned, it fails to solve the problems presented by the JCET program and even creates additional complications."[19]

The U.S. Special Operations Command, on the other hand, believes that the exercises and close contacts with host nation forces helps to introduce and build respect for human rights in the world.[20] With the United States involved in more than twenty countries in Africa alone, as well as heavy involvement in Latin America and many other countries worldwide, the scope of their operations is enormous. There is no doubt that the U.S. military in general, and USSOCOM in particular, have benefited from the JCET program. However, as USSOCOM has expanded its training opportunities to host nation SOF units in fragile small states, the potential for deviation from the intended goal also increases. Despite USSOCOM's intentions, human rights abuses and acts of treason by U.S.-trained forces in these states are still a problem. In fairness, these problems cannot be laid solely at the feet of the United States. Other countries have participated in training SOF from small fragile states that have gone on to commit acts of treason and human rights abuses. Blowback causes credibility problems not just for the host nation government and military involved, but for the assisting nation as well.

ROGUES GALLERY

The devastating effects of crumbling civil-military relations and the turning of the military against its people go beyond casualties. People must be able to trust those invested with their security. If the unit involved is a special operations force, reasonable questions surrounding the value of the investment in this capability are natural. Are they too dangerous to good order to maintain? Even with a developed nation partner, decisions must be made on whether the overall 'juice' is worth the 'squeeze.' Decisions by developed states to involve their forces in training SOF forces in fragile small countries have historically been perilous. If the SOF unit receiving the training come from a strong, unified culture built on the foundation of law and accountable to its people, then its reliability and loyalty will likely be more robust. Conversely, if these things are not in place, often the case in the developing world, then the opportunity for rogue activity increases significantly. SOF units, especially led by charismatic leaders, in dysfunctional small states may find themselves on the wrong side of history.

Due to the hemispheric proximity of Latin America, the United States has been involved in training many different SOF units in this region. Cold War geopolitical considerations intensified U.S. SOF involvement in the region and the connections between US and various Latin American SOF units. Subsequent problems caused by these host nation units should give military and political leaders, from both countries, pause when considering these deployments. Mexico is a case point.

The primary national security threat to the Mexican state comes from the drug cartels that operate within the country. A long counter-insurgency campaign in the Chiapa province against the Zapatista movement has also been an ongoing source of concern. The close relationship to the United States through geography, history, political and economic ties and cross-border population ensures that it is in the American national interest to assist in the training and equipping of the Mexican military and Mexican SOF. Mexico has a history of resistance to American involvement in their military, but due to the overwhelming problem of the drug cartels, Mexico requested assistance beginning in the early 1990s. Mexico provides the classic cautionary tale for what can happen when a highly trained military unit decides that it would be more profitable to go into business for itself.

Mexico has several SOF units, the primary army unit is the Special Forces Corps or CFE (Cuerpo de Fuerzas Especiales) and there is also a Tier One unit called, FER (Fuerza Especial de Reacción). The Mexican Navy has the FES (Fuerzas Especiales), which are the Mexican variant of the U.S. Navy's SEAL teams.

Where the problems began was in the 1990s when the Gulf Cartel, a powerful drug syndicate, began to recruit soldiers from Grupo Aeromóvil de Fuerzas Especiales (GAFE), the former name of what is now the CFE.[21] They used these troops to form the now infamous unit, Los Zetas, based on founder Arturo Guzmán Decena's codename. The unit was originally formed as a type of bodyguard for the protection of the paranoid head of the Gulf Cartel.[22] The 7th Special Forces Group, responsible for the Latin American geographical area, conducted training for GAFE and Mexican military forces in counternarcotics operations, which look very similar to counter-insurgency techniques, but were not referred to as such for political and legal reasons.[23] Los Zetas eventually turned on their Gulf Cartel masters and formed their own cartel.

Now that the genie was out of the bottle, most of the other drug gangs began to recruit from military units for their sicarios (hitmen) or regular troops.[24] Mexico has not been forthcoming with information on this matter, for obvious reasons, but they have stated that between 1994 and 2015 about 1,383 "elite soldiers deserted" and became part of the problem, rather than the solution they were trained to be.[25]

Another Latin American example lies in Guatemalan SOF. These highly effective troops, called Kaibiles, are a notorious Guatemalan SOF unit that was stood up in 1974. They have been involved with U.S. Special Forces for many years, and that relationship continues to the present. The Kaibiles are known for their skill and ferocity and have been used for counter-narcotics operations, counter-insurgency and are even part of a recent UN Peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They also have a long history of human rights abuses, including during the Guatemalan civil war that raged between 1960 and 1996, where the Kaibiles were used against the Guatemalan population by the various government heads. Former members of the Kaibiles have also been linked to Los Zetas in Mexico, working for drug cartels.[26]

Honduras is still another Latin American country that has had problems with its SOF units. The corruption of the narco problem also affects

Honduran SOF. U.S. Special Forces have trained their Cobra and Tiger special police units which are used for counter-narcotics and other internal security problems. The Cobras have been linked to the Los Grillos gang and there have been investigations and prosecutions of members of this organization.[27] Honduran special forces began in the 1960s and were assisted by U.S. Army Green Berets in establishing what would, in 1974, come to be called the Black Panthers.[28] The Piranhas naval special warfare group were assisted by U.S. Navy SEAL teams in their organization and training.[29] In a more recent episode of concern, Honduran military special forces have been linked to the murder of an environmental activist in 2016.

Yet another example is Colombia. It has been a source of national security problems for the United States for decades. The country has been unstable for many years, facing an insurgency from left-wing terrorist groups (FARC and ELN) as well as being the major source of cocaine shipments to the United States. Unsurprisingly, the U.S. has long had military and paramilitary connections with Colombia with training and assistance provided by U.S. Other Governmental Agencies (OGA) and USSOCOM units.

The first SOF unit in Colombia, and their largest force, is the Lanceros. The Lancero school (like the U.S. Army Ranger school) was set up in 1955 and the first companies were set up in 1959.[30] The Lanceros were created in the wake of La Violencia, a bloody ten-year civil war. Colombia created its Tier One unit, Agrupación de Fuerzas Especiales Antiterroristas Urbanas (AFEAU), after a particularly heinous terrorist incident involving the takeover of the Palace of Justice in Bogota by the terrorist group M19. This incident ended in tragedy with a rescue attempt by non-SOF military troops that tragically ended with multiple hostage casualties. This unit has close associations with the U.S. 7th Special Forces Group and have multiple JCET training operations annually.[31]

There have been controversies surrounding the training of Colombian military units, due to their poor human rights records and the U.S. legal framework surrounding the JCET and Leahy laws.[32] Due to the politically sensitive circumstances, there has been a tendency to frame all requests for assistance within the counter-narcotics paradigm, while training has proceeded in the following of a typical special operations curriculum.[33]

As time passed, the terrorist groups in Colombia turned from funding by communist states such as the Former Soviet Union and Cuba to narcotics

trafficking. The evolution of the funding source has led to increased levels of violence. The Colombian military's response to the increased violence have included multiple accounts of extrajudicial killings of civilians, human rights activists, and politicians in guerilla-held areas.[34]

Latin America is not the only region where examples of rogue SOF can be found. Prior to, and following the wave of independence from colonialism in Africa, geopolitical posturing caused a new 'scramble' for Africa. While the traditional use of this term refers to the colonial powers and their thirst for resources, during the Cold War the objectives were ideological, geo-strategic and resource-based. As in Latin America, great power competition in Africa had lasting negative consequences for nearly every country on the continent.

In West Africa, a coup was conducted in Guinea by a former French Legionnaire and commander of the Guinean Special Forces Group. It was the second coup in just over a decade, and one of three since the mid-1980s. About one hundred Guinean special operators along with their leader Mamady Doumbouya, seized the capital on 5 September 2014, while the U.S. Special Forces team that had been instructing them was still in the country.[35] According to The *Intercept's* reporter Nick Turse, there have been no less than nine attempted coups, with eight successful, in five West African countries that received U.S. SOF training and assistance.[36] Guinea was but one. There were three in Burkina Faso, three in Mali and one in Mauritania and the Gambia.[37]

Burkina Faso has had an incredibly chaotic history. Violence is not uncommon to the people of the former Republic of Upper Volta. There have been numerous coups; the country endured two in 2022 alone. Prior to 2015, the Regiment of Presidential Security (RSP) was an elite unit within the army of Burkina Faso. As the name implies, it was responsible for the protection of the leader of the country. It was autonomous from the army but was involved in the country's internal politics. RSP was involved in multiple killings and coups within the country and was finally dissolved in 2015. There are other special operations forces within Burkina Faso and they have also played a role in the recent coups. In January 2022, Paul-Henri Damiba, a former RSP officer, seized control of the country; however, in September of that year, another coup supplanted him. The newly created counter-terror unit, Cobra, has been linked to the takeover.[38] Damiba received training through the JCET program.[39] The fight against

jihadist terror groups in the country is fueling the political instability. Ironically, it is felt that one of the reasons that Damiba was deposed was that he refused to hire Russian Wagner mercenaries as elite forces in the fight against Islamic radicals.[40]

In Mali, there have been several coups in recent memory. As recently as June 2020, a coup led by Colonel Assimi Goita, the commander of Mali's Autonomous Special Forces Battalion, was able to take power. In a previous coup, in 2012, the president of Mali, Amadou Touré, was deposed by mutinying members of the Malian army. It was only the Canadian SOF-trained (Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR)) elite parachute battalion that stayed loyal and protected the president.[41] There have been multiple coups in Mali since independence from France and despite training from the United States, Canada and France, Malian special operations units remain troubled.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) a 750-man unit, that was eventually called the 391st Commando Battalion, was stood up through SOCAFRICA (U.S. Special Operations Command Africa) in 2010. When the unit was engaged with M23 rebels in November of 2012, they began to break when the rebels started to defeat them on the field. The officers lost control of their troops and atrocities began against civilians: killings and mass rapes of women and girls were reported.

In the Central African Republic (CAR) there is a new version of a tired old theme in Africa. Russian Wagner group mercenaries have been training a recent version of the old Presidential or Republican Guard, now the main SOF unit for CAR, called SAOS-GSPR. The training comes in exchange for resource considerations for the Russian government. In this case, the bad actors seem to be the Wagnerians, with widespread accusations of human rights abuses in the country.[42]

In Asia, the Indonesian SOF unit known as Kopassus has a long history of training with Western SOF units, including the U.S. Special Forces and the Australian SAS Regiment. They also have a solid record of human rights abuses. They have undergone name changes from their inception in 1952, but they remain the primary SOF unit of Indonesia. They have been involved in extra judicial killings, participated in the Gestapu Affair that brought President Suharto to power in 1965, and the abduction of journalists involved in the pro-democracy movement in 1997/98.

The United States conducted military training with these units until 1998 when a ban was implemented. Kopassus continued to train with Australian SASR as they did not have the same restrictions as American units did. Secretary of Defense James Mattis began the process to reinstate Indonesia to the JCET program in 2018 and as of 2019 Kopassus was eligible for training and while the global pandemic slowed this process, by 2020 the relationship was being rebuilt through training exercises. The relationship was deemed important due to the geopolitical conflict with neighbouring China and its aggressive movement in the area. National interest and strategy trumps all.

CONCLUSION

Special operations forces are an essential capability for any modern military force. A small state with limited resources that enjoys a good relationship with other wealthier countries may be able to create a small SOF capability that they can nurture into an effective force they can rely on and be proud of. This capability can allow them to better protect their nation, contribute more meaningfully to international and regional multilateral missions (and crises) and maintain or increase beneficial partnerships with other countries. A small developing state, with an effective SOF program, can potentially elevate themselves and create conditions that increase benefit to the country overall.

Conversely, weak civil-military relations, poor resource management and complex political conditions can derail these efforts. While these conditions are generally important for success as a viable state, they are essential to creating and maintaining a successful SOF program. Developed countries struggle at times with misconduct of their own SOF troops (U.S., UK, France, Russia are all prime examples), but they generally have a solid foundation that maintains the program's integrity. Small fragile states do not have this advantage. When considering the creation and maintenance of SOF units in these countries, this risk must be accurately and adequately assessed to best mitigate it. Paraphrasing British philosopher John Locke, the first duty of government is to secure its people. The trust of the people must not be broken by the very forces charged with their protection. As such, SOF need to train and maintain to a higher standard not simply for the security of their nations, but to justify their existence, lest they be lost.

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 Colin Gray, *Explorations in Strategy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 149.

2 Canada, *Canadian Special Operation Forces Command. An Overview* (DND: Ottawa, 2008), 7.

CHAPTER 1

1 For the purposes of this chapter Strategic Impact is considered as being consistent with Freedman's view that basic strategy is designed to change an existing state of affairs. Applied at the national level, strategic impact is thereby the consequence of a national directed action focused on improving a nation's position on any given issue. Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

2 Mandate of CANSOFCOM as per https://www.canada.ca/en/special-operations-forces-command/corporate/mandate.html, accessed 10 August 2023.

3 Colin Gray, *The Future of Strategy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 39.

4 As per the potential shortcomings cited in Colonel (retired) Bernd Horn, *Military Elites* (Kingston, ON: CANSOFCOM Education and Research Centre (ERC) Press, 2020).

5 Boucher has argued that successive governments were confused and unable to land on a clear narrative that defended their policy choice for involvement in Afghanistan adopting various positions from protecting Canadians, to supporting Afghans to an obligation to support the international community. The rather fluid adoption of different rationale at different times reveals an unwillingness to reveal the foundation basis for Canada's involvement. Jean-Christophe Boucher, "Selling Afghanistan: A Discourse Analysis of Canada's Military Intervention, 2001-08." *International Journal*, vol. 64, no. 3 (2009): 717-733.

6 "Prime Minister announces new actions under Canada's COVID -19 response," 16 March 2020, https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/16/prime-minister-announces-new-actions-under-canadas-covid-19-response, accessed 30 July 2023.

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CHAPTER 3

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31 The author would like to thank Ms. Lindsay M. MacDonald for her review and suggestions with regards to this chapter. As always, any omissions or errors are mine and mine alone.

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19 Ibid.

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21 Ibid., 29. Over the years he has modified this initial definition.

22 Ibid., 14.

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24 Ibid., 28. Hoffman states, "In such conflicts, future adversaries (state, state-sponsored groups, or self-funded actors) will exploit access to modern military capabilities including encrypted command systems, man-portable air to surface missiles, and other modern lethal systems, as well as promote protracted insurgencies that employ ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and coercive assassinations. This could include states blending high-tech capabilities, like anti-satellite weapons, with terrorism and cyber-warfare directed against financial targets."

25 Ibid., 28.

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27 Ibid., 29. Hoffman stated that normally these units would be used to prolong the conflict, provoke overreactions, or siphon off resources from the enemy.

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35 Thomas M. Huber, ed. *Compound Warfare That Fatal Knot,* (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2002), 2-7.

36 Ibid., 3-7.

37 Huber does qualify this by stating, "Although the model of compound warfare offered here has been kept simple in hopes that it will serve as a convenient framework for analysis, readers should remember that enormous variety exists in the historical cases of compound warfare. As in most other realms of military thought, the theory is simple but the reality is complex. The CW model assumes that one side in a CW conflict uses CW methods and the other does not. In reality, both sides may use CW methods. In most historical cases of compound warfare, one side uses CW methods predominantly; the other side deliberately uses them to the extent it is able. The model assumes two kinds of force, regular or conventional force, and irregular or guerrilla force. Several types of mobile regional militias may fall between these two poles and may contribute importantly to the leverage of the CW operator. In other words, various intermediate types of force are possible between the regular and irregular models promulgated here for simplicity." See Huber, *Compound Warfare*, 2-5.

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41 Michael D. Pearlman, *The Wars of Colonial North America, 1690-1763,* in Thomas M. Huber, *Compound Warfare*, 39-40.

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65 John T. Carney and Benjamin F. Schemmer, *No Room for Error: The Covert Operations of America's Special Tactics Units from Iran to Afghanistan,* (United States: Presidio Press Book, Random House Publishing Group. 2002), 13.

66 Ibid., 13.

67 US Army SOCOM Homepage. Fact Sheet: *Special Forces "A" Team Organizational Structure* http://www.soc.mil/SF/SF_default.htm, accessed 10 July 2005. As

was shown so effectively in Afghanistan this organization provides the cadre that is more then capable of training and controlling guerrilla operations of about unit size. It is expected that during UW operations Special Recce and Direct Actions missions would be carried out by both the SOF and guerrillas, however, the level of expertise will tend to vary. In the end UW is the most versatile core mission a nation can develop.

68 American Special Forces training is broken down into the following phases: Phase I – Special Forces Assessment and Selection, Phase II – Small Unit Tactics, Phase III – Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Specific Training, Phase IV – Culmination Exercise (Robin Sage), Phase V – Language Training, and Phase VI – Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE). See http://www.soc.mil/SF/SF_default.htm., accessed 10 July 2005.

69 Tom Clancy and Carl Stiner, *Shadow Warriors: Inside the Special Forces* (New York: Penguin, Putnam 2002), 132-134.

70 Ibid., 132-133.

71 DoD, *Special Forces Assessment and selection: Overview of SFAS and "Q" Course*. http://www.goarmy.com/job/branch/sorc/sf/sfas.htm, accessed 14 December 2003.

72 Clancy, *Shadow Warriors*, 133.

73 Ibid., 133-134. There is a good description of the training SF candidates undertake at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/jfksws-training.htm, accessed 1 January 2005.

74 Special Forces Assessment and selection, 1-4.

75 Ibid.

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78 L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Bookings Institution Press), 20-40.

79 Shaw Kennedy, *The Long-Range Desert Group* (California: Presidio Press, 1989), 18-19.

80 Special Air Service, http://www.specwarnet.com/europe/sas.htm, accessed 2 February 2004.

81 United States Special Operations Command, *Capstone Concept for Special Operations* (Washington D.C.: DoD, 2006), 6.

82 Steven Basilici and Jeremy Simmons, *Transformation: A Bold Case for Unconventional Warfare*, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2004), 75.

83 Max Boot, presentation to The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Terrorism, *Unconventional Threats, and Capabilities,* June 29, 2006.

84 The most likely argument will be that a large military like the U.S. can afford to have a variety of capabilities within its SOF capability package; however, smaller countries like Canada out of necessity cannot, therefore, we must prioritize based on what will provide Canada the greatest bang for the buck. The answer is a UW unit. This is because in addition to UW skills it can also do DA and Special Reconnaissance (SR) missions, that are carried out by an SAS-type capability.

85 As a result, the Finnish army is divided into four operational military provinces (Southern, Western, Eastern and Northern) which bear the command responsibility for all brigade-level units and military districts. Subordinated to the military provinces are 19 military districts, which are responsible for carrying out training and activation of reservists, and planning and executing territorial defence of their areas. Logistical requirements are provided by the Army's Materiel Command, which has one Logistics Regiment for each military province. Today, the Finish Army is divided into six branches: the infantry (which includes armoured units), field artillery, anti-aircraft artillery, engineers, signals, and materiel troops.

86 Pekka Visuri, *Evolution of the Finnish Military Doctrine 1945-1985, Finnish Defence Studies* (Helsinki: Finnish War College, 1990) 89. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/39979659.pdf, accessed 23 February 2023.

87 Ibid., 68-71 and 95.

88 Ibid., 70-77.

89 Ibid., 70-77 and 90.

90 Ibid., 95.

91 Ibid., 87.

CHAPTER 5

1 Multi-domain operations are the orchestration of military activities across all operational domains and environments, synchronized with non-military activities to enable the Alliance to create converging effects at the speed of relevance.

2 Special Reconnaissance is reconnaissance and surveillance activities conducted as a special operation in, but not limited to, hostile, denied, diplomatically and/or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, led by special operations forces using distinct techniques and methods. Direct action is a short-duration strike or other small scale offensive action by special operations forces to seize, destroy, capture, recover or inflict damage to achieve specific, well-defined and often time-sensitive results. *NATO Official Terminology Database,* https;//nso.nato.int, accessed 2 June 2023.

3 Military Assistance is defined as a broad range of activities that support and influence critical friendly assets through training, advising, mentoring or the conduct of combined operations. Note: The range of military assistance is considerable and includes, but is not limited to: capability building of friendly security forces; engagement with local, regional, and national leadership or organizations; and civic actions supporting and influencing the local population. *NATO Official Terminology Database,* https;//nso.nato.int, accessed 2 June 2023.

4 ISAF was created in accordance with the Bonn Conference in December 2001. The concept of an UN-mandated international force to assist the newly established Afghan Transitional Authority was also launched at this occasion to create a secure environment in and around Kabul and support the reconstruction of Afghanistan. In 2003, NATO assumed leadership of the ISAF operation. In 2014, ISAF was transformed to Resolute Support Mission that lasted until the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan in 2021. ISAF webpage, https://carefully_removed_external_link_due_to_policy, accessed 6 June 2023.

5 SIGINT is intelligence derived from electromagnetic signals or emissions. The main subcategories of signals intelligence are communications intelligence and electronic intelligence.

6 James Stavridis, "The New Triad," *Foreign Policy*, 20 June 2013. http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/06/20/the-new-triad/, accessed 8 June 2023.

7 Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press 1992).

8 Freedom House, *The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule*, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/FIW_2022_PDF_Booklet_Digital_Final_Web.pdf, accessed 8 June 2023.

9 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

10 NATO, *NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept* (Brussels: Allied Command Transformation, 2021).

11 Joint action is the use of a combination of manoeuvre, fires, information and civil-military cooperation to create physical, virtual and cognitive effects. Joint action is directed by command and control, informed by intelligence and supported by force protection and sustainment. *NATO Official Terminology Database,* https://nso.nato.int, accessed 2 June 2023.

12 NATO, *Initial Alliance Concept for Multi-domain Operations* (Brussels: Allied Command Transformation, 2022).

13 Cyberspace is defined as the global domain consisting of all interconnected communication, information technology and other electronic systems, networks and their data, including those which are separated or independent, which process, store or transmit data. *NATO Official Terminology Database,* https;//nso.nato.int, accessed 2 June 2023.

14 NATO, *NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept.*

15 Brainy Quotes, https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/sun_tzu_387509, accessed 12 June 2023.

CHAPTER 6

1 Ronald O'Rourke, *Renewed Great Power Competition: Implications for Defense – Issues for Congress* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 4 March 2021), 1.

2 President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (Washington D.C.: White House, March 2021), 6-8.

3 For the sake of simplicity "small state" in this chapter will refer to all states not considered "great powers" (e.g., U.S., Russia, China) or large powers" (e.g., Britain, France).

4 As former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford offered, "We think of being at peace or war…. Our adversaries don't think that way." Cited in Melia Pfannenstiel and Louis L. Cook, "Disinformation and Disease," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, vol. 98 (2020): 25.

5 See Annex A – Summary of Sub-Threshold Activities (pp. 89-94 of this book) for a summary of key activities undertaken by states as part of strategic competition.

6 Kaley Scholl, "The Use of US Special Operation Forces in Great Power Competition: Imposing Costs on Chinese Gray Zone Operations," *Small Wars Journal*, 7 December 2020. https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/use-us-special-operation-forces-great-power-competition-imposing-costs-chinese-gray-zone, accessed 8 December 2020.

7 *USSOCOM White Paper, The Gray Zone,* 9 September 2015, 1.

8 András Rácz, *Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine. Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist*. The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, FIIA Report 43, 41.

9 Kerry K. Gershaneck, *Political Warfare. Strategies for Combating China's Plan to "Win without Fighting,"* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2020), 26. A 2014, British Ministry of Defence report captured the essence of Hybrid Warfare:

> *Our adversaries are unlikely to engage us on our terms and will not fight solely against our conventional strengths. They will seek an asymmetric advantage and some will employ a wide range of warfighting techniques, sometimes simultaneously in time, space and domain. Their logic will not necessarily be our logic and thus our ability to understand adversaries – and our ability to make them understand our intent – will be challenging… In some conflicts, we are likely to see concurrent inter-communal violence, terrorism, insurgency, pervasive criminality and widespread disorder. Tactics, techniques and technologies will continue to converge as adversaries rapidly*

adapt to seek advantage and influence, including through economic, financial, legal and diplomatic means. These forms of conflict are transcending our conventional understanding of what equates to irregular and regular military activity; the conflict paradigm has shifted and we must adapt our approaches if we are to succeed.

Ministry of Defence (UK), *Strategic Trends Programme: Future Character of Conflict*, 13.

10 Frans-Paul van der Putten, Minke Meijnders, Sico van der Meer and Tony van der Togt, eds., *Hybrid Conflict: The Roles of Russia, North Korea and China* (Wassenaar, NL: Clingendael Institute, 2018), 1.

11 Cited in Stefan Hadjitodorov and Martin Sokolov, "Blending New-Generation Warfare and Soft Power: Hybrid Dimensions of Russia-Bulgaria Relations, *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2018): 11.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid. Further insight on how Russia views contemporary conflict was provided by Colonel S.G. Chekinov and Lieutenant-General S.A. Bogdanov in a 2013 article entitled "The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War." Similar to General Gerasimov, they extracted lessons from how the West, particularly the Americans, have conducted their military campaigns. As a result, they identified eight particular steps of new-generation warfare:

1. Non-military measures that blend moral, information, psychological, ideological, and economic measures that aim at establishing a more favorable political, economic, and military environment;
2. Media, diplomatic channels, and top government and military agencies carry out coordinated special operations so as to mislead political and military leaders. This can include leaking false data, orders, directives, and instructions;
3. Bribing, deceiving, and/or intimidating government and military officers, to force them to abandon their duties;
4. Fueling discontent among the population. This can be further enhanced by the arrival of Russian "volunteers";
5. Establish no-fly zones and blockades over the targeted country. Co-operation between private military contractors and armed opposition;
6. Initiate large-scale reconnaissance and subversion operations that are immediately followed upon with military action;
7. Launch a combination of information, electronic warfare, and air force operations that are complemented with high-precision weapons; and
8. Eliminate the last points of resistance through reconnaissance operations, special operations, and artillery and missile bombardment.

Cited in Hadjitodorov and Sokolov, "Blending New-Generation Warfare," 12-13.

14 Cited in Tom Wilhelm, "A Russian Military Framework for Understanding Influence in Competition Period," *Military Review* (July-August 2020): 36.

15 Ibid.

16 For a detailed study of Hybrid Warfare see Colonel Bernd Horn, *On Hybrid Warfare* (Kingston, ON: CANSOFCOM PDC Press, 2016).

17 Dr. Jonathan Schroden, panelist at the "Transforming SOF to Meet Future Challenges" SOF Symposium at the Joint Special Operations University, Tampa, Florida, 8 January 2020.

18 FID is defined as "Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security." DoD, JP1-02, 145.

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28 Tom Hammerle and Mike Pultusker, "Special Operations are Deterrence Operations: How United States Special Operations Forces should be used in Strategic Competition," *Small Wars Journal*, 24 May 2022; and Stavros Atlamazoglou, "US special operators are getting a new outpost in a tense corner of Europe," *Business Insider*, 7 February 2022. https://news.yahoo.com/us-special-operators-getting-outpost-231700866.html, accessed 8 February 2022.

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to Defense Intelligence Agency for analysis, who discovered the planned concrete footings were specific to support surface-to-air and shore-to-ship missiles. Armed with this analysis, the U.S. Ambassador explained to their Nigerian counterparts that the port would become a strategic target and potential war zone between great powers; the Nigerians seized the Chinese-purchased land and halted the port construction. SOF's forward presence provided advanced warning of Chinese nefarious activities and, partnering with the US Embassy team, thwarted these activities."

39 An American official explained, "We want the Baltics to present a deterrent to Russia. And part of what we can do in the Army is have our special operations forces work with the Baltic militaries to help them in terms of…developing what I would call resistance capabilities. Nations supported under the ROC [Resistance Operating Concept] are encouraged to establish the legal and organizational framework for a resistance and bring it under the official control of their armed forces. One such example is the Estonian Defence League, a volunteer paramilitary organization whose 16,000 members are organized under Tallinn's defense ministry and receive training from U.S. special operations." David Winkie, "Less door-kicking, more resistance: Inside Army SOF's return to unconventional warfare," *Army Times*, 9 September 2021. https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2021/09/09/less-door-kicking-more-resistance-inside-army-sofs-return-to-unconventional-warfare/, accessed 19 September 2001.

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CHAPTER 7

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40 Vasiliyeva, "Russia reels from attacks behind lines," See also Sara Rainsford, "Ukraine's shadow army resisting Russian occupation," 29 July 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62333795.

41 Nicknamed the Alligator, the two-seat Ka-52 attack helicopter is one of Russia's most advanced weapon systems, having been in service for nearly a decade. Each helicopter costs in the area of 12 million pounds and is capable of carrying anti-tank missiles. Russia is believed to have about 90 of these helicopters in their inventory.

CHAPTER 8

1 Cited in David A. Broyles and Brody Blankenship, *The Role of Special Operations Forces in Global Competition* (Arlington, VA: CNA Analysis & Solutions, 2017), 13-14.

2 Gray Zone Conflict is defined "as competitive interactions among and within state and non-state actors that fall between the traditional war and peace duality. They are characterized by ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, opacity of the parties involved, or uncertainty about the relevant policy and legal frameworks." USSOCOM White Paper, *The Gray Zone*, 9 September 2015, 1.

3 For the purpose of this chapter, SOF are defined as "organizations containing specially selected personnel that are organized, equipped, trained and educated to conduct high-risk, high value special operations to achieve military, political, economic or informational objectives by using special and unique operational methodologies in hostile, denied or politically sensitive areas to achieve desired tactical, operational and/or strategic effects in times of peace, conflict or war." Canada, *Canadian Special Operation Forces Command. An Overview* (DND: Ottawa, 2008), 7.

4 Cited in Tom Wilhelm, "A Russian Military Framework for Understanding Influence in Competition Period," *Military Review* (July-August 2020): 36.

5 Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's New Tip of the Spear," *Foreign Policy*, 8 May 2013. https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/05/08/russias-new-tip-of-the-spear/, accessed 9 January 2023.

6 Cited in Lester Grau and Charles Bartles, *The Russian Way of War: Force Structure, Tactics, and Modernization of the Russian Ground Forces* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2016), 282-284'; and Tor Bukkvoll, "Russian Special Operations Forces in Crimea and Donbas," *Parameters*, vol. 46, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 14.

7 Cited in Grau and Bartles, *The Russian Way of War*, 282-284. The document clearly states that "Russian SOF are not replacing spetsnaz. Rather, they are a new set of elite special units with distinct roles to play in Russia's current operating environment, ranging from counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, both at home and abroad, to training and equipping missions with foreign militaries." Dr. Chris Marsh noted, "unlike other spetsnaz units that are seen as elite forces that perform missions (e.g., reconnaissance, direct action, etc.) for the sole purpose of furthering the movement and manoeuvre of conventional forces, the structure of Russia's new SOF units suggests that they are intended to act independently. For that purpose, the Command has a dedicated special aviation brigade that directly controls

combat aviation assets at Torzhok, and a squadron of the Il-72 transport aircraft at the Migalovo airfield near Tver." Dr. Chris Marsh, *Developments in Russian Special Operations* (Kingston, ON: CANSOFCOM ERC Press, 2017), 17.

8 John Psaropoulos, "Europe awakens to the threat of sabotage by Russian agents," *Al Jazeera*, 17 January 2023. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/17/europe-awakens-to-the-threat-of-sabotage-by-russian-agents, accessed 18 January 2023.

9 Ibid.

10 Alexander Sladkov, "Novyi Rossiiskii Spetsnaz dlya zagranitsy," Television Channel "Rossiya 24", program "Vesti Nedeli," 28 April 2013.

11 Alexey Nikolsky, "Little, Green and Polite: The Creation of Russian Special Operations Forces," in Colby Howard and Ruslan Pukhov, eds., *Brothers Armed: Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine* (Minneapolis: East View Press, 2015).

12 Marsh, *Developments in Russian Special Operation*, 19. The Russian Ministry of Defense defines the term "special operation" as follows: the special operation of troops (forces) is a complex of special actions of troops (forces), coordinated by objectives and tasks, time and place of execution, conducted according to a single concept and plan in order to achieve certain goals. Special actions of troops (forces) are activities carried out by specially designated, organized, trained and equipped forces, which apply methods and ways of fighting not typical for conventional forces (special reconnaissance, sabotage, counterterrorist, counter-sabotage, counter-intelligence, guerrilla, counter-guerrilla and other activities). Cited in Ibid., 18-19.

13 Wilhelm, "A Russian Military Framework," 36; and Ben Smith, *Russian intelligence services and special forces,* Briefing Paper Number CBP 8430 (London: House of Commons Library, 30 October 2018), 9.

14 Stavros Atlamazoglou, "How China's special forces stack up against the US's special operators," *Business Insider*, 1 December 2020. https://www.businessinsider.com/how-china-special-forces-compare-to-us-special-operators-2020-12, accessed 7 December 2022.

15 Michael Peck, "China's Special Forces: The Most Elite Group You've Never Heard Of," *The National Interest*, 2 July 2021. https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/chinas-special-forces-most-elite-group-youve-never-heard-189021, accessed 7 December 2022. Other researchers have asserted that Chinese SOF units have their roots in reconnaissance units. The also state that the PLA "formed their first SOF unit in the late 1980s and gradually expanded the force through the 1990s and into the new century." Dennis J. Blasko, "Chinese Special Operations Forces: Not Like 'Back At Bragg'," *War on the Rocks*, 1 January 2015. https://warontherocks.com/2015/01/chinese-special-operations-forces-not-like-back-at-bragg/, accessed 7 December 2022.

16 Atlamazoglou, "How China's special forces," 1 December 2020; and Blasko, "Chinese Special Operations Forces." Many of the Chinese SOF personnel are

two-year conscripts and lieutenants on their first assignments. In 2012, the PLA established a dedicated Special Operations Academy in Guangzhou to train junior officers for assignments in SOF units.

17 Blasko, "Chinese Special Operations Forces."

18 Darryl J. Lavender, *China's Special Operations Forces Modernization, Professionalization and Regional Implications* (Carlisle, PA: US War College, 2013), 10-11.

19 Atlamazoglou, "How China's special forces."

20 Blasko, "Chinese Special Operations Forces."

21 This observation needs to be balanced with the realization that such support can be provided by the PLA. Also, during World War II, many of the SOF organizations also lacked integral strategic resources, yet were able to conduct a myriad of successful missions.

22 Blasko, "Chinese Special Operations Forces."

23 Atlamazoglou, "How China's special forces."

24 Peck, "China's Special Forces." In the summer of 2018, China ran a comprehensive assessment of its SOF. The FMSO reported that the exercise, Ingenious Special Operations Soldier-2018, "tested all levels of command, including brigade, battalion, company, element and squad levels." See also Atlamazoglou, "How China's special forces."

25 Ruslan Pukhov, "Iranian Special Forces," *Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies* (cast.ru), n.d. https://cast.ru/products/articles/iranian-special-forces.html, accessed 13 December 2022.

26 Ibid. The Quds Force is believed to be about 10,000-20,000 strong.

27 Ibid. For example, the tests include a 54km march in full gear; alpine tests at 4,000m altitude; trekking 300km through forest and 500km through desert; and rock climbing at an altitude of over 1,200m.

28 Ibid.

29 SOF characteristics can be described as:

1. Small footprint/small team deployments;
2. SOF can operate clandestinely, covertly or overtly;
3. Operations are often conducted at great distances from a supporting operational base;
4. SOF utilize sophisticated means of insertion, support, and extraction to penetrate and successfully return from hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas;
5. SOF employ sophisticated communications systems;

6. SOF are proficient with, and enabled by, application of advanced technologies;
7. SOF utilize unorthodox tactics;
8. SOF often require development, acquisition, and employment of equipment that are not standard for others;
9. SOF conduct operations "General Purpose Forces" cannot perform;
10. SOF are well-suited for operations in denied and politically sensitive environments;
11. SOF conduct operations not only against military objectives, but also to support the application of the diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments of national power;
12. SOF are capable of working independently or in conjunction with conventional forces or other government agencies, or host nations/partner nations;
13. SOF are proficient at inter-organizational coordination; and
14. SOF missions are differentiated by physical and political risk, operational techniques, modes of employment, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.

30 General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, "The Value of Science in Prediction," in "The 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and Russian Non-Linear War," *In Moscow's Shadows. Analysis and Assessment of Russian Crime and Security.* https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/, accessed 6 February 2015.

31 Covert is defined as not openly acknowledged or displayed. Clandestine is defined as "an operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment." *Covert Action and Clandestine Activities of the Intelligence Community: Selected Definitions* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2022), 5 and 7.

32 Matt Burgess, "'Dark Ships' Emerge from the Shadows of the Nord Stream Mystery," *Wired*, 11 November 2022. https://www.wired.com/story/nord-stream-pipeline-explosion-dark-ships/, accessed 28 December 2022.

33 Christopher Bing, "Exclusive: U.S. to give ransomware hacks similar priority as terrorism," *Reuters*, 3 June 2021. https://www.reuters.com/technology/exclusive-us-give-ransomware-hacks-similar-priority-terrorism-official-says-2021-06-03/, accessed 10 June 2021. Veronica Stracqualursi, Geneva Sands and Arlette Saenz, "Colonial pipeline: Cyberattack forces major US fuel pipeline to shut down," *CNN*, 8 May 2021. https://a.msn.com/r/2/BB1gvmnp?m=en-ca&referrerID=InAppShare, accessed 9 May 2021; and Josh Margolin, Molly Nagle and Luke Barr, "Ransom ware cyberattack shuts down major US pipeline, company says," *ABC News*, 9 May 2021. https://a.msn.com/r/2/BB1gvx5s?m=en-ca&referrerID=InAppShare, accessed 9 May 2021.

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38 Ibid.

39 Ibid. For example, "The Communications Security Establishment (CSE) is aware of reporting regarding an increase in Russian state-aligned hacktivist groups seeking to compromise, or disrupt Ukrainian-aligned allies, in response to their continued support of the Government of Ukraine." Sean Boynton, "Adopt 'heightened' vigilance on reports of Russia-linked hacks over Ukraine aid: CSE centre," *Global News*, 26 January 2023. https://globalnews.ca/news/9439781/russia-cyberattacks-ukraine-tanks-canada-warning/, accessed 30 January 2023.

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41 Ibid., 19-20.

42 Ibid., 17-18. Russian SOF were also responsible for training and providing intelligence to the rebels.

43 George Barros and Noel Mikkelsen, "Interactive Map and Assessment: Verified Ukrainian Partisans Attacks Against Russian Occupation Forces," *Institute for the Study of War*, 1 November 2022. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/interactive-map-and-assessment-verified-ukrainian-partisan-attacks-against-russian, accessed 13 January 2023.

44 Brooke Davies, "Huge fire at Russian power plant fuels rumours that saboteurs are getting braver," *Metro*, 13 December 2022. https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/world/huge-fire-at-russian-power-plant-fuels-rumours-that-saboteurs-are-getting-braver/ar-AA15dTzM?ocid=msedgdhp&pc=U531&cvid=9e428b45b61445b6aa4b179de546e352, accessed 13 December 2022.

45 Stavros Atlamazoglou, "Mysterious fires and explosions at sensitive Russian sites are hints of a hallmark mission for special-operations units," *Business Insider*, 26 September 2022. https://www.businessinsider.com/fires-explosions-insider-russia-may-be-sign-of-unconventional-warfare-2022-9, accessed 28 September 2022. In addition, another "strategically important bridge supplying Russian forces was

partially destroyed in a mystery attack deep behind enemy lines. The attack on the bridge over the Molochna River outside the southern city of Melitopol damaged its structure making it unusable for heavy military equipment to cross. Additionally, partisans supported by Special Forces identify Russian targets for Ukrainian artillery and long-range rockets. They blow up rail lines and assassinate Ukrainian officials they consider collaborators with the Russians. They plant car bombs, booby traps and targeted killings with pistols." They also provided targeting information to take out a Wagner Group barracks causing serious casualties in June, in Russian-occupied Kadiivka in Luhansk Oblast. Andrew E. Kramer, "Behind Enemy Lines, Ukrainians Tell Russians 'You Are Never Safe'," *The New York Times*, 17 August 2022. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/17/world/europe/ukraine-partisans-insurgency-russia.html, accessed 13 January 2023; and Joe Barnes, "Mystery attack damages key Russian-held bridge deep behind enemy lines," *The Telegraph*, 13 December 2022. https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/world/mystery-attack-damages-key-russian-held-bridge-deep-behind-enemy-lines/ar-AA15eNrI?ocid=msedgdhp&pc=U531&cvid=9e428b45b61445b6aa4b179de546e352, accessed 13 December 2022.

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49 An American official explained, "We want the Baltics to present a deterrent to Russia. And part of what we can do in the Army is have our special operations forces work with the Baltic militaries to help them in terms of…developing what I would call resistance capabilities. Nations supported under the ROC [Resistance Operating Concept] are encouraged to establish the legal and organizational framework for a resistance and bring it under the official control of their armed forces. One such example is the Estonian Defence League, a volunteer paramilitary organization whose 16,000 members are organized under Tallinn's defense ministry and receive training from U.S. special operations." David Winkie, "Less door-kicking, more resistance: Inside Army SOF's return to unconventional warfare," *Army Times*, 9 September 2021. https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2021/09/09/less-door-kicking-more-resistance-inside-army-sofs-return-to-unconventional-warfare/, accessed 19 September 2001.

50 Insider, "US Green Berets Who've Trained Taiwanese Troops Explain How They Could Fight China and Why the US Keeps Their Mission Secret," *SOFREP*,

26 October 2021. https://sofrep.com/news/us-green-berets-whove-trained-taiwanese-troops-explain-how-they-could-fight-china-and-why-the-us-keeps-their-mission-secret/, accessed 28 October 2021; and Julian Borger, "Secret group of US military trainers has been in Taiwan for at least a year," *The Guardian*, 7 October 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/07/taiwan-us-military-trainers-china, accessed 14 October 2021. A 2021 study focused on WWII French resistance networks determined that "resistance networks that were organized locally and later supported by coalition forces are more likely to be successful than those resistance networks that were organized during the conflict by foreign operatives inserted covertly into France." The researchers asserted operational security was a key element of a resistance network's survival and was in essence the necessary condition for success. They argued that pre-war local networks were more proficient in security measures than those organized by foreign operatives during the war, which led to a higher success rate in case of the former. Tyler Rogoway, "Special Ops Train to Defend Strategic Aleutian Islands Radar Outpost During All-Out War." *The War Zone*, 18 October 20021. https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/42783/special-ops-train-to-defend-strategic-radar-outpost-in-the-aleutian-islands-during-all-out-war, accessed 26 October 2021.

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europe-awakens-to-the-threat-of-sabotage-by-russian-agents, accessed 18 January 2023. In addition to sabotage, cyber-attacks have also been conducted. For example, "The Communications Security Establishment (CSE) is aware of reporting regarding an increase in Russian state-aligned hacktivist groups seeking to compromise, or disrupt Ukrainian-aligned allies, in response to their continued support of the Government of Ukraine." Sean Boynton, "Adopt 'heightened' vigilance on reports of Russia-linked hacks over Ukraine aid: CSE centre," *Global News*, 26 January 2023. https://globalnews.ca/news/9439781/russia-cyberattacks-ukraine-tanks-canada-warning/, accessed 30 January 2023.

65 Marsh, *Developments in Russian Special Operations*, 21-22.

66 Bukkvoll, "Russian Special Operations Forces," 14.

67 Ben Smith, *Russian intelligence services and special forces,* Briefing Paper Number CBP 8430 (London: House of Commons Library, 30 October 2018), 10.

68 Jack Watling, Oleksandr V. Danylyuk and Nick Reynolds, *Preliminary Lessons from Russia's Unconventional Operations During the Russo-Ukrainian War*, February 2022-February 2023 (London: Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), February 2023), 10. Goluban was not alone. Internal destabilisation was attempted by other Russian recruited agents who were employed within the Ukrainian intelligence community, law enforcement agencies, other state authorities, political parties, public organizations and criminal organizations. Ibid., 5-6.

69 The Russians also used the presence of their agents and infiltrators to create chaos within Ukrainian society. The Russians used Ukrainian social media to create panic by summoning citizens to report suspicious markings on buildings, which were purported to represent targeting for sabotage. As a result, there was a flood of reporting that swamped the capacity of Ukrainian law enforcement. A similar tactic was used prior to the invasion when Russian special services made continual false bomb threats to Ukrainian law enforcement. Ibid., 16-17.

CHAPTER 9

1 Special Warfare (SW) is defined as the execution of activities that "involve a combination of lethal and non-lethal 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 permissive, non-permissive, or hostile environments." (U.S. Department of the Army, 2012).

2 "Will" is defined by the Institute for the Study of War as "the composite of convictions, perceptions, and influences that drive toward action." According to unclassified NATO Information Operations Doctrine, "Will is the faculty by which an actor decides upon and initiates a course of action. It includes factors such as motivation, perception, attitude, beliefs and values and encompasses the intent to act

or resist." The terms "will", and "willpower" are used here interchangeably. "Addressing the New Era of Deterrence and Warfare: Visualizing the Information Domain - Part II," *Institute for the Study of War*, accessed 10 April, 2023, https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/addressing-new-era-deterrence-and-warfare-visualizing-information-domain-part-ii; and North Atlantic Treaty Organization. AJP-10.1 Allied Joint Doctrine For Information Operations, Edition A, Version, (2023), accessed 17 June, 2023, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1133515/AJP-10.1-Info_Ops_web_accessible.pdf. The significance of will is emphasized by principal military theorists Sun Tzu and Carl von Clausewitz. Sun Tzu dictates in his treatise *Art of War* that forces who achieve the peak of skill can win battles by defeating enemy will to resist without needing to fight or apply kinetic force. "Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting." Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Lionel Giles, *Sun Tzu and the Art of War: The Oldest Military Treatise in the World* (London & Co., 1910), Chapter 3: Attack by Stratagem, 3.02. Prussian General and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz claimed that all war is a war of wills, an act of force to compel the opponent to do our will. "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will." and "to impose our will on the enemy is its object." Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 75.

3 Characteristics, capabilities, or localities from which a nation, an alliance, a military force, or other grouping derives its freedom of action, physical strength or will to fight. (DTB, Record 324). http://btd.terminologie.mil.ca/MultiTransWeb/Web.mvc, accessed 3 May 2023.

4 Colonel (retired) Phillip Meilinger, *Basil H. Liddell Hart: His Applicability to Modern War*, Royal Air Force Center for Air and Space Power Studies (RAF CASPS), accessed 14 March, 2023, https://medium.com/raf-caps/basil-h-liddell-hart-his-applicability-to-modern-war-bf4e4c9145e3. Renowned 20th century military theorist Liddell Hart, known in part for his development of the "indirect approach," which counsels to focus one's strengths against the weakness of the adversary, provides an example of Western military theory that aligns closely with Sun Tzu's identification of the centre of gravity in human conflict, and the best means to affect it. "Liddell Hart believed that although Clausewitz had written of three general objects in war – military power, the country itself, and the will of the populace, leaders and forces – he criticized the Prussian for placing 'will' last in his triumvirate rather than first. The listing of military forces as the primary objective in war was to him a massive error."

5 Modern military theorists, including authors of the 2019 research report on the "Will to Fight" published for the United States based military thinktank RAND corporation, argue that advances in the contemporary methods by which war is fought have not diminished the preeminent importance of will. The argue that:

> "Will to fight is the single most important Factor in war. Will to fight is the disposition and decision to fight, to keep fighting, and to win. The best technology in the world is useless without the force of will to use it and to

keep using it even as casualties mount and unexpected calamities arise. Will to fight represents the indelibly human nature of warfare."
Ben Connable, Michael J. McNerney, William Marcellino, Aaron B. Frank, Henry Hargrove, Marek N. Posard, S. Rebecca Zimmerman, Natasha Lander, Jasen J. Castillo, James Sladden, Anika Binnendijk, Elizabeth M. Bartels, Abby Doll, Rachel Tecott, Benjamin J. Fernandes, Niklas Helwig, Giacomo Persi Paoli, Krystyna Marcinek, and Paul Cornish, *Will to Fight: Returning to the Human Fundamentals of War* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019). https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB10040.html, accessed 3 May 2023.

6 This is not to suggest that will alone is sufficient, in and of itself, to succeed in conflict, but rather that it is the defining factor that bears such significant weight that it can upset all others. This may be especially true for democratic nations that seek to secure their interests and enforce foreign policy while relying on the support of their domestic populations.

7 Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006). An autobiographical account of his experiences surviving against the odds in Nazi concentration camps, Frankl may have been quoting the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's work *Twilight of the Idols*, when he wrote "If we have our own why in life, we shall get along with almost any how."

8 The terms "The West" and "Western" are used in reference to the diverse, but predominantly democratic nations, peoples and cultures represented in the Americas, Europe, and Australasia.

9 Direct Action missions are "Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives" (JP 3-05), accessed 7 June, 2023, *JP 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (army.mil).

10 Special Warfare is used here as an umbrella term to refer to the activities performed by SOF included in Irregular Warfare, Unconventional Warfare, and Guerilla Warfare programs, ranging from support for a government officially recognized as the legitimate authority in the area of their operations, to the inverse scenario where SOF enable guerilla elements to achieve regime change. SW is used to differentiate from the role of Counter-Terrorism, which will always be required by small state SOF, albeit reduced in priority in GPC, where the rising need for traditional SW. The period of greatest focus on CT for SOF was during the Global War on Terror, spanning roughly the twenty years between the terrorist attacks on the United Stated on 11 September 2001, to the withdrawal of Western military forces from Afghanistan on 30 August 2021.

11 The U.S. Special Operations Triad consists of Psychological Operations, Civil Affairs and Special Forces.

12 Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*, Department of National Defence, June 2017, https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/canada-defence-policy.html, accessed 10 April 2023.

13 Canada, *Beyond the Horizon: A Strategy for Canada's Special Operations Forces in an Evolving Security Environment,* CANSOFCOM Strategic Plan, (2020), 9. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2020/dgm-19719-bm8_cansofcom_stratgicplan_en_v8.pdf, accessed 9 April 2023. The Gray Zone according to CANSOFCOM is defined as "a conceptual area of activity that is coercive in nature and that is deliberately designed to remain below the threshold of conventional military conflict and open inter-state war."

14 Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars,* Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Arlington, Virginia December 2007, 8. https://www.potomacinstitute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf, accessed 13 June 2023. Hoffman believes, "Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. Hybrid wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors. These multi-modal activities can be conducted by separate units, or even by the same unit, but are generally operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battlespace to achieve synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of the conflict."

15 Canada, *Beyond the Horizon.*

16 "…the potential use of certain means or methods of attack, designed by an adversary whose relative military power or whose strategy or tactics differ significantly from its opponent, in order to circumvent or negate the adversary's strengths while exploiting its weaknesses." Canada, *Beyond the Horizon*, 16.

17 "The continuum depicts four types of relationships in which states/groups of people may participate: cooperation, which represents a state of peace, through rivalry to confrontation and, ultimately, to armed conflict. The boundaries between cooperation, rivalry, crossing the [rules based international order] to confrontation, and the threshold between confrontation and armed conflict are complex and dynamic; the progression between each is neither linear nor easily defined. The majority of sub-threshold activity is covertly orchestrated by state and non-state, including proxy, adversaries seeking to undermine NATO's and its partners' security, the integrity of its democracies, its public safety, reputation or economic prosperity. Sub-threshold activity is particularly prevalent in the information environment where information and communication activities with hostile intent are widely used along with malicious cyberspace activity and targeted campaigns to sow distrust and potentially exacerbate turmoil amongst different audience groups." North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *NATO Standard AJP-10 Allied Joint Doctrine For Strategic Communications*, Edition A, Version 1, NATO Standardization Office (NSO) © NATO/OTAN (2023), accessed 17 June 2023, Allied Joint Publication 10, Allied Joint Doctrine for Strategic Communications (publishing.service.gov.uk).

18 North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949 and is [currently] a group of 31 countries from Europe and North America that exists to protect the people and territory of its members." https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/126169.htm#:~:text=Collective%20defence%3A%20The%20North%20Atlantic,and%20territory%20of%20its%20members, accessed 15 June 2023.

19 Disinformation is used here to refer to the dissemination of information that is deliberately false.

20 Dr Jack Watling, Oleksandr V. Danylyuk and Nick Reynolds, *Preliminary Lessons from Russia's Unconventional Operations During the Russo-Ukrainian War*, February 2022-February 2023, Published in 2023 by the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (29 March 2023), accessed 6 Apr 2023, Preliminary Lessons from Russia's Unconventional Operations During the Russo-Ukrainian War, February 2022-February 2023 | Royal United Services Institute (rusi.org).

21 "The primary threats CANSOFCOM must be prepared to counter and the vulnerabilities it must be poised to exploit are increasingly asymmetric in nature. These threats seek to divide Western alliances, to undermine multilateral frameworks and to sow distrust in democratic institutions by exploiting perceived limitations and weaknesses in our rules-based society." Canada, *Beyond the Horizon*, 20.

22 Ryan Clow, Psychological Operations: The Need to Understand the Psychological Plane of Warfare, *Canadian Military Journal*, vol. 9, no. 1: 24.

23 The Hydra of Greek Mythology was "a gigantic water-snake-like monster with nine heads … Anyone who attempted to behead the Hydra found that as soon as one head was cut off, two more heads would emerge from the fresh wound. The destruction of the Lernean Hydra became one of the 12 Labours of Heracles. For that and other labours, Heracles enlisted the aid of his nephew Iolaus. As Heracles severed each mortal head, Iolaus was set to the task of cauterizing the fresh wounds so that no new heads would emerge." Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia. "Hydra." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 20 October 2022. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hydra-Greek-mythology, accessed 22 May 2023.

24 U.S. Army Special Operations Command History Office, *U.S. Army PSYOP History Handbook* (Fort Bragg, North Carolina: 2018), 7, 16. "The current U.S. Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS), their Special Operations Center of Excellence at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, recently celebrated their 70th Anniversary of PSYWAR in September 2022. The original name of this institution was the PSYWAR Center, having been created primarily through the efforts of the Pentagon's Office of Psychological Warfare (OCPW), and tasked with the training and command of all Special Operations units during the Korean War. The lead institution for training soldiers in the art of Special Warfare." And "The OCPW also played a pivotal role in the 1952 establishment of the Psywar Center at Fort Bragg, which was became the lead institution for training Army soldiers in the art of Special Warfare (Unconventional Warfare, Psychological Warfare and Counterinsurgency)." The PSYWAR Center was established at Fort Bragg, NC, on 10 April 1952, commanded by Col Charles H.

Karlstad, and mandated to both train and command all regular force (active duty) PSYWAR and Special Forces units during the Korean War. It is redesignated the Special Warfare Center and School in 1956, and the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School 1 June 1964 to honour the 35th President of the United States, who had personally approved the wearing of the Special Forces green beret prior to his assassination the year prior."

25 Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of U.S. Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

26 U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Joint Operations Publication 3.0 (2011) JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (army.mil), 115, accessed 3 June 2023. The U.S. DoD defines six phases of warfare in their Joint Operations Publication 3.0 (2011) as:

1. Shape;
2. Deter;
3. Seize Initiative;
4. Dominate;
5. Stabilize; and
6. Enable Civil Authority.

"Shape phase missions, task, and actions are those that are designed to dissuade or deter adversaries and assure friends, as well as set conditions for the contingency plan and are generally conducted through security cooperation activities. Joint and multinational operations and various interagency activities occur routinely during the shape phase. Shape activities are executed continuously with the intent to enhance international legitimacy and gain multinational cooperation by shaping perceptions and influencing adversaries' and allies' behavior; developing allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations; improving information exchange and intelligence sharing; providing US forces with peacetime and contingency access; and mitigating conditions that could lead to a crisis."

27 Sergeant Major Charles (Chuck) Ritter, Deputy Commandant of the NCO Academy at the US Army's JFK Special Warfare Center and School, host, *The Great Equalizer, Irregular Warfare in the city*, Irregular Warfare Podcast (podcast), 21 October 2022. https://mwi.usma.edu/the-great-equalizer-irregular-warfare-in-the-city/, accessed 14 March 2023.

28 Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*. "State and non-state actors are increasingly pursuing their agendas using hybrid methods in the "Grayzone" that exists just below the threshold of armed conflict. Hybrid methods involve the coordinated application of diplomatic, informational, cyber, military and economic instruments to achieve strategic or operational objectives. They often rely on the deliberate spread of misinformation to sow confusion and discord in the international community, create ambiguity and maintain deniability. The use of hybrid methods increases the potential for misperception and miscalculation. Hybrid methods are frequently used to undermine the credibility and legitimacy of a national government or international alliance. By staying in the fog of the Grayzone, states can influence events in their favour without triggering outright armed conflict. The use of hybrid methods

presents challenges in terms of detection, attribution and response for Canada and its allies, including the understanding and application of NATO's Article 5." https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2018/strong-secure-engaged/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf, accessed 15 March 2023.

29 Weigley, *The American Way of War*.

30 United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, *ARSOF 2022*, 10. http://www.specialoperations.org/ARSOF2022_vFINAL%5B1%5D.pdf, accessed 13 June 2023.

31 Department of Defense. Joint Pub 3-05 *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (1998), II-6; and JP 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (army.mil). Unconventional Warfare is defined as "A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes guerrilla warfare and other direct offensive low-visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape (E&E)."

32 United States of America, Department of Defense. Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept, V1, (2007), 2. https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joc_iw_v1.pdf, accessed 7 June 2023. Irregular Warfare is defined as "A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. Irregular Warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will."

33 U.S. Department of National Defence, Directive: Irregular Warfare, Department of Defense Directive Number 3000.07, August 28, 2014 Incorporating Change 1, May 12, 2017, 14. DoDD 3000.07, August 28, 2014, Incorporating Change 1, May 12, 2017 (whs.mil), accessed 13 June, 2023. Special Warfare can include other specific activities like Irregular Warfare (IW), and Unconventional Warfare (UW). IW differs in that it "… is a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population." IW favours indirect and asymmetric approaches though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities in order to erode an adversary's power, influence and will.

34 Dan Madden, Dick Hoffmann, Michael Johnson, Fred Krawchuk, John E. Peters, Linda Robinson, and Abby Doll, *Special Warfare: The Missing Middle in U.S. Coercive Options* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014). https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR828.html, accessed 5 April 2023.

35 Canada, *B-GL-300-001/FP-001 Land Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008). https://acims.mil.ca/sp/CADL/DoctrineLibrary/B-GL-300-001-FP-001.pdf. Referred to as Physical Plane, a domain is a major division within the military environment where specific activities, influence, and knowledge are applied. Domains are delineated by both physical and non-physical characteristics – Pan-Domain Force Employment Concept (2020).

36 Kimberly Kagan, Frederick W. Kagan, Brian Babcock-Lumish, and Dan Chenok, *Addressing the New Era of Deterrence and Warfare: Visualizing the Information Domain – Part II* (Institute for the Study of War). https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/addressing-new-era-deterrence-and-warfare-visualizing-information-domain-part-i, accessed 13 March 2023.

37 Target Audience: An individual or group selected for influence or attack by means of psychological operations. (AAP-6 NATO glossary of terms and definitions).

38 Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged.*

39 Government of Canada, "CANSOFCOM leverages innovation to gain a competitive advantage over its adversaries." https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2022/09/cansofcom-innovative-competitive-advantage-adversaries.html, accessed 9 March 2023.

40 Canada, *CANSOFCOM Organizational Structure*, https://www.canada.ca/en/special-operations-forces-command/corporate/organizational-structure.html, accessed 9 March 2023. The GoC's *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, states, "Canada's Special Operations Forces structure is lean. It consists of a headquarters commanding Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) – Canada's military counter-terrorism unit; the Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit (CJIRU) – Canada's military Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear detection and response unit; the Canadian Special Operations Regiment; the Special Operations Aviation Squadron; and the Canadian Special Operations Training Centre." Canada, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, 40.

41 Canada, *Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) - Our Expertise.* https://www.canada.ca/en/special-operations-forces-command/corporate/organizational-structure/so-regiment.html, accessed 9 March 2023.

CANSOFCOM core strategic capabilities:

1. Deliver an effective counter-terrorism response both domestically and abroad;
2. Access, understand and influence operational environments; and
3. React rapidly to emerging or immediate threats.

CANSOF Core Tasks:

1. Hostage rescue;
2. Direct action;
3. Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear crisis response;
4. Sensitive site exploitation;
5. Combating weapons of mass destruction;
6. Maritime special operations;
7. Support to non-combatant evacuation operations (neo); and
8. Special protection operations.

42 U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), *Core Activities*. https://www.socom.mil/about/core-activities#:~:text=Direct%20Action,Special%20Reconnaissance, accessed 7 April 2023.

1. Direct Action - Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions employing specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets.
2. Special Reconnaissance - Actions conducted in sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance.
3. Unconventional Warfare - Actions to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power.
4. Foreign Internal Defense - Activities that support an HN's internal defense and development (IDAD) strategy and program designed to protect against subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their internal security, and stability, and legitimacy.
5. Civil Affairs Operations - CAO enhance the relationship between military forces and civilian authorities in localities where military forces are present.
6. Counterterrorism - Actions taken directly against terrorist networks and indirectly to influence and render global and regional environments inhospitable to terrorist networks.
7. Military Information Support Operations - MISO are planned 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. United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) conducts internet-based MISO in partnership with United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) to expose, counter, and compete against adversary malign activity and disinformation throughout USSOUTHCOM's area of responsibility. These on-going and enduring activities are coordinated with U.S. government agencies and implemented in accordance with U.S. law and DoD policies.
8. Counter-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction - Activities to support USG efforts to curtail the conceptualization, development, possession, proliferation, use, and effects of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), related expertise, materials, technologies, and means of delivery by state and non-state actors.
9. Security Force Assistance - Activities based on organizing, training, equipping, rebuilding, and advising various components of Foreign Security Forces.
10. Counterinsurgency - The blend of civilian and military efforts designed to end insurgent violence and facilitate a return to peaceful political processes.
11. Hostage Rescue and Recovery - Offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, pre-empt, and respond to terrorist threats and incidents, including recapture of U.S. facilities, installations, and sensitive material in overseas areas.
12. Foreign Humanitarian Assistance - The range of DOD humanitarian activities conducted outside the US and its territories to relieve or reduce human suffering, disease, hunger, or privation.

43 CAO are what Canadians, and most NATO nations, would call Civil-Military cooperation (CIMIC) and include the enabling of civilians and civil resources towards the achievement of military objectives through liaison and empowerment.

44 Austin Branch, Ed Cardon, Devin Ellis and Adam Russell, "We Ignore the Human Domain at Our Own Peril", *Modern Warfare Institute*, https://mwi.usma.edu/we-ignore-the-human-domain-at-our-own-peril/, accessed 10 April 2023.

45 U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), *Core Activities.*

46 Canada, *Beyond the Horizon*, 20.

47 Branch, et al, *We Ignore the Human Domain.* General Charles Cleveland, then the commander of United States Special Operations Command – Central, "the human domain unsurprisingly emphasizes humans—their beliefs, their networks, their values—as a center of gravity in modern, twenty-first-century nation-state competition."

48 Canada, *Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit (CJIRU)*, https://www.canada.ca/en/special-operations-forces-command/corporate/organizational-structure/joint-incident-response.html, accessed 9 March 2023.

49 The task of training, equipping, mentoring or potentially leading partner elite or special forces elements can be referred to by several interconnected terms, to include Security Force Assistance (SFA), Security Force Capacity Building (SFCB), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), and Defence, Diplomacy and Military Assistance (DDMA).

50 Emily Spencer, *Solving the People Puzzle: Cultural Intelligence and Special Operations Forces* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010).

51 Major Tony Balasevicius, "Book Review of *Solving the People Puzzle: Cultural Intelligence and Special Operations Forces* by Emily Spencer", *Canadian Army Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2011). http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo11/no2/13-balasevicius-bookreview-eng.asp, accessed 6 April 2023. "Spencer believes that the human dimension will become increasingly important because future conflict will occur within populations as potential enemies seek to conceal themselves among the people. Therefore, the support of the population will become the centre of gravity for operational success, and true success will only be achieved by the ability to influence and this can only be done by fully understanding others. However, to achieve success influencing the population requires military forces that have professionals who can see reality through the eyes of others. The idea of moving SOF to the forefront of influencing activities in the COE is the lead into the second part of the book."

52 Canada, *Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) - Our Expertise.*

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Emily Spencer, "It's All About the People: Cultural Intelligence (CQ) as a Force Multiplier in the Contemporary Operating Environment," *Journal of Conflict Studies*, vol. 29 (2009): 98.

56 Canada, *B-GJ-005-313/FP-001 Psychological Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004), 1. https://www.psywar.org/psywar/reproductions/CF_Psychological_Operations_Joint_Doctrine.pdf.

57 Canada, *Canadian Army Doctrine Note (CADN) 16-01 Land Operations Doctrine – An Updated Summary* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2016), 2. "Actions and their effects occur on one of two planes—the physical or the psychological. The term "psychological" was chosen over other terms because it incorporates the scientific aspect of cognitive thinking, but incorporates as well, cultural and other social influences that affect how an actor will perceive and act. There is no such thing as an "information plane" and any use of information to engage a target will have a first order effect on the psychological plane."

58 Narratives, themes and audiences are often provided to the operational and tactical levels starting with strategic guidance. In a NATO context, this means a clear and concise Strategic Communications framework, detailing strategic objectives, supporting effects, approved and restricted audiences, and an overarching narrative, or the friendly forces version of the story, the "why," and an explaining for coalition involvement in any operation. The NATO J10 model subordinates the Info Ops coordination function and the PSYOPS and Military Public Affairs capabilities under a direct chain of authority for coordinated non-kinetic effects. Many small state Information Operations processes are not nearly as mature or clearly defined; often relying on a very vague process of communicating strategic intent from the state through government representative to the Armed Forces. That strategic vision is then interpreted by the armed forces and transformed into operational orders before being issued to domestic or expeditionary forces to execute on operations. Many small state armed forces do not possess a dedicated Information Operations staff, traditionally responsible for the planning and orientation of this coordinating function, meant to harness a cohesive and mutually reinforcing effort from all information related capabilities, and remain too under resourced to be competitive during operations in the information environment (OIE).

59 Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence, New and Expanded: The Psychology of Persuasion* (New York: Harper Business, 2021). Influence techniques have historically been developed largely through a combination of state-level wartime applications and peacetime civilian marketing research. One common body of research referenced by Psychological Operations forces is the work of Dr. Robert Cialdini, who curated existing academic literature and his own primary research in his international best-selling book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, where he refers to these techniques as the "Weapons of Influence." Cialdini's Weapons of Influence include the principles of:

1. Reciprocity;
2. Commitment and consistency;
3. Liking;
4. Authority;
5. Scarcity;
6. Social Proof; and
7. Unity.

60 Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, Concordia University. https://www.concordia.ca/research/migs/resources/rwanda-radio-transcripts.html#:~:text=The%20Role%20of%20Radio,%2C%20and%20moderate%20Hutu%2C%20neighbours, accessed 6 April 2023. "During the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, radio broadcasts played an important role in inciting ordinary citizens to take part in the massacres of their Tutsi, and moderate Hutu, neighbours. Two major radio stations transmitted hate propaganda to the illiterate masses--Radio Rwanda, and Radio Télévision des Milles Collines (RTLM). Radio Rwanda was the official government owned radio station. Under the second Arusha Accord it was barred from continuing to disseminate hate propaganda."

61 Colonel Jeffrey B. Jones, "*Psychological Operations in Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Urban Freedom*", *Special Warfare* (1994). https://universityofleeds.github.io/philtaylorpapers/pmt/exhibits/2739/PSYOP_in_Desert_Shield-Storm_and_Urban_Freedom.pdf, accessed 9 April 2023.

62 Melissa Dittmann, "*Operation hearts and minds*," *Monitor on Psychology*, vol. 34, no. 7 (2003). https://www.apa.org/monitor/jun03/operation.html, accessed 10 April 2023.

63 Jones, "*Psychological Operations in Desert Shield.*

64 Ibid., 27. "Impact indicators: The following indicators attest to the success of PSYOP activities in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Urban Freedom: Prior to hostilities, leaflet operations generated extensive Iraqi concern about the penetration of Kuwaiti airspace by U.S./coalition aircraft. In fact, that airspace was never penetrated before hostilities began. Iraqi soldiers fired weapons at leaflets falling from the sky. The morale of the Kuwaiti citizenry soared once leaflet operations began. Iraqi units were repositioned because of deception-leaflet operations. The Iraqi III Corps commander's sand table, found in Kuwait City, depicted virtually all coalition avenues of approach as coming from the sea. Despite facing a death penalty for possessing coalition leaflets, a large percentage of Iraqi defectors and enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) were carrying leaflets when they surrendered. One prisoner was reported to have had 345 leaflets when he arrived at the EPW camp. Massive numbers of Iraqis deserted prior to and during the war. Iraqi death squads operated between the Iraqi and coalition fronts to stop and assassinate defecting Iraqi soldiers. Frontline Iraqi troops reported the continual harmful effect of coalition leaflet and radio messages. The Iraqis mounted their own leaflet and information campaigns to counter coalition leaflet operations. The Iraqi command confiscated its soldiers' personal radios. Iraqi sources attempted to jam coalition broadcast operations. Iraqi EPWs reported listening to coalition broadcasts for "true" information. The Iraqi chain of command reported to its soldiers that coalition leaflets were contaminated by chemical agents. Iraqi "Mother of All Battles" broadcasts changed frequencies to counter coalition broadcasts. A 500-man battalion surrendered in the XVIII Airborne Corps' sector prior to the start of the ground war. After the ground war began, more than 87,000 Iraqis surrendered, including the 1,405 soldiers on Failaka Island. Ninety-eight percent of all EPWs either carried or had seen PSYOP leaflets. Fifty-eight percent of all EPWs reported hearing the "Voice of the Gulf" and trusted the

broadcasts. Eighty percent of those followed the instructions or actions encouraged by the broadcasts. Thirty-four percent of all EPWs reported hearing loudspeaker broadcasts, and more than half of those complied with the surrender message."

65 Canada, Peace Support Training Centre, "PSYOPS Tactical Operator." https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/education-training/establishments/peace-support/courses.html, accessed 9 April 2023.

66 Support, cooperation and compliance are the three potential outcomes of an influence activity and are differentiated by the level of commitment by the audience to perform the desired behaviour. PSYOPS may, for example, seek to provide reasoning or argumentation that will intrinsically motivate an audience to perform as desired. They may also reserve techniques to extrinsically motivate compliance by enabling the audience to acquire or avoid something tangible. Lastly, they are capable of leveraging known psychological vulnerabilities of approved audiences that can compel compliance (e.g., Highlighting an enemy's fear of a particular friendly weapon system or unit they wish to avoid, or magnifying their lack of confidence in their own chain of command while aiming to increase willingness to abandon a position or surrender).

67 TPT characteristically deploy with a combination of portable, backpack and vehicle or aerial platform mounted loudspeaker suites. Their audible ranges may vary between 500 meters and 2.5 kilometers, and may be capable of supporting feint manoeuvres, harassment, and military deception.

68 Tactical PSYOPS elements will often employ their own small, portable radio broadcast equipment, or negotiate access to airtime on popular existing radio to reach local audiences.

69 PSYOPS print products are selected based on how likely they are to provide access to, and influence among, a target audience. Print media types can include billboards, posters, handbills, or leaflets disseminated by aircraft or artillery.

70 Web Operations, or Web Ops, are described in this context most simply as the utilization of the internet by PSYOPS as a platform for media product dissemination, and are not to be conflated with Cyber Operations, which include a vastly wider spectrum of activities in the virtual realm.

71 "Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas (ODAs) are elite teams consisting of mature, intense, highly-trained operators. SF Operators receive specialized training in advanced weapons, language, demolitions, combat medicine, military free-fall, and advanced combat tactics. Today's quiet professional operates in autonomous environments as the most trusted force in America's Army." https://www.goarmysof.army.mil/SF/, accessed 8 June 2023.

72 PSYOPS may consider the application of principles and models of behavioural psychology, including supporting the perception by an approved target audience that they are likely to receive either reward for performing a supporting behaviour, a

punishment for behaviour that impedes mission objectives, or both. These concepts are largely based on the foundational behaviourist research of B.F. Skinner. B.F. Skinner, *Operant Behavior* (1963), *American Psychologist*, vol. 18, no. 8: 503-515. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0045185, accessed 6 June 2023.

73 This is not to suggest a return to the WWII Canada/US First Special Service Force's "kinetic exploitation stickers," emblazoned with the unit's distinctive "Crimson Spearhead" and the message "DAS DICKE ENDE KOMMT NOCH!" (The worst is yet to come), left behind by the commandos after raids behind enemy lines for their Axis foes to dwell upon during their reconsolidation, but perhaps a modern, ethical improvement upon the same psychological principle could be argued as morally superior to resorting to lethal force without any attempt to dissuade combatants from fighting.

74 Linda Robertson, *SOF's Evolving Role: Warfare 'By, With, and Through' Local Forces* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 9 May 2017). The term "By, With and Through" is used by the SOF community to refer to their role in advising and assisting partner forces to achieve military objectives in support of mutual interests. SOF elements provide expertise and access to specific military capabilities, like precision fires, or close air support, while advising local forces, but the majority of the combat action is performed by local elements, and mutual goals are achieved through local efforts. "…the most notable feature of the expanded U.S. SOF role in the Middle East has been its work alongside indigenous forces in Iraq and Syria. Conventional and coalition forces provide additional numbers of troops. What makes this campaign so unusual is that U.S. forces are not providing the muscle of the frontline combat troops. Instead, the campaign is conducted "by, with, and through" others, a Special Forces phrase that the CENTCOM commander, General Joseph Votel, has adopted to call attention to this new way of warfighting."

75 Robert Cialdini's "Weapons of Influence" highlight the importance of "Liking" in any effort to produce voluntary compliance or cooperation. This principle of persuasion is based on how the individual or group perceives the individual presenting the appeal for collaboration. The research shows that influence can be achieved through the employment of the liking principle when that individual is perceived as similar, familiar, attractive, or as someone with whom association is likely to generate some benefit. Liking is one principle studied and potentially employed by PSYOPS. Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence, New and Expanded* (HarperCollins, 2021).

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and national policy prohibit U.S. military forces or other government agencies (OGAs) from engaging in or supporting such activities. However, since our adversaries employ terrorism and transnational criminal activities against the interests of the United States and its partners, these activities are included below as examples of the range of operations and activities that can be conducted as part of IW: • Insurgency • Counterinsurgency (COIN) • Unconventional warfare (UW) • Terrorism • Counterterrorism (CT) • Foreign internal defense (FID) • Stabilization, security, transition, and reconstruction operations (SSTRO) • Strategic communications • Psychological operations (PSYOP) • Information operations (IO)".

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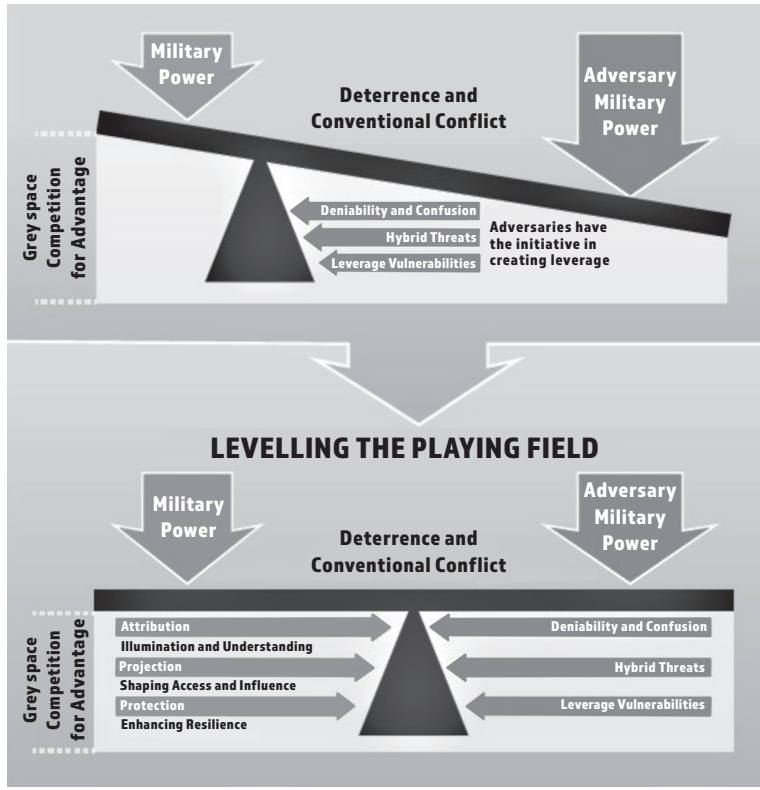

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2. **Quality is better than quantity**. A small number of people, carefully selected, well trained, and well led, are preferable to larger numbers of troops, some of whom may not be up to the task.
3. **Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced**. It takes years to train operational units to the level of proficiency needed to accomplish

difficult and specialized SOF missions. Intense training – both in SOF schools and units – is required to integrate competent individuals into fully capable units. This process cannot be hastened without degrading ultimate capability.

4. **Competent Special Operations Forces cannot be created after emergencies occur**. Creation of competent, fully mission capable units takes time. Employment of fully capable special operations capability on short notice requires highly trained and constantly available SOF units in peacetime.
5. **Most special operations require non-SOF support**. The operational effectiveness of our deployed forces cannot be, and never has been, achieved without being enabled by our joint service partners. The support Air Force, Army, Marine and Navy engineers, technicians, intelligence analysts, and the numerous other professions that contribute to SOF, have substantially increased our capabilities and effectiveness throughout the world. SOF truth most SOF missions require non-SOF support.

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CHAPTER 12

1 A Canadian 2009 doctrinal publication defined SOF as "organizations containing specially selected personnel that are organized, equipped, trained and educated to conduct high-risk, high value special operations to achieve military, political, economic or informational objectives by using special and unique operational methodologies in hostile, denied or politically sensitive areas to achieve desired tactical, operational and/or strategic effects in times of peace, conflict or war." Canada, *Canadian Special Operation Forces Command. An Overview* (DND: Ottawa, 2008), 7. Elite can be defined as "the choice or best of anything considered collectively, as of a group or class of persons." As such, military organizations that have nothing to do with SOF activities can be elite (e.g., fighter pilots, submariners, certain Guards regiments).

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CRANINX – Major Cedric Craninx is an Army Special Operations Officer in the Belgian Defense Forces. He holds a Master's of Science degree from the Belgian Royal Military Academy and a Master's of Science degree in Defense Analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey. He has held command and staff appointments in the Belgian SOF community, including Platoon Commander in the 1st Para Bn, Coy 2nd in Command in the 2nd Bn Commando, and Team Leader, Troop Commander, and Operations & Training (S3) Officer in the Belgian Special Forces Group.

DAY – Lieutenant-General (retired) D. Michael Day, CMM, MSC, CD, MA was born in Nova Scotia and subsequently spent his school days in England. Lieutenant-General Day has commanded at every level and rank, in a variety of units, and deployments around the world serving and commanding within his Regiment and Canada's Counter Terrorist and Special Forces community. He commanded both Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) and Canada's Special Operations Forces Command. With the majority of his time spent in Command, he has also served in a variety of Senior Staff appointments including the CAF's Senior Military Officer in the Defence Policy Group and the Chief Strategic Planner for the future of the Canadian Armed Forces, where he also oversaw the development of the Department of National Defence's Space and Cyber Programs. Since retirement, he has been employed on a variety of corporate Boards and consults with a number of companies, predominantly in the High Tech sector focusing on efforts to digitize supporting capabilities and practices in Defence and Security Departments across the Government of Canada. He is President of the Board of Trustees for his Regimental charity (The PPCLI Foundation).

Day has a Bachelor's in Political Studies and History and a Master's in War Studies (Strategic Studies and Special Operations).

DE BARTOK – Captain Adam de Bartok, MMM, CD, is an Infantry Officer, Paratrooper, and Psychological Operations Subject Matter Expert (SME) in the Canadian Armed Forces, who has built an extensive resume of unique experiences across a three-decade long professional military career. His considerable breadth of operational appointments includes Tactical PSYOPS Team Commander in Afghanistan, Chief Analyst and PSYOPS Media Production NCO at the Influence Activities Task Force, Information Warfare Training Squadron Sergeant Major and several Influence Activities and Strategic Communication advisory roles on operations in Iraq and Ukraine. Captain de Bartok currently serves as a SME at the CAF Information Operations Centre of Excellence.

HORN – Colonel (retired) Bernd Horn, OMM, MSM, CD, PhD is a former infantry officer who has held key command and staff appointments in the Canadian Armed Forces, including Deputy Commander of Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM), Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment and Officer Commanding 3 Commando, the Canadian Airborne Regiment. He is currently the CANSOFCOM Command Historian, an appointment he fills as a civilian. Dr. Horn is also an adjunct professor of history at the Royal Military College of Canada. He has authored, co-authored, edited or co-edited 50 books and numerous monographs/chapters/articles on military history, Special Operations Forces, leadership and military affairs.

ILIS-ALM – Colonel (retired) Hans Ilis-Alm is, since January 2021, assigned to the Swedish Defence University, Centre of Special Operations Research. During most of his military career, he has served in the Swedish Special Operations Community, where his last position was Commander Swedish Special Operations Command. His operational experience includes tours to Afghanistan, the Balkans and operations on the African continent. Colonel Ilis-Alm has also served in several U.S. Combatant Commands as well as in the European External Action Service. He holds a MSc degree in National Security Strategy from the U.S. National War College and a certificate in Terrorism studies from the University of St Andrews.

JEPPSSON – Colonel Christian Jeppsson is currently assigned to Swedish Armed Forces Joint Command, Control, Communications, Computers,

Counter-intelligence (C5) Warfare Centre as development lead for Swedish Joint Operational Capabilities. Colonel Jeppsson has served for more than 20 years with Swedish Special Forces and held positions from team leader to unit commander, as well as Director for Plans and Policy, Chief of Staff and deputy commander at Swedish Special Operations Command (SweSOCOM). Operational experience includes SweSOF deployments to the Balkans, Afghanistan and Africa. Colonel Jeppsson is a graduate of the NATO SOF Catalyst for Change course and he is one of the founders of the Centre For Special Operations Research at the Swedish Defence University in a previous assignment as Head of the Department for War Studies.

MACDUFF – Robert MacDuff is a researcher on a wide range of military, law enforcement and civilian subjects. Special areas of interest are: special operations history and policy, Cold War military and intelligence history, small arms history, general weapons technology history, military aviation, law enforcement use of force, and general military strategy and tactics. He volunteers for special projects at The Military Museums in Calgary and holds a BA in Political Science and a BA in History from the University of Calgary.

TAILLON – Colonel (retired) J. Paul de B. Taillon, OMM, CD, PhD, served in the Canadian intelligence community for 30 years. From 2006-2014 he was the Strategic/Counterinsurgency Advisor to the Commander the Canadian Army. He deployed to Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and the Ukraine. He holds a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science and a Master's in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. He is an Adjunct Fellow at the Joint Special Operations University in Tampa, and he has taught at RMC; Canadian Forces Command and Staff College, Toronto; U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, Virginia; the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School at Monterey, California; as well as being directing staff at the NATO Special Operations School at Chièvres, Belgium.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

427 SOAS	427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron
ABI	Activity-Based Intelligence
AFEAU	Agrupación de Fuerzas Especiales Antiterroristas Urbanas
AFO	Advanced Force Operations
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMAN	The Directorate of Military Intelligence in Israel
AQI	Al Qaeda in Iraq
BPC	Building Partner Capacity
BRI	Belt & Road Initiative
C2	Command & Control
C5	Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Counter-Intelligence
CA	Canadian Army
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CANSOF	Canadian Special Operations Forces
CANSOFCOM	Canadian Special Operations Forces Command
CAO	Civil Affair Operations
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBRN	Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
CEFCOM	Canadian Expeditionary Forces Command
CEI	Critical Energy Infrastructure
CFE	Cuerpo de Fuerzas Especiales
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Groups
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CJIRU	Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CLI	Command Line Interface
CMO	Civil-Military Operations
COE	Current Operating Environment
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
CQ	Cultural Quotient or Cultural Intelligence

CSOCC	Composite Special Operations Component Command
CSOR	Canadian Special Operations Regiment
CSOTC	Canadian Special Operations Training Centre
CT	Counter-Terrorism
CVEO	Counter-Violent Extremist Organization
CW	Compound Warfare
CWMD	Combating weapons of mass destruction
DA	Direct Action
DDMA	Defence, Diplomacy, Military Assistance
DFD	Direct Force Development
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DM	Deputy Minister
DO	Distributed Operations
DoD	[U.S.] Department of Defense
EU	European Union
FER	Fuerza Especial de Reacción
FES	Fuerzas Especiales
FG	Force Generate
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FMSO	Foreign Military Studies Office
FMV	Full Motion Video
FOA	Freedom Of Action
FSB	Federal Security Service
FSSF	First Special Service Force
GAFE	Grupo Aeromóvil de Fuerzas Especiales
GEOINT	Geospatial Intelligence
GoC	Government of Canada
GPC	Great Power Competition
GPS	Global Positioning System
GRU	Russian Military Intelligence
GUI	Graphical User Interface
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HIMARS	High Mobility Artillery Rocket System
HN	Host Nation
HR	Hostage Rescue

HUMINT	Human Intelligence
HVT	High Value Targets or High Value Task (context)
IA	Influence Activities
IASE	Influence Activities Support Element
IATF	Influence Activities Task Force
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
IE	Information Environment
IMET	International Military Education and Training program
Info Ops	Information Operations
Int	Intelligence
IO	International Organization or Information Operations (context)
IRC	Information Related Capabilities
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
IS	Islamic State
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	Islamic State in Syria
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance
IW	Irregular Warfare
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JTF2	Joint Task Force Two
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
MA	Military Assistance
MANPADS	Man-Portable Air-Defense System
MCC	Military Cooperation Committee
MCT	Maritime Counter-Terrorism
MDO	Multi-Domain Operations
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
MOE	Measures of Effectiveness
MOP	Measures of Performance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NCTV	National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism

NDS	National Defense Strategy
NEO	Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	North America Aerospace Defense Command
NRF	NATO Response Force
NSCC	NATO SOF Coordination Centre
NSHQ	NATO SOF headquarters
NSOCC-A	NATO Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan
NSTI	NATO SOF Transformation Initiative
NUI	Natural User Interface
NZSAS	New Zealand Special Air Service
OD	Operational Detachment
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
OG	Operational Groups
OGD	Other Government Department
OIE	Operations in the Information Environment
OIR	Operation Inherent Resolve
OPE	Operation Preparation of the Environment
OPSEC	Operational Security
OSINT	Open-Source Intelligence
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PJBD	Permanent Joint Board on Defence
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PM	Prime Minister
PMC	Private Military Companies
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSE	PSYOPS Support Elements
PSTC	Peace Support Training Centre
PSYOPS	Psychological Operations
PSYWAR	Psychological Warfare
RBIO	Rules-Based International Order
ROC	*Resistance Operating Concept*
ROE	Rules of Engagement
RPG	Rocket-Propelled Grenade
RSP	Regiment of Presidential Security

SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SAS	Special Air Service [British]
SASR	Special Air Service Regiment [Australian]
SBU	Ukrainian Security Service
SEAL	U.S. Navy Sea Air Land teams
SERE	Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape
SF	Special Forces
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SMI	Special Maritime Intervention [Danish]
SOCC	SOF Component Command
SOCNORTH	Special Operations Command North
SOCoE	Special Operations Center of Excellence,
SOCOM	Special Operations Command
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force
SOTG	Special Operation Task Group
SQ	Social Quotient or Social Intelligence
SR	Special Reconnaissance
SSE	Sensitive site exploitation
SW	Special Warfare
TA	Target Audience
TACOP	PSYOPS Tactical Operators
TDF	Territorial Defence Force
TPT	Tactical PSYOPS Teams
TTP	Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UKR SOF	Ukrainian Special Operations Forces
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USSF	U.S. Special Forces
USSOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UW	Unconventional Warfare

VEO	Violent Extremist Organization
VFTC	Voluntary Formations of Territorial Communities
VSO	Village Stability Operations
Web Ops	Operations on the World Wide Web or Internet
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WoG	Whole of Government
WSB	West Side Boys
WWII	World War Two

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