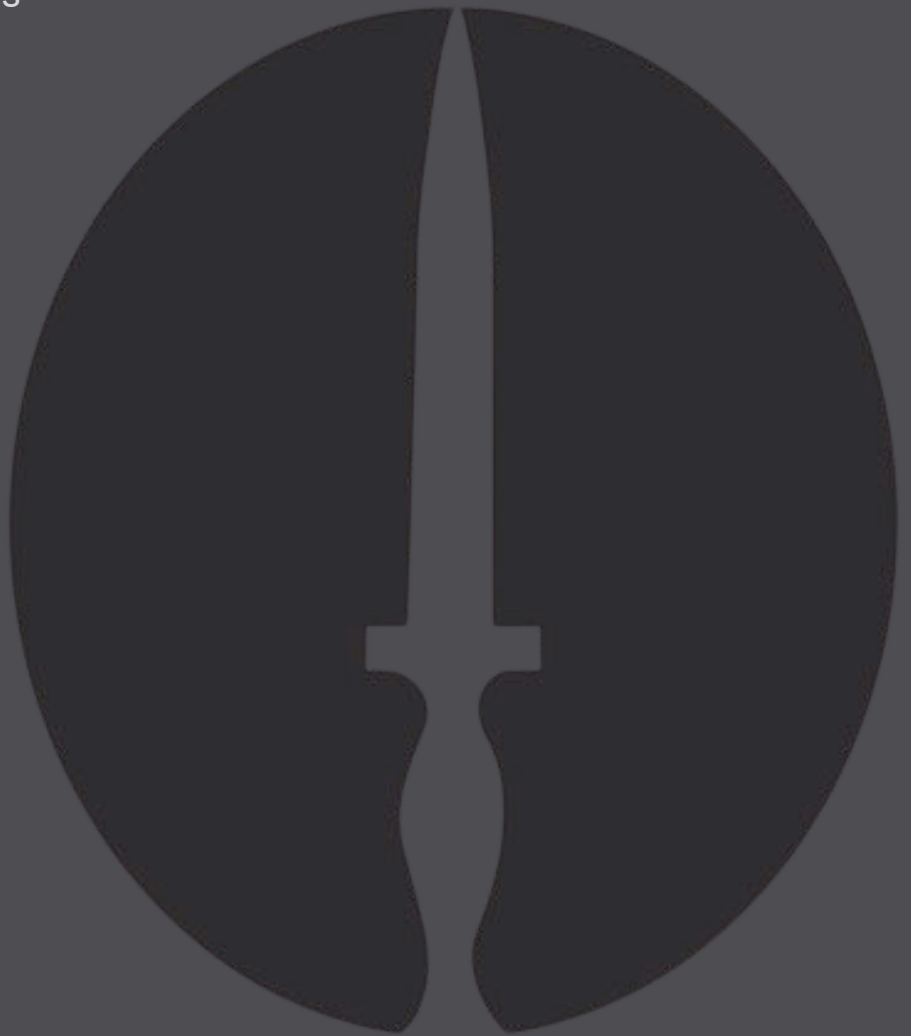


SPECIAL OPERATIONS JOURNAL

Editor: Christopher Marsh
Associate Editor: James Kiras

Included in this print edition:
Volume 1 Issue 1 (2015)



Special Operations Research: Out of the Shadows

Christopher Marsh

School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, USA

James Kiras

School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, USA

Patricia Blocksome

School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, USA

There has been a proliferation of special operations forces over the past twenty years as states seek to gain the status and capabilities that come from such units. While the importance of special operations seems apparent, research in the field is still very much in a nascent stage. The authors argue that a forum for the exchange of ideas is critical to the formation of a research community centered on special operations, and, furthermore, suggest that the planning and conduct of special operations can benefit from rigorous historical and social science research. While acknowledging that significant contributions in this regard have been made, they suggest that much of this research has remained limited in its reach and has not fostered a critical mass of scholarship in the field. They explain how the *Special Operations Journal* can become just such a forum and help achieve this and other objectives.

Keywords: special operations theory, social science, research methods, special operations forces

Although what are today considered special operations can be traced back in time to the earliest recorded accounts of warfare, the conduct of modern special operations—and the formation of specially trained and equipped units, what we call special operations forces (SOF), as distinct from conventional operations and general purpose forces—is typically traced to World War II. Most special operations units created during that war were subsequently disbanded and created anew as the need arose. The large-scale investment in and restructuring of SOF into more efficient organizational structures occurred in the American context only in the early 1980s, after the creation of the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in 1987. Since that time special operators have proven their ability to conduct critical missions with speed and precision,

or patience and discretion, and their tactical actions often result in strategic consequences. Beyond the United States, there has been a proliferation of SOF across the globe over the past 20 years as all major powers—and some lesser powers as well—seek to gain the status and capabilities that come from the possession of such elite units (Marsh, 2013).

Special operations can be broken down into several different types of missions, including counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, mission sets which have recently become the subject of intense academic research and for which exists a wide variety of publications. Special operations comprise other types of missions as well, including unconventional warfare, irregular warfare, security force assistance, and humanitarian assistance, as well as surgical strike/direct action operations. Much of the literature on these mission areas has focused on unit or national histories, or individual “kill and tell” memoirs, but has been largely neglected by the academic community. Moreover, there is much to be gained by studying special operations and SOF holistically, rather than in a piecemeal fashion, because these missions often occur simultaneously and the roles and capabilities of SOF evolve over time (e.g., from conducting security force assistance and counterterrorism to eventually fighting counterinsurgency).

While the importance of special operations today seems quite apparent, academic study and professional research into special operations is still very much in a nascent stage. One factor that is critical to the formation of a research community in any area is a forum for the exchange of ideas, and this is no less true for special operations than it is for particle physics. It was the editors’ strong conviction about this idea that led to the establishment of the *Special Operations Journal*, the first academic and professional journal devoted solely to the study of special operations and special operations forces. Given the popularity of the subject, both as an area of research and in popular culture, it is rather surprising that a journal devoted to special operations was formed so late in the development of the field. This may be due to the fact that there exist many journals on related research areas, including defense studies, intelligence, insurgency, and security studies, as well as the fact that international relations and foreign policy journals can certainly publish articles on special operations topics. Others organizations have pioneered their own publishing efforts, including the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) and its JSOU Press, as well as the Army Special Operations Command Historical Office and its journal *Veritas*. Journals such as *Veritas* and *Special Warfare*, while providing interesting articles, are limited in the scope of their investigation of special operations due to organizational imperatives, agendas, and space limitations. Moreover, because they are not peer-reviewed academic publications, academic scholars might shy away from publishing their research there because of the pressures of the academic publishing world. There are also, of course, several high-quality academic journals devoted to operations that often fall under the category of special operations, including *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* and *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. *SOJ* is the first, however, to focus exclusively on special operations.

Special Operations Journal is the first peer-reviewed publication dedicated to promoting research across academia, the military, and the SOF community, both in the United States and abroad, on the nature, conduct, and sources of success of special operations. This journal, published in collaboration with Routledge/Taylor & Francis, is one of the primary research initiatives launched by the Special Operations Research Association (SORA). Founded in 2013, SORA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote research on special operations

and SOF to better understand their nature, utility, and the factors contributing to mission success; to better understand how special operations are planned and conducted, and their role in the policymaking process; and to further understanding of their unique role in national strategy. In line with this mission, SORA not only publishes the *Special Operations Journal* but also collaborates with government and nongovernment entities on related topics; seeks to develop a community of researchers, planners, and practitioners that shares insights and thinking on special operations; and plans to engage in funded research on topics of particular importance.

What links SORA and *SOJ* is the belief that strategy, planning, conduct, and after-action review of special operations can benefit from rigorous historical and social science research. Of course, such research has been going on as long as such operations have existed, but without the academic community enablers of a professional association, a journal, and conferences the reach of much of this research has remained limited to a small group of scholars working on a particular era, specific unit, or other highly specialized topic. This state of affairs rarely permits, and certainly does not promote, the sort of interdisciplinary research and cross-pollination of knowledge that can lead to critical advances in research. The U.S. military itself—at all levels, from individual members¹ all the way to USSOCOM—has also always been active in research into special operations, primarily through the processes of doctrine development and after-action review. The same is certainly true of the militaries of other nations. While such research is of course necessary, objective and unbiased scientific research by nonstakeholders may be even more important.

Beyond the benefit of such research to the special operations community itself, we believe that the scholarly fields of history and social science (and others) can benefit from the rigorous study of special operations. Moreover, we believe that such research has, unfortunately, yet to reach a critical mass. Within political science, for example, there are theories of just about every political phenomenon, from voting to violence—not to mention the great debate between liberalism and realism that dominates the international relations subfield. The role of special operations, however, has yet to find its place in such debates. Consider the fact that there are 43 current organized sections of the American Political Science Association, covering areas as diverse as religion and politics and sexuality and politics, but nothing on special operations or even a related topic (the closest, perhaps, is conflict processes). In addition, a search of the association's flagship journal, the *American Political Science Review*, from the formation of USSOCOM in 1987 until 2014, uncovers zero articles focusing on or directly dealing with special operations. We, the editors of *Special Operations Journal*, believe the topic is of such significance that it merits far greater attention by the social science community than it has yet received, and we hope that *SOJ* will contribute in a significant way to promoting research in the area.

This necessarily leads to a question: What, more specifically, comprises the research area of special operations? This is a point on which the editorial staff of *SOJ* healthily debate and disagree, so we suspect there may be even wider disagreement in the research community writ large. We could use a U.S. doctrinal definition of special operations and SOF, but doing so would unnecessarily—and unfairly—eliminate units labeled “special” by foreign militaries simply because they might not meet the U.S. definition. And if we then decided to include any unit that was specifically designated as “special” by any country, this again becomes problematic for several reasons. First, there are certainly many historical examples of “special operations” units, such as Merrill's Marauders and Rogers' Rangers, that at the time were not

labeled as such. Second, missions that fall in line with special operations in one country may not be considered “special” in another country.

A good example of this is offered by Martin Andrew in his article on the origins of Chinese special forces in the current issue. As his research shows, the Chinese Communist Party formed and tasked units with the targeting and elimination of those disloyal to the party during the Chinese civil war and revolution; this is not a mission set in line with that of any U.S. SOF unit, nor of any liberal democracy. For that matter, these units, however, were considered part of China’s special forces, and today they remain an important part of their historical legacy (as do Merrill’s Marauders and Rogers’ Rangers for U.S. SOF). Should the scholarly community not consider these units as SOF, as unsettling as their existence may be to liberal democratic values? Cases such as these need not and, we argue, should not be dismissed out of hand. It is a much better practice to investigate such cases and let the community of scholars make such a determination, or determinations, as the case may be.

Methodologically, we do not wish to limit the research published in the pages of *SOJ* to any particular discipline or methodological approach. While we hope to publish scholarship that is based in the established disciplines of military history, political science, and sociology (and perhaps in other social and behavioral sciences as well, including psychology and anthropology), we also hope the journal will serve as an outlet for research that crosses the traditional boundaries of these fields. The development of an interdisciplinary research field also calls for a variety of methods of inquiry, and we welcome traditional, novel, and mixed-methods research. Finally, we are particularly interested in serving as an outlet for research that is policy relevant, understanding that such relevance can be obtained from historical research as well as analyses of current operations.

Having launched this journal, we believe it is a good time to reflect on the state of the nascent field and to share some of our thoughts on the development of a research agenda for special operations. Rather than attempting to stake out ground for our own research, we share some ideas on the possible direction for the field and hope to generate some healthy debate on the matter.

The first area we recognize, both chronologically and in terms of priority, is that of a theory of special operations. Several excellent studies have been done on this topic (Luttwak, Canby, & Thomas, 1982; Gray, 1992; McRaven, 1996; Kiras, 2006; Finlan, 2007; Spulak, 2007; Celeski, 2011; Yarger, 2013), but the debate is far from over. Not only is there no general theory of special operations, there is not even agreement among the field as to whether there should be (or can be) a theory of special operations. At the first annual SORA Symposium, this issue was a theme of one of the panels. One of the authors here, James Kiras, suggested during this SORA panel that no special theory of SOF or special operations is needed, and that the field of special operations research can continue—indeed, might develop more fruitfully—without a set theory to guide or perhaps even constrain research. As Thomas Kuhn (1962) showed us, theories and their accompanying paradigms can do as much to constrain new research as they can to promote research within an established paradigm. At the symposium, Col. Jeff Goble of JSOU, however, argued equally persuasively that a theory of special operations is precisely what the nascent research field needs. This is a healthy debate, and we hope *SOJ* will serve as a forum for this debate to continue.

While some SOF case studies—both historical and contemporary—already exist, further inquiry into specific SOF activities can only benefit the field. Further, historical cases of special operations or even “special operations–like” units and events (e.g., Rogers’ Rangers) should be

reinvestigated, as the passage of time brings with it the benefit of sources such as declassified documents, memoirs from actors both great and small, and a better understanding of the historical context that can be gained only through sufficient chronological distance from the events themselves. And given the current proliferation and activity of special operations around the globe, new cases are emerging all the time. Such case studies can also benefit from collection efforts that organize specific events into categories of mission set, historical context, regional or national influences, or other themes. By developing a library of richly descriptive literature, we hope *SOJ* will provide resources to those seeking to better understand the present by studying the lessons of the past.

Beyond a library of case studies, macrolevel research on special operations is sorely needed for several reasons. First, to our knowledge no study exists comparing all of the special operations units of the world, or even those of a select group (such as Western democracies). There are great differences between many of the world's SOF units, from Russian *spetsnaz* and Afghanistan's Commando Unit 333 to Chinese Special Forces. Such differences will make cross-national research difficult, but that is precisely why it is so sorely needed: to map out the parameters of what special operations and SOF are—not just in a U.S. or Western context but globally. Second, and perhaps more important, most Western special operations organizations find themselves at a crossroads in terms of roles and missions. The drawdown in Afghanistan is coinciding with a resumption of activity in Iraq and increased interest in Syria and elsewhere. Although SOF were successful tactically and operationally in both Afghanistan and Iraq, their contribution strategically to those lengthy engagements is unclear at best. For many SOF commanders and national leaders, the questions now revolve around preparing to conduct activities as they have over the past decade, evolving into other mission areas, or striking an uncomfortable balance between both.

Other areas of research that are understudied and would facilitate the kind of academic community/SOF community interaction we are calling for include the evolution and dispersion of SOF, strategy, and doctrine. Innovation and dispersion has become a significant theoretical issue within the social sciences, and there is no reason that special operations should not be affected by this phenomenon. Indeed, one of the authors here has argued that, following Waltz (1979), international relations theory predicts that military innovations will diffuse around the world as states adapt to the threats they face, and thus the proliferation of SOF should be considered an example of the global diffusion of a successful military practice (Marsh, 2013).

We were pleased to see that we are not the only ones interested in this phenomenon academically. Recently, the Dan Shomron Center for Society, Security, and Peace at Kinneret College on the Sea of Galilee organized a conference, Special Operations Forces (SOFs) Around the World: Perspectives From the Social Sciences. We take this as a sign that the study of special operations might be on the brink of a phase transition to the critical mass we mentioned previously. And we hope that *SOJ* will be able to contribute in a significant way to the field in the years to come.

NOTE

1. Of particular note here is Adm. (Ret.) William McRaven, whose *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1996) is a seminal work in the field and was written while he was a student at the Naval Postgraduate School.

REFERENCES

- Celeski, Joseph. (2011, August). *A theory of SOF*. Briefing at the Joint Special Operations University SOF-Power Workshop, MacDill Air Force Base, FL.
- Finlan, Alastair. (2007). *Special forces, strategy, and the war on terror: Warfare by other means*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gray, Colin. (Ed.). (1992, June). *Special operations: What succeeds and why? Lessons of experience, phase I*. Fairfax, VA: National Institute for Public Policy, June.
- Kiras, James. (2006). *Special operations and strategy: From World War II to the war on terror*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kuhn, Thomas. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Luttwak, Edward, Canby, Steven, & Thomas, David. (1982, May). *A systematic review of "commando" (special) operations*. Potomac, MD: C&L Associates.
- Marsh, Christopher. (2013, November). *The rise of SOF power*. Paper presented at the Midwest International Studies Association Conference, St. Louis, MO.
- McRaven, William. (1996). *Spec ops: Case studies in special operations warfare: Theory and practice*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press.
- Spulak, Robert G. (2007). *A theory of special operations*. Hurlburt Field, FL: Joint Special Operations University.
- Waltz, Kenneth. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Yarger, Harry. (2013). *21st century SOF: Toward an American theory of special operations*. MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University.

Entry Point: Accessing Indigenous Perspectives During Complex Operations

Matthew P. Dearing

National Defense University, Fort Lesley McNair, Washington, DC, USA

James L. Jeffreys

San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California, USA

Justin A. Depue

U.S. Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, USA

Looking back on the U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is evident that one of the greatest impairments for Western stability practitioners was their inability to identify with indigenous perspectives. Despite this well-known weakness, there is a way to acquire such essential insights: By becoming the “other” as a participant observer, civilian ethnographers can access entry points at the individual level that foster social interactions that realistically introduce indigenous intelligence into complex operations—recording how identity is learned and communicated; how identity informs perspectives; and how the population may respond to change. Equipped with this type of ethnographic comprehension, stability practitioners can limit their collective efforts to those select opportunities that can be successfully engaged at the subnational level rather than ill-advised “whole of government approaches,” which often create new levels of instability. Based on our fieldwork with U.S. special operations forces, we discuss qualitative research methods that succeeded and failed in a complex operations environment.

Keywords: special operations, counterinsurgency, ethnography, research methods, Afghanistan, Iraq

Becoming lost, confused, and war-weary remains an operational risk during prolonged conflicts. Over the past decade, warfighters have been tasked not only to implement counterinsurgency solutions at the local level but also to read, interpret, and understand the very foundation of localized conflicts weaved within historical and cultural complexities. Moreover, they have been given insufficient tools and education to conduct this important cross-cultural work. While many contemporary scholars address the challenges of cross-cultural fieldwork, relatively few examine the functionality of research methods within areas impacted by protracted armed conflict. Even fewer studies identify how an ethnographic approach to microlevel research may reduce the probability that stability practitioners will succumb to the adverse effects of disorientation or fatigue while attempting to find a way

forward within complex operations. Conversely, subject-matter experts in the field of ethnography can advise stability practitioners and recommend directional changes when operations are misguided. With the right methodological approach, ethnographers can act as directional aids and remote sensors that inform microlevel research in support of stability practitioners in the field (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). As field instruments, ethnographers normally develop an indigenous “point of view” that can enable the identification of pragmatic entry points for stability practitioners and reduce the impact of exhaustion on the effectual use of resources (Fife, 2005).

Irrespective of the approach, field research remains a demanding process of learning and adapting, often under less-than-ideal conditions. It is even more arduous in a conflict setting, where threats to the researcher and respondents are ever present. We investigate the problems associated with our recent use of research methods at field sites in Afghanistan and promote discourse on best practices for complex operations. These field sites, known as village stability platforms, were frequently inaccessible and at times unstable. Our research backgrounds are wide-ranging: two American academics working as social scientists for the Human Terrain System and an Army Civil Affairs officer assigned to U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). Despite our background differences, we all found ourselves in Afghanistan faced with the same duty: to conduct primary research, collect and analyze data, and distribute finished products. In light of these limiting factors, we found it was possible to use ethnography to better inform stability practitioners. Our fieldwork found three core barriers to researchers in complex operations: (1) restricted rapport building; (2) overreliance on central access points; and (3) organizational pressures. We also found three mutually reinforcing methods that worked: (1) identifying with the indigenous respondents; (2) obtaining information on the periphery; and (3) identifying appropriate entry and exit points for stability practitioners. This study provides a short case study example to illustrate the limited success of these research methods.

Oddly, given the complexity of the U.S. mission, our methodological approach is the focus of some academic scorn. The ethical debate of “militarized anthropology” and, more broadly, social science research has been addressed many times from a variety of academics and policy practitioners within and outside of the system (Gonzalez, 2007, 2008; Lucas, 2009; Forte, 2011; McFate & Fondacaro, 2011; Joseph, 2014). The institutions of anthropology have maintained an anti-imperialist stance on military intervention and advocated noninvolvement in Afghanistan. Many of the academic criticisms of military anthropology (seen in practice as Human Terrain teams) are based on a moralist view of anthropology, which advocates against imperial power structures or establishes a strict adherence to objectivity. A second argument tends toward the function of such research: One side suggests a lack of sufficient rigor within Human Terrain teams (Simons, 2011), while another (Lamb, Orton, Davies, Pikulsky, & Flynn, 2013) argues the institution was not properly used by the Army due in part to its strong cultural aversion to irregular warfare. No evidence or complaints exist suggesting an unacceptable application of anthropological expertise (Lucas, 2009), and studies by the National Defense University (NDU), Institute for Defense Analysis, Center for Naval Analysis, and West Point all found at least partial success with the use of Human Terrain teams (Lamb et al., 2013). Following Lamb’s conclusions, our comments focus on the function and process of field-based, microlevel research under the constraints of complex operations and how they are best situated within USASOC line of effort.

FIGHTING FATIGUE FROM MISGUIDED APPROACHES

Complex operations encompass military, social, environmental, and economic issues that justify the need for civilian capability in areas of diplomatic, intelligence, logistical, and research functions. In the post–Cold War era, failed states, transnational crime, and ungoverned spaces are of increasing focus at the international level; such multidimensional problems require joint civil–military effort across agency, nongovernmental, and international partners (White House, 2005). Frequently, the incalculable complexities of these environments lead to misguided operational approaches that ultimately become impractical and altogether disconnected from the reality of events on the ground. Complex operations are used to try to solve what policy planners have called “whole of government” problem sets—where fragile states require an interdependent focus on political, security, economic, and social domains, as failure in one area commonly leads to the eventual collapse of another (Department of Defense, 2010). On the whole, civil–military efforts have not prevailed in developing a coherent and practical strategy behind whole of government approaches (WGAs). While the theory behind WGAs brings in every available institution to support the effort, it is evident from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that stability practitioners were woefully unprepared, underfunded, and/or underresourced (Chandrasekaran, 2007, 2012). In many cases, these efforts materialized as force-fed, impractical approaches that exhibit a misguided flow of resources toward programs and structures that simply did not fit at the local level (Rosenau, 2009). It is no wonder that many of the stability practitioners who left Iraq and Afghanistan did so with an overwhelming sense of disinterest and utter fatigue.

Complex operations demand pragmatism. As a further difficulty, “complex operations fatigue” can contribute to indifference among practitioners in the fields of diplomacy, defense, and development (Binnendijk and Cronin, 2009). Exhaustion can impact even the most seasoned professional soldiers within USASOC, who are often called on to perform as police officer, government advisor, and development economist—all at the same time. A large part of negotiating complex operations is prior knowledge of an area and its people, as well as the ability to learn and adapt to changes in the field. Embedded social science researchers, such as ethnographers, can provide the focus and depth of information that other stability practitioners may not have the experience, time, or interest to perform.¹

There has been a growing focus on research in conflict zones over the years (Nordstrom & Robben, 1995; Richards, 2005; Sriram, 2009; Mazurana, Jacobsen, & Gale, 2013). In addition to work put forward by academics, there is new interest in the complex operations field to develop a more contextual and grounded perspective. Many agree that the Department of Defense shoulders the majority of burden for complex operations, using civilians sparingly for areas the military cannot handle, such as social science research (Binnendijk & Cronin, 2009). Conventional military and special operations that seek to operationalize indigenous perceptions can gain a crucial advantage during complex operations, mitigating violent effects or outright preventing violence from the start. In addition, warfighters have learned long overdue lessons and acknowledged that cultural conflicts can prove highly resistant to force alone. However, learning to operate cross-culturally is always difficult (Davis & Konner, 2011). Experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan exposed the truth that military forces are not well prepared to carry out operations requiring more than a basic understanding of indigenous perceptions or their potential impact. During the past decade of war, poor performance and a lack of cultural knowledge on the ground led to “pressure from below” for a rapid change in direction for the U.S. military (Foley, Griffin, & McCartney, 2011).

After successive civil–military engagements throughout the world and the rapid change of direction and subsequent transformation of the U.S. military over the past 20 years, both conventional military and special operations are better prepared for the challenges presented by future complex operations (Farrell, Osina, & Russell, 2013). Yet structural changes typically take place in distinct stages. As a learning institution, the U.S. military continues to navigate the “cultural turn,” and knowledge-based developments can be observed in some sectors (Kelly, Jauregui, Mitchell, & Walton, 2010). While deep changes in the “purpose” of social science research have historically resulted in the development of new research methods (Fox, 2007), in the same way, the next stage of military transformation must be defined by the collaborative development of research methods that are expeditionary, effective, and practical. In the next section, we briefly examine those techniques and processes that show potential; however, note the barriers one may face when used in a conflict setting.

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Above all, research methodologies need to consider how indigenous identity may determine the effectiveness of stability practitioners during complex operations, focusing on: (1) how indigenous identity is learned; (2) how indigenous identity is communicated; (3) how indigenous identity informs perspectives; and (4) how indigenous groups respond to change (Reynolds, Valentine, & Munter, 2011). Being successful with this type of ethnographic approach often requires the prolonged use of participant observers that are able to become the “other” in field settings (Ely, with Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & McCormack Steinmetz, 1991; Hammersley, 1992).

Methods are only part of the plan. As part of the transformational process, stability practitioners should seek out subject-matter experts in the social sciences and collectively work toward the pragmatic adaptation of select research methods to gain real-world advantage. Rapid ethnography and comparative research methods represent the core of this advantage (Beebe, 2001). As a team-based approach, rapid ethnography provides specific data about distinct indigenous groups; comparative research can expand these types of data into generalized products. That said, subject-matter experts in the field of ethnography can provide stability practitioners with cross-cultural data that reflects the meanings behind the “incidence, distribution, and causes” of behavior among indigenous groups (Ember & Ember, 2009). However, setbacks are inevitable during complex operations, and the use of these approaches is not without risk.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

Mistakes are assured: Members of indigenous groups could be injured or killed based on inaccurate information, flawed analyses, or misinterpretations. This set of predictabilities has proven to be inherently common wherever research methods are adapted for complex operations. The history of the social sciences in the context of complex operations offers sufficient evidence to support this dismal statement (Davies, 1998). As previously mentioned, many professionals in the social sciences accede to a form of “blanket moral condemnation” of militarized research and seek to distance themselves from the expected liabilities of such behavior (Lucas, 2009).

Keeping a safe distance remains a strategy of choice for both individuals and institutions alike. The strategy to remain distant or distinct from military or other government organizations has inherent value toward the expansion of general knowledge for all. Independent research conducted outside of the U.S. military that examines the “social condition” of armed conflict is often of great importance to military and government professionals (Lubkemann, 2008). Put simply, the militarization of academic knowledge is not restricted to embedded researchers. Published research found in the public domain is used by the U.S. military every day, and moral disapproval does not change this fact. Comparatively, getting close or being embedded is not necessarily bad either. Social scientists who actively participate in militarized research will continue to offer significant contributions not only to military and government entities but to the social sciences as well.

BARRIERS TO FIELD RESEARCH

We find three core barriers that social science researchers may face during complex operations: (1) restricted rapport building; (2) overreliance on central access points; and (3) organizational pressure. These barriers upset the ultimate objective of the ethnographer, which is to establish a foundation of indigenous identity as a means of accessing practical information.

Restricted Rapport Building

Complex operations present a variety of stressors to both the ethnographer and the population of interest, including the threat of violence. While we may use a variety of techniques to triangulate our data collection, such as in-depth interviews, small focus groups, media monitoring, and archival data, lacking sufficient time on the ground with an indigenous group can present significant problems in rapport building. The establishment of rapport is a prerequisite of ethnography (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). Moreover, the embedded nature of association with military units provides distinct difficulties in rapport building, as we are at best viewed as sympathetic to, if not complicit with, U.S. interests. Our presence affects the behavior, actions, and dialogue of respondents, making rapport building all the more imperative.

Identifying with respondents in complex operations is more than just drinking tea. What respondents tell us is certainly important, but what they withhold through silence—and why—may be much more significant (Brun, 2013). Such nuances can be garnered only through participant observation in safe spaces—an area the average soldier rarely accesses.² When the ethnographer was able to access these areas, more was learned by observation of attitudes, behaviors, and processes of intracultural relationships—more than is typically evidenced at a key leader engagement or similar manufactured setting. Key leader engagements, while valuable tools to build cross-cultural relations, are more often controlled environments that produce distorted information and confidence levels. Military units typically reside in a location for 6 to 12 months and may visit a specific village only half a dozen times while deployed. Stability practitioners that reside at a more local level, such as USASOC teams, may live in a village their entire tour, with near total access to the nonverbal behaviors required to make more substantive judgments of norms and group identity. In this environment, an ethnographer can be a key link between the unit and the indigenous population, accessing safe spaces that the military unit may

never know of, let alone be granted permission to enter. It should be noted, however, that one should be wary of placing too much weight on behaviors under such conditions. It is important that the information garnered in such environments be cross-referenced with that from key leader engagements. Finally, failure to understand local cultural norms and nuances may lead one to misinterpret gestures or expressions.³ However, the quickest and most impactful method of rapport building is to know the language—not only the ability to speak the language (Goffman, 1959) but also to mirror linguistic behavior that is as powerful as, if not more powerful than, the words themselves (Whitbeck, 2012). Subcultures may have phrases or greetings that are unique. Knowing these cues can identify the researcher as part of the in-group and facilitate rapport building with potential respondents.

Overreliance on Central Access Points

A second barrier toward valid research is an overreliance on central access points, namely working directly with stability practitioners in their operations cycle to collect information. Key leader engagements, on-the-spot interviews, and patrol participation are methods that alone rarely produce valuable information. Data gathered in such interviews always have to be weighed against the possibility the respondent is providing “loaded” information, divulging what they think will either keep them safe from government or insurgent forces, or create a positive response from U.S. forces. Over the years the Afghan population experienced key leader engagement and interview fatigue. They realized what should and should not be said; what military units were looking for; and how to operationalize us to fight their battles. Ethnographers embedded within the military unit itself on a mission were of little use as they were viewed more intelligence collectors. At times, researchers found themselves competing with military occupation specialties (e.g., military intelligence, psychological operations) that asked questions geared toward the collection of actionable information. Given logistical constraints, these specialized personnel were often embedded alongside the ethnographer during patrols, forcing the ethnographer to interact with the same respondents—an impractical task. We were not alone; indigenous groups also faced a set of dreadful challenges.

Afghans often noted in their own proverbial ways that they felt stuck between a rock and a hard place. An owner of a very small hydroelectric wheat grinding plant described these stressors; he compared his life to that of a grain-grinding wheel that grinds the chaff into wheat. He described the population as the chaff ground by, and stuck between, the opposing wheels—always balancing between an insurgent or coalition sympathizer. In other instances we viewed what could be described as Scott’s (1987) “weapons of the weak”: passive resistance through misinformation based on sympathy with insurgent forces or antipathy toward the Afghan government and coalition forces. The fearful and compromising manner in which the respondent answers questions only gives us hints of the truth, and in some instances this places the ethnographer in an uncomfortable ethical dilemma, as the style of the interview more resembles an interrogation than a discussion. In such circumstances, interview data collection can become corrupted and must be thoroughly vetted against other streams of data.

Given that our presence could affect the environment and the agency of actors, we were sometimes forced to postpone research to avoid upsetting indigenous social movements in an area. In one instance, significant attention was placed on a district in eastern Afghanistan where an anti-Taliban “uprising” had occurred. Work by a local journalist, Emal Habib (2013), was

some of the only reporting coming out of this district at the time. While we frequently received requests for data and analysis on the causes, evolution, and direction of the movement, it was critical for us to remain physically disengaged from it to ensure we did not upset the grassroots nature of the movement. Our presence in the area or association with movement leaders could have signaled to locals that the movement was influenced or supported by outside actors and thus could have harmed the movement or those involved.

Organizational Barriers

Like the wheat grinder, we also felt the proverbial rock on both sides: The professional obligation to be objective was pressed against the stress of serving with military units that must rationalize the need for each and every person located on a base. On some of the most remote combat outposts, civilian social scientists can be quickly labeled “dead weight” if they fail to participate in camp cleanup, solidify defensive positions, or participate in guard duty. On patrol, civilians are often tested for their ability to “soldier” or “hack it.” There were certainly methods to bargain for a minor camp duty without going “all in” and risking the loss of outsider status, such as conducting cultural awareness classes for soldiers.

More than camp duties, time was always a limiting factor in the collection and analysis process. If it was not too little time, it was the random and ambiguous nature of time in the field. Given the 24-hour combat operation cycle, we often had to provide results before the postfield-work process was complete, forcing a “preliminary” assessment. The nature of complex operations rarely provides the ideal research environment, such as living in or near the research site, repeated visits to field sites, or the development of independent research topics. Time constraints and the need for information “now” invariably set the stage for incomplete, misleading, or incorrect answers.

Beyond our small program staffed with academics, we noticed many units relied heavily on ad hoc ethnographic research capabilities such (e.g., military intelligence, military civil affairs teams, or military information support operations). In pursuit of quick answers, they often sacrificed depth analysis that a trained ethnographer could bring, imposing pressure on the unqualified to make answers fit. Finally, we noticed an overreliance on secondary and non-ethnographic methods by military organizations at the local level. While useful in general or strategic-level studies, broad data sets, geospatial analysis, and even longitudinal studies tended to be misleading when applied at the microlevel. Generally, there were four major methodological concerns with quantitative polling in the complex operations environment: (1) security concerns for individual pollsters in a conflict environment; (2) subcontracted data collection was often corrupted and lacked proper oversight; (3) when central access points (U.S. soldiers) were used to conduct a poll the data were unreliable; and (4) the limited scope of data, as there are significant local variables that can distort results when not taken into account within the survey instruments. Certainly, quantitative data can be used to build a case but should never be considered a stand-alone package to make actionable decisions at the local level.

We often found that ethnographic research, such as rapid ethnography or participant observation at the local level, served to question quantitative results covering larger geographic areas, compelling further research, reassessment of methodologies, or refinement of assumptions. Clearly, assumptions made about individuals based on aggregate data tended to lead to the common errors of ecological fallacy. Indigenous groups are not easily represented by statistical

data alone. While functionally useful at the strategic level, quantitative data also serve a ceremonial function within military organizations that are committed to PowerPoint culture. However, such data often overshadow valuable qualitative tools that are not as easily represented in a briefing.

METHODS THAT WORKED

Successful approaches during complex operations depend on a series of progressive actions across political, security, economic, and administrative domains. As previously mentioned, attempts at WGAs within complex operations often fail to produce effective government linked vertically from district to national level. In this context, the reversal of widespread lawlessness, insurgency, and ineffective government can be an uphill battle. Based on field experiences, three interrelated research methods appeared to improve the odds faced by stability practitioners at the subnational level: (1) conducting rapid ethnographic studies that rely primarily on indigenous respondents located on the periphery of military operations or outside of key leader engagements; (2) using the findings of rapid ethnographic studies to identify appropriate entry/exit points (EEPs) for stability practitioners; and (3) identifying with indigenous respondents throughout the process.

Entry Points

WGAs tend to be resource intensive and often target multiple indicators with imprecise aim, potentially missing those marks that offer the most operational impact. The problem intensifies when complex operations fatigue sets in and resource usage becomes the primary metric of success. The coordinated use of EEPs offers a degree of aid. An entry point is a predetermined component of WGAs that utilizes available resources to effectively target a primary indicator to maximize impact and reduce the inherent risks of exploitation by local actors. An exit point establishes a metric for desired effects and criteria for disengagement. Markedly suited for village or district stability operations, EEPs propose realistic, measurable, and achievable outcomes within complex operations. Without EEPs, the uncontrolled flow of resources (e.g., humanitarian assistance supplies, multiple-award contracts to local leaders, employment contracts for local police) can become a source of instability and elevate the risk of complex operations fatigue. Using EEPs, a “fractional” WGA can prioritize a small number of interconnected points and ignore numerous secondary indicators. Success depends on the ability of stability practitioners to bypass secondary indicators while actively engaged with those predetermined EEPs. Ethnographic data can enable better situational awareness and control during this type of selective engagement.

An Example at the District Level

Beyond question, village and district stability operations are problematic during complex operations. Long-standing patterns of high-visibility attacks attributed to armed insurgent groups can produce pervasive threat perceptions among indigenous groups. Such perceptions often contribute to the normalization of ineffective government at the district level. In this context,

such perceptions can depress the day-to-day performance of government officials and produce widespread apathy toward central government. Any WGA directed at reversing the predisposition of ineffective government at the district level should be formed around entry points that represent internal significance for indigenous groups and match the external resources available to stability practitioners. Of these resources, time may hold the most influence over progressive actions that hit the mark.

From an example based in central eastern Afghanistan, the ethnographer recorded, analyzed, and incorporated ethnographic data into the construction of a formative theory, termed the A3 construct, which identified a set of three primary indicators of ineffective government at a besieged district center: (1) access, (2) absenteeism, and (3) administration. As a reference tool, the ethnographer designed the A3 construct to enable a colocated military civil affairs team to reach a common understanding of subnational governance at the district center and rapidly develop consensus on three EEPs for progressive actions.

At the time of the study, indigenous groups seeking official services at the district center were faced with poor security, empty offices, and low performing officials. The A3 construct offered a pragmatic plan that operationalized only those EEPs that increased confidence in local government through the pursuit of measures that improved physical and procedural access to the district center. This plan had three aims. First, decrease threat perceptions and reduce absenteeism among government officials through measures that enhance security at the district center using physical barriers. Second, further mitigate absenteeism through measures that improve basic facilities or work spaces at the district center. Third, incentivize the professional administration of duties through support provided to those select district officials who demonstrate professional capability.

Limitations and Successes in the Field

Even with the implementation of the A3 construct, the composite nature of the complex operations tended to obstruct the efforts of the military civil affairs team to fully isolate primary indicators from secondary indicators in regard to ineffective government at the district center. Despite this limiting factor, the use of an ethnographer offered key insights into the social processes that allowed indigenous groups to construct meanings and identities during the phases of this complex operation. According to Justin Depue, a team leader with a Special Operations Civil Affairs Team, some members of USASOC team recognized the operational value of these insights.

The redeployment of our subject-matter expert ethnographer was a frustration for us. His departure from the district stability platform left a significant hole. We had developed an operational dynamic that benefited our team's efforts toward addressing issues regarding stability, governance, and development at the district level. He was a critical component that provided us with key access to the local population. Due to the operational tempo, I was unable to develop the same types of relationships. He provided valuable information from the local population. Once he left, this type of information was no longer available to us. Many of those relationships just ended.⁴

During the noted study, the ethnographer routinely challenged assumptions held by the USASOC team. In the past, the U.S. military has faced setbacks after making decisions based on inaccurate assumptions about indigenous groups (Munoz, 2012). Throughout the

postfieldwork process, data recorded by the ethnographer were aggregated to identify central themes or dominant narratives, furthering the operational understanding of indigenous perspectives. As an applied approach, this specific ethnography enabled the USASOC team to remain connected to indigenous groups, identify primary indicators, and establish realistic outcomes during a district stability operation. In summary, the effective coordination between USASOC components and a civilian ethnographer exemplify the advantage of microlevel research and civil–military integration during complex operations.

CONCLUSION

To reduce the adverse effects of disorientation or complex operations fatigue, stability practitioners should integrate a subject-matter expert ethnographer into all phases of predeployment and deployment cycles. Once introduced into the deployment cycle, the ethnographer should be an integral part of the team but at the same time maintain a level of autonomy and independence to conduct substantive fieldwork. These two prerequisites are not easily met. Still, in becoming the “other” as a participant observer, civilian ethnographers can access entry points at the individual level that foster social interactions that realistically introduce indigenous intelligence into complex operations: recording how identity is learned and communicated; how identity informs perspectives; and how the population may respond to change. Equipped with this type of ethnographic comprehension, stability practitioners can limit their collective efforts to those select opportunities that can be successfully engaged at the subnational level rather than ill-advised “whole of government approaches” that often create new levels of instability. Ethnography offers an edge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The opinions and analysis expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Department of Defense.

NOTES

1. Critics after the invasion of Iraq called for building ethnographic intelligence (EI) capability within the U.S. military to better understand cultures and Human Terrain (Simons & Tucker, 2004; Renzi, 2006; Kipp, Grau, Prinslow, & Smith, 2006; Eldridge & Neboshynsky, 2008).
2. Notable exceptions include Maj. Jim Gant, author of “One Tribe at a Time” (2009), a U.S. Army Special Forces officer who spent considerable time living among villagers in Nuristan Province, as well as other special forces teams living within villages and away from the typical confines of forward operating bases.
3. We often viewed soldiers or researchers misinterpreting behavior in an interview setting. Notably, observers would mirror image Western cultural expressions onto Afghans. While there are universal human behaviors, there are also distinct cultural nuances that can mislead the untrained observer.
4. Interview with Capt. Justin Depue (coauthor), Special Operations Civil Affairs Team, USASOC, November 27, 2012.

REFERENCES

- Beebe, J. (2001). *Rapid assessment process*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.
- Binnendijk, H., & Cronin, P. M. (2009). Through the complex operations. *PRISM*, 1(1), 9–20.
- Brun, C. (2013). “I love my soldier”: Developing responsible and ethically sound research strategies in a militarized society. In D. Mazurana, K. Jacobsen, & L. A. Gale (Eds.), *Research methods in conflict settings: A view from below* (pp. 129–148). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Chandrasekaran, R. (2007). *Imperial life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Chandrasekaran, R. (2012). *Little America: The war within the war for Afghanistan*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Davies, C. A. (1998). *Reflexive ethnography: A guide to researching selves and others* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Davis, S. H., & Konner, M. (2011). *Being there: Learning to live cross-culturally*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Department of Defense. (2010, February). *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.defense.gov/qdr/qdr%20as%20of%2029jan10%201600.pdf>
- Dewalt, K. M., & Dewalt, B. R. (2011). *Participant observation: A Guide for fieldworkers*. New York, NY: Alta Mira Press.
- Eldridge, E., & Neboshynsky, A. (2008). *Quantifying Human Terrain* (Master's thesis). Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.
- Ely, M., with Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & McCormack Steinmetz, A. (1991). *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles*. New York, NY: Falmer Press.
- Ember, C. R., & Ember, M. (2009). *Cross-cultural research methods* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press.
- Farrell, T., Osina, F., & Russell, J. A. (2013). *Military adaptation in Afghanistan*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fife, W. (2005). *Doing fieldwork: Ethnographic methods for research in developing countries*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foley, R. T., Griffin, S., & McCartney, H. (2011). “Transformation in contact”: Learning the lessons of modern war. *International Affairs*, 87(2), 253–270.
- Forté, M. C. (2011). The Human Terrain System and anthropology: A review of ongoing public debates. *American Anthropologist*, 113(1), 149–153.
- Fox, R. G. (2007). *Anthropology put to work*. New York, NY: Berg.
- Gant, J. (2009, October 29). “One Tribe at a Time.” Los Angeles, CA: Nine Sisters Imports. Retrieved from Steven Pressfield Online: <http://www.stevenpressfield.com/2009/10/one-tribe-at-a-time-4-the-full-document-at-last/>
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Anchor.
- Gonzalez, R. J. (2007). Phoenix reborn? The rise of the Human Terrain System. *Anthropology Today*, 23(6), 21–22.
- Gonzalez, R. J. (2008). Human Terrain: Past, present, and future applications. *Anthropology Today*, 24(1), 21–26.
- Habib, E. (2013, September 20). Auto archives: Emal Habib. *Afghanistan Analysts Network*. Retrieved from <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/author/emal-habib>
- Hammersley, M. (1992). *What's wrong with ethnography*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Joseph, P. (2014). “Soft” counterinsurgency: Human Terrain teams and US military strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan. New York, NY: Palgrave Pivot.
- Kelly, J. D., Jauregui, B., Mitchell, S. T., & Walton, J. (Eds.). (2010). *Anthropology and global counterinsurgency*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Kipp, J., Grau, L., Prinslow, K., & Smith, D. (2006). The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21st century. *Military Review*, 86(5), 8–15.
- Lubkemann, S. C. (2008). *Culture in chaos: An anthropology of the social condition in war*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Lamb, C. J., Orton, J. D., Davies, M. C., Pikulsky, T. T., & Flynn, M. T. (2013). *Human Terrain teams: An organizational innovation for sociocultural knowledge in irregular warfare*. Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics.
- Lucas, G. R. (2009). *Anthropologists in arms: The ethics of military anthropology*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.
- Mazurana, D., Jacobsen, K., & Gale, A. L. (Eds.). (2013). *Research methods in conflict settings: A view from below*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- McFate, M., & Fondacaro, S. (2011). Reflections on the Human Terrain System during the first 4 years. *PRISM*, 2(4), 63–82.
- Munoz, A. (2012). *US military information operations in Afghanistan: Effectiveness of psychological operations 2001–2010* (Monograph). Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
- Nordstrom, C., & Robben, A. (1995). *Fieldwork under fire: Contemporary studies of violence and survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Renzi, F. (2006). Networks: Terra incognita and the case for ethnographic intelligence. *Military Review*, September–October, 16–22.
- Reynolds, S., Valentine, D., & Munter, M. (2011). *Guide to cross-cultural communication*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Richards, P. (2005). *No peace no war: An anthropology of contemporary armed conflicts*. Oxford, UK: James Curry.
- Rosenau, W. (2009). Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan. *Harvard International Review*, 31(1), 52.
- Scott, J. (1987). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Simons, A. (2011). Anthropology, culture, and COIN in a hybrid warfare world. In P. Brister, W. H. Natter, & R. R. Tones (Eds.), *Hybrid warfare and transnational threats* (pp. 83–91). New York, NY: CENSA.
- Simons, A., & Tucker, D. (2004). *Improving human intelligence in the war on terrorism: The need for an ethnographic capability*. Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School.
- Sriram, C. L., King, J. C., Mertus, J. A., Martin-Ortega, O., & Herman, J. (Eds.). (2009). *Surviving field research: Working in violent and difficult situations*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- The White House. (2005, November 7). National Security Presidential Directive 44. Retrieved from *Federation of American Scientists* website: <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html>
- Whitbeck, L. (2012). *Mental health and emerging adulthood among homeless young people*. Florence, KY: Psychology Press.

The American Counterculture of War: Supporting Foreign Insurgencies and the American Discourse of War

Jan K. Gleiman

Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, USA and Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, Australia

The U.S. Army Special Forces and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) trace their legacy back to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). But the history and legacy of special operations, especially the use of unconventional warfare, goes back much further in American history. After closely examining the historical literature that discusses the American ways, cultures, and dominant traditions of war, this article asserts that unconventional warfare, the practice of supporting insurgencies, represents a counterculture of war that is rising and beginning to influence the discourse on strategy, war, and warfare in America. The article speculates that the rise of this counterculture could be a forcing function for better strategy and strategic thinking.

Keywords: unconventional warfare, strategic culture, way of war, counterculture, support to insurgency, ideology, strategic discourse

INTRODUCTION

Both the U.S. Army Special Forces and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) trace their legacy back to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and its larger-than-life founder, William J. Donovan. But the history and legacy of special operations, especially the use of unconventional warfare, goes back much further in American history. Most historians do not consider such manifestations of warfare to be part of mainstream thinking when Americans think about war. Unconventional warfare is not part of the “American way of war” (Weigley, 1973), or the “American culture of war” (Lewis, 2006), or other expressions of mainstream thinking about armed conflict. Yet particularly in the United States there has always been an underlying tradition of supporting foreign insurgent groups. Since the founding of the republic, this tradition can be effectively labeled a “counterculture of war” separate from the mainstream culture. Throughout U.S. history, individuals and small groups have rejected some of the more dominant notions of the nature of war, the character of warfare, and approaches to conflict. Taking a broad historical perspective reveals that this counterculture of war is on the rise and is truly affecting the discourse on war and the understanding of strategy in more and more profound ways.

Correspondence should be addressed to Jan K. Gleiman, C/O SORA, P.O. Box 3043, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027.
E-mail: jkgleiman@ksu.edu

This article is not subject to U.S. copyright law.

Understanding how we think about war and why we may subconsciously favor one approach over another could be vital to the improving strategic thinking in general.

The central idea, in what this article refers to as the American counterculture of war, is the belief in the feasibility, practicality, and righteousness of assisting foreign insurgencies or resistance movements in their attempts to overthrow or disrupt adversarial regimes. Throughout the history of the United States, citizens found utility in providing various forms of assistance to insurgent movements, sometimes as an expedient matter of state policy, and other times through the often illegal, though quietly condoned or tolerated, actions of private citizens.

This article first explains the concept of a counterculture of war as it relates to other literature on the ways that Americans have traditionally pursued armed conflict. The phrases *culture of war*, *strategic culture*, *ways of war*, *traditions of war*, and even *strategic approaches* are used as near synonyms, though nuance is also clarified in the first section. The article then discusses the ideological influences on this counterculture and traces the history of the counterculture using general historical examples, while demonstrating that the counterculture is becoming part of the mainstream thinking about conflict and war.

UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE AND ITS CULTURE

Unconventional Warfare—Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow an occupying power or government by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area. (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2014, p. 255)

Unconventional warfare—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. Also called UW. (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010; U.S. Army official Department of Defense definition prior to 2014)¹

The U.S. military establishment has struggled over the past few years to agree on the definition of unconventional warfare. Oddly, the term is one of the most frequently used in the past decade. The failure to agree on a definition can be traced to competing schools of thought, which may seem technical in their arguments but actually reflect a much bigger divide in U.S. military culture. The simple disagreement over definition is symptomatic of different ways of understanding war, warfare, and strategy.

At first glance, the definitions at the beginning of this section appear quite similar. But the updated definition focuses exclusively on assisting resistance movements or insurgencies to “disrupt or overthrow” governments or regimes whether they are legitimate or de facto. It implies a direct or at least closer connection to the political and ideological motivations of warfare and is often linked to the objective of regime change. The earlier definition is more encompassing of all irregular warfare activities. But the pre-2014 definition may also include activities to assist a de facto or de jure government in fighting an internal war against an insurgency or resistance movement.

So why then was there a controversy over such a technicality in a definition? Mark Grdovic (2010), a special forces officer and former doctrine writer for the Army’s Special Forces

Command, explained that the tangled history of this term was the result of separate “communities of interest,” some of whom believed in the 1990s that the likelihood of the United States ever supporting an insurgency was very low and that it would certainly not be a major strategic factor in any future conflict. Another community of interest, largely represented by special forces and the CIA, believed that supporting a foreign insurgency or resistance movement to achieve U.S. objectives was not only viable but also likely and appropriate to the post–Cold War era, just as it had been during the Cold War (Grdovic, 2010, p. 136). It is this community of interest that stands as the current manifestation of a long-evolving, and recently rising, counter-culture of American war, which started well before Donovan headed the OSS.

The political and strategic purposes of this counterculture are the same as those related to the other schools of thought, cultures, or ways of war. The political and strategic purpose was always to place the United States at a position of advantage. But the approaches advocated by the counterculture sought to avoid the costs often accrued with direct forms of warfare that are associated with both the dominant culture of war and the alternative culture of war (which will be explored in the next section). The counterculture relies more on indirect approaches. Furthermore, this counterculture of war does not attempt to separate politics from war. It is often ideologically motivated and inextricably linked to politics. It is fundamentally about armed politics (Simpson, 2012) as well as a tool for achieving large-scale and narrowly political strategic objectives.²

WAYS OF WAR, CULTURES OF WAR, DISCOURSES ON WAR, AND IDEOLOGY

Many historians have attempted to conceptually frame the interrelated ideas of an “American way of war” (Weigley, 1973), an “American strategic culture” (Gray, 2006), and an “American culture of war” (Lewis, 2006). These concepts are all based on the idea that the U.S. military, civilian leaders, and citizens generally prefer to undertake large-scale conventional wars. Other historians have taken a slightly different approach and identified alternative traditions or schools of thought that have engaged in a continuing discourse on how the American military prepares for war (Lynn, 2003; Linn, 2007).³ Still other historians argue that while the mainstream military culture in the United States may have favored a bipolar, symmetric, conventional war, the majority of American wars and military actions have involved small wars, counterinsurgencies, and stability operations (Boot, 2002, 2013; Tierney, 2007).

Yet none of these authors has specifically identified an unconventional warfare tradition that focuses primarily on the concept that supports the definition of unconventional warfare. Historians John Tierney and Max Boot focus on warfare that involves largely conventional forces engaged in fighting against an insurgency to legitimize or reinforce a government or occupying power (sometimes the United States itself). The overarching concept of the continuing discourse between a primary way or culture of war and an alternative culture of war is a useful construct when attempting to understand the continuities of America’s approach to war, but it fails to capture another tradition that has existed and manifested itself from time to time over the course of U.S. history. In addition to the dominant culture of war (preference for conventional wars and decisive victory) and the alternative culture of war (preference for counterinsurgency and stability operations), there exists an American counterculture of war, which has not been much of a player in the discourse until very recently. While these concepts are useful for explaining the abstract ideas about how Americans think about and practice

warfare, they are just cognitive constructions that may not necessarily reflect the nuanced thinking of individuals.

In an addition to the discourse about ways of war, John Grenier (2008) discusses a pre-War of Independence “first way of war” tradition that persisted on the frontier after the founding of the United States. This way or culture of war was characterized by extirpation in the form of the deliberate targeting of noncombatant populations and the destruction of essential resource bases of adversaries. This culture of war is no longer part of the serious modern discourse on war except in the form of discussions about nuclear war and strategic bombing. Nevertheless, Grenier effectively demonstrates that in the 150 years prior to the War of Independence, this culture of war was dominant.

A counterculture is a subculture whose values and norms of behavior deviate from those of mainstream society, often in opposition to mainstream cultural mores. Theodore Roszak (1968) is largely credited with inventing the term and its definition to explain the phenomenon of hippie culture in the 1960s. Roszak’s book *The Making of a Counterculture* explains how a countercultural movement rises, is recognized, and then exerts some significant influence on the mainstream discourse of a society upon all matters to which it relates. The hippie counterculture of the 1960s is but one example of a counterculture in history. Just as the term *culture* is used to describe the norms of behavior and traditional ways of thinking in a society, it can also be used to explain a segment of society or the collective thinking of a society regarding an abstract idea.

Many authors use the term *culture* to describe patterns of thinking within the U.S. military community and the collective thinking of U.S. society on the subject of war. Colin Gray (2006), for example, uses the term *strategic culture* to describe the dominant American way of strategic thinking. Speaking in large generalities to describe this concept, he identifies several characteristics. According to Gray, the dominant strategic culture is apolitical, culturally ignorant, focused on firepower, large in scale, and profoundly regular. America’s counterculture of war is quite the opposite. It is often politically and ideologically driven and inspired; it relies upon and teaches cultural understanding and specialization; it focuses on humans as more important than hardware or firepower; it relies on “light footprint” operations; and by its nature it is wedded to irregular forms of warfare (USSOCOM Public Affairs, 2012; Lujan, 2013).

Russell Weigley (1973), in his seminal work *The American Way of War*, uses a different way of framing a similar argument. Rather than using the term *culture*, Weigley argues that the American tradition of waging war centers primarily on the idea of winning a military victory over an opponent through supreme conventional force. Weigley makes the case that the U.S. military, particularly the Army, has preferred to pursue strategies of annihilation and wars whose overall objectives were total, while political objectives were clear and tied to military victory. Though Weigley’s framework for describing strategies has been criticized as overly simplistic, his work has been central to the discourse on the subject.

Adrian Lewis (2006), on the other hand, combines the framework of both Gray and Weigley to describe the “American culture of war.” Lewis uses both the ideas and the terms of Weigley and Gray to present a more general thesis arguing that the American culture of war is not only based on conventional wars of annihilation but, through military professionalization, is also detached from politics and from the population of the United States. Lewis looks beyond just the military institutions and examines the culture of war beyond strategy, tactics, and warfare, examining its impact on American society as a whole.

Other scholars have argued that the U.S. military may have favored strategies of annihilation through the use of conventional forces, but more frequently the U.S. military has found itself engaged in wars of a different character. Max Boot (2002, 2013), for example, in *Savage Wars of Peace* and more recently in *Invisible Armies*, maintains that the United States actually practiced another way of war involving history's "small wars," such as the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion, Philippine Insurrection, and numerous Indian Wars. These conflicts did not involve symmetrical wars fought for the annihilation of the enemy's military forces. Instead, as John Tierney also argues, they involved guerilla warfare, asymmetric conflict, and, most important, counterinsurgency. Tierney (2007), in his book *Chasing Ghosts*, actually uses the term *unconventional warfare* but sticks to the earlier definition of unconventional warfare that ties the term to the concept of working through and with the security forces or allied of a de facto government. Tierney and Boot pay little attention to the important difference between supporting an insurgency and supporting a government to defeat an insurgency. When Tierney reaches the point in his book where the U.S. government establishes institutions to provide support to insurgencies (i.e., OSS and CIA), he lumps this milestone in with the rest of the counterinsurgency tradition rather than seeing it as something different.

The writings of Weigley, Gray, Lewis, Tierney, and Boot are indicative of the debate or discourse among historians on the continuities associated with the way the United States has pursued political objectives through warfare. John Lynn (2003), in his book *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*, explains how a discourse within a society determines the character of warfare from that society. Brian Linn (2007) attempts to frame this discourse for the United States military in his book *Echo of Battle*. In this work, Linn argues that U.S. military professionals learned different lessons from their wartime experiences and engaged in a discourse about how the military as an organization should prepare for future conflicts. He identifies three archetypes that represent schools of thought in the discourse. Referring to these as heroes, guardians, and managers, Linn highlights how each of these traditions framed lessons learned and participated in the discourse that led to policy decisions and to preferred methods of fighting and strategic directions. All of these, with the occasional exception of the heroes, were opposed in principle to the central idea of the unconventional warfare. Only those whom Linn recognizes as "heroes" (such as William Eaton and Frederick Funston) would see the benefit of supporting insurgents and resistance movements as an effective expedient.

Most significantly, all of these scholars effectively capture the dominant continuities in how American professionals thought about, prepared for, and practiced warfare. However, Lewis (2006) was correct in his framework that the discourse on war extends beyond military professionals and into society. Yet these scholars generally do not address the continuity that many Americans also engaged in warfare of a different character that does not really fit into the discourses they frame. Americans frequently attempted to inspire, foment, or assist insurgencies to overthrow existing governments. This highly political and ideological form of warfare runs counter to Weigley's way of war and Grey's strategic culture. It is related to and perhaps part of Tierney's and Boot's conception of the United States fighting counterinsurgency, or assisting a foreign government in its attempts to stabilize a country or put down an insurgency. Yet this counterculture of war deserves its own examination.

In explaining this concept of a counterculture of war, it is also necessary to address its ideological roots. Warfare in the United States is a part of foreign policy. While interests and resources are the primary determinants and driver of policy choices, ideology also plays an

important role. Michael Hunt (1987), in his classic work *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, does for foreign policy what Weigley, Gray, Lewis, Boot, and Tierney do for America's culture of war. Hunt argues that while most scholars focus on politics, economics, and interests when examining U.S. foreign policy, ideology is often overlooked but always important in the formation of policy and policy preferences. Hunt further argues that U.S. foreign policy ideology can be characterized through the continuity of three general principles. First, Hunt claims that Americans have generally shared a notion of American exceptionalism. While the specific definition and interpretation of that exceptionalism has been open to some interpretation and has evolved, it has generally referred to the belief that the United States has the best way of governing and is the product of the most advanced society in the world. Hunt argues that the second principle of the ideology of U.S. foreign policy is a shared belief in a racial hierarchy, where White, Anglo-Protestant Americans are at the top and all other races are stratified below. The notion of racial hierarchy influenced what Americans believed was possible with respect to integration of other races into American society and prospects for democratic self-government abroad in countries inhabited by "lesser races." Finally, Hunt maintains that the ideology of U.S. foreign policy has been characterized by a strong distrust and suspicion of social revolutions. Hunt argues that even though the United States was born of "revolution" and the rejection of the rule of British monarchy without representation, such revolutionary movements in other countries could not be trusted. The reasons for the distrust related back to the first two principles: America was exceptional, and other, lesser races could not handle the responsibilities of republican government with democratic principles and obligations.

Understanding Michael Hunt's thesis is important to the explanation of America's counterculture of war because it provides some insight into possible reasons why the central idea of the counterculture has remained out of the mainstream discourse yet still persisted over time. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, supporting foreign insurgencies was a dangerous business. The United States was a young, relatively weak state with untamed and ill-defined borders. In addition, the general belief in a racial hierarchy and the distrust of social revolutions provided strong ideological incentive against the practice. Yet American exceptionalism, as exemplified in the Monroe Doctrine, provided the ideological lifeline that maintained the continuity of this counterculture of war. Exceptionalism, manifested both in selfish reasons (or reasons of self-interest) and in reasons grounded in the perception of righteousness (the expansion of liberal democracy), would influence and feed the underground existence of the counterculture until the 20th century.

A NASCENT COUNTERCULTURE

The American counterculture of war has its ideological roots in the American War of Independence. Many view the War of Independence (1775–1782) as the first successful anticolonial war in modern history (Borstelmann, 2001).⁴ Yet as Michael Hunt (1987) demonstrates in his work, the spirit of revolution and the belief in the efficacy of wars of liberation were quickly tempered by news of the atrocities of the French Revolution: "France's bloody and prolonged agony, deeply etched in the American political consciousness, stood as a reminder of just how beset with perils the revolutionary road to liberty would be" (p. 102). This would begin a trend of Americans acting to hold revolution at bay.⁵

While the atrocities of the French Revolution may help explain the American ideological aversion to social revolutions, the relative weakness of the United States helps to explain why the federal government took stern legal measures to prevent private citizens from supporting armed insurrection abroad. Motivated by the immediate perceptions of potential scenarios from the Genet Affair, Congress passed the Neutrality Act of 1794, which made it illegal for private citizens to assist in foreign insurgencies against countries with which the United States was not at war (Brown, 1980, p. 6; Lobel, 1983). That same law is still codified in U.S. Code Title 18, Section 960, and states:

Whoever, within the United States, knowingly begins or sets on foot or provides or prepares a means for or furnishes the money for, or takes part in, any military or naval expedition or enterprise to be carried on from thence against the territory or dominion of any foreign prince or state, or of any colony, district, or people with whom the United States is at peace, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than three years, or both.⁶

Throughout the next century, many citizens would face charges of violating the Neutrality Act. Most of them, despite clear and overwhelming evidence of their activity, would be acquitted by sympathetic juries who likely shared their ideological attraction to the liberation narrative or to the righteousness of other intentions.

While Hunt may be correct in arguing that, in general, the United States held a strong distrust of revolutions, that sentiment was far from universal. Even with the passage of the Neutrality Act individuals and small groups of like-minded citizens would support revolutions abroad and in frontier territories where European powers still held *de jure* sovereignty. The illegal yet generally admired practice of filibustering began soon after the turn of the century. For example, in his book *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Lives and Times of the Filibusters*, Charles H. Brown (1980) describes how Vice-President Aaron Burr and Francisco de Miranda commanded a great deal of respect and support as each sought his own mission of “liberation” in foreign territory. Describing them as the “prototypical filibusters,” Brown explains how in 1805–1806 Burr recruited support among influential citizens (including senators, governors, and military officers) to launch expeditions through the Louisiana territories, rally settlers to his cause, and seize land owned by Spain in Texas and Florida.⁷ He then planned to declare a new country that might one day join the United States. Miranda, on the other hand, was a native of Venezuela who sought to liberate Venezuela from Spain in the early 1800s. In 1812, Miranda and his American fighters landed in Venezuela and attempted to raise an army from the local population that he assumed was eager for leadership and ready to liberate the rest of his country. Miranda used ships, men, and equipment financed by wealthy U.S. donors. He failed and many of his men were executed, while his U.S. supporters were tried and predictably acquitted for violations of the 1794 Neutrality Act (Brown, 1980).

In the early 19th century, not all such activity was the product of private citizens acting outside of government policy. The U.S. government in its relative weakness would turn to assisting rebellion in its first major international armed conflict following the War of Independence. In 1804, as U.S. shipping and commerce suffered under the piracy of the Barbary States, President Thomas Jefferson approved a plan to affect the overthrow of Yusuf Karamanli, the bashaw of Tripoli. As part of the plan, Jefferson entrusted William Eaton to find Hamet Karamanli, the exiled brother of the reigning bashaw. Eaton’s mission was to support Hamet and his “army” with advice and weapons so that Hamet could capture the city of Derne

and then proceed to Tripoli to unseat Yusuf. The history of Eaton's mission bears a striking resemblance to modern-day U.S. special forces missions and training to work with indigenous forces. Eaton and his men faced many of the same challenges, scenarios, and lessons that are integral in training U.S. special forces. For example, Hamet's army was actually more of an undisciplined "rabble," much like the bands of resistance fighters and role-players of special forces training. Eaton and his men faced what modern special forces soldiers would call a "near catastrophic loss of rapport" with their indigenous force, at one time even having to stop a mutiny in which Hamet himself participated (Lambert, 2005; Edwards, 1968; Rodd, 1932). Eaton's mission also included training these Arab soldiers and other mercenaries and paying local leaders for their support and safe passage, all part of a special forces soldier's training today.⁸

While the policy and mission decisions made by Jefferson may have been based on interests and strategies constrained by the relative weakness of the United States, Eaton's own motivations seem to have been somewhat different. Eaton seems to have been motivated by a desire for personal glory and adventure. Yet ideology and a sense of justice also provided motivation. In preparation for his mission and later in retelling the tales of the successful capture of Derne and subsequent march to Tripoli, Eaton presented his expedition to the world "as a corps of Tripolitanian patriots seeking vengeance against a tyrant" (Edwards, 1968, p. 175). Thus, even in this first example of U.S. state-sponsored support to an insurgency or rebellion, we see an ideological narrative that ran counter to the dominant foreign policy position. Similarly, Eaton's mission, while hailed in civilian circles in the United States, was seen as an anomaly among his military peers. Eaton himself, having served as both an Army officer and then as a Naval officer, was often regarded with disdain in the young professional corps of military officers.⁹ Perhaps this makes Eaton the first identifiable individual military officer who was part of the counter-culture of war.

In the first half of the 19th century, controversy and territorial disputes with Spain, France, and Britain led to further prototypical filibustering activity. Historians, including Charles H. Brown (1980) and Robert E. May (2002), explain that settlers from the United States, invited by Spanish authorities to populate areas of Florida and Texas, inspired such adventurers as James Long and José Félix Trespalacios to attempt to "liberate" Texas. Brown (1980) also argues that Andrew Jackson's supposedly unauthorized incursion into Florida during the First Seminole War also represents a nascent form of filibustering tradition that would see its climax in the 20-year period before the U.S. Civil War, from 1840–1860 (see also May, 2002). Another early example includes President James Madison ordering Brigadier General George Matthews to spark an insurrection in East Florida; this incident became known as the Patriot War, as it sought to gain the territory for the United States (Knott, 1996).

The spirit of filibustering took hold in the 1840s, when visions of American exceptionalism began to coincide with notions of grandeur and an expanded republic. Summed up by John L. O'Sullivan, one of the most famous supporters of filibustering, Manifest Destiny became the leading ideological motivation for such expeditions. Intermixed with a strategic narrative of Manifest Destiny, however, was a political agenda often with stark antebellum motivations. Most filibusters who sought to add to U.S. territory came from southern states and saw their plans leading to an eventual increase in the number of slaveholding states to the union, which would help preserve the threatened institution of slavery (Brown, 1980). When it comes to assessing explicit motivations, historians frequently disagree and are able to provide evidence of multiple

motivations for each of the many filibustering expeditions and their leaders (Brown, 1980, pp. 16–18, 45; May, 2002, pp. xii–xiv). Among those motivations, one consistently finds the belief that the population of the targeted area held a strong desire to be liberated, whether in the continental United States or in Latin America. While it may be difficult for readers to conceive of expanding the institution of slavery as part of a “liberation” narrative, the filibusters of antebellum America had little trouble with such reconciliation.

Filibustering as an activity was well known and widely discussed in American society at the time. As seen in newspaper and other press reports, the practice was both praised and despised. As both Brown and May explain, while still illegal under updated versions of the Neutrality Act (1818), many filibuster adventures often seemed to have the tacit approval if not the connivance of the U.S. government (Brown, 1980, pp. 13–16).¹⁰ For presidents from James K. Polk to James Buchanan, filibustering was probably the single greatest foreign policy headache with which they had to deal (Brown, 1980, p. 460). The ranks of the filibuster expeditions included citizens from all walks of life who sought adventure and believed in the cause. Yet it was often the War and Navy Departments that had to prevent or arrest the leaders and participants of such expeditions before they embarked. To the mainstream military of the United States, the counter-culture of filibustering was an abomination, though some soldiers and officers often secretly admired or joined such expeditions.

The multitudes of filibustering expeditions and famous filibusters are too numerous to discuss in this short article. Most of them, with only a few exceptions, were privately funded and illegal. The most prominent among them were Narciso López, who attempted to spark revolution in Cuba in 1850, and the infamous William Walker, who successfully invaded and for a short period ruled Nicaragua (May, 2002, p. xvi). The expedition of John C. Fremont to California and his collusion with the settlers who founded the Bear Flag Republic could also be seen as a filibuster mission that was probably sanctioned by the president of the United States. In this instance, an agent of the U.S. government and a military officer aided rebellion essentially in support of a larger war effort of the Mexican-American War. The same can be said of support to the fight for Texas around the same time period (Hietala, 2002).

In the end, the missions of the numerous private efforts probably did more damage than good to U.S. foreign policy and to the native populations they attempted to “liberate.” As both Hunt and Brown point out, filibustering and its backlash reinforced racial stereotypes and the widespread acceptance of hierarchical theories of race (Brown, 1980, p. 461; Hunt, 1987, p. 102). However, up until and eventually after the Civil War, the stories of filibusters and their adventures in support of a liberation narrative and the sense of American exceptionalism did provide a legacy that would survive, though never quite in the same magnitude that it had prior to the Civil War when conditions were favorable to such endeavors (Brown, 1980, p. 462). The counterculture of support to foreign liberation movements, with all of its additional expansionist and proslavery motivations, would have to wait until after the cataclysm of the Civil War to once again manifest itself in the actions of warriors and would-be liberators.

COUNTERCULTURE REBORN: IMPERIALISM AND WILSONIANISM

Following the Civil War, the United States had very little time, resources, or patience for the further expansion of supporting other wars of national liberation. On the frontier, Army forces

co-opted Indian tribes and factions against one another (Clendenen, 1970). The federal government had a full plate of domestic concerns involving reconstruction in the South, the taming of the western frontier regions with hostile Indian tribes, and the securing of the southern border with Mexico. Despite this, the filibustering tradition was instantly reborn, this time in the form of Irish immigrants eager to attack British Canada and support an Irish Catholic population ready to rise up against Britain. The Fenian Brotherhood, an organization of Irish Catholics who had served in the Union Army, launched several raids on Canadian territory between 1866 and 1870, all achieving similar strategic results despite some impressive tactical success (Senior, 1991).

By the 1870s, when Cubans were fighting for independence, the Grant administration and many private citizens were tempted to lend their support. While some private citizens may have given materiel support, the United States mostly held off on such activity (Brown, 1980, p. 464). The closest that the United States may have come to any official support to foreign insurgencies may have been the deliberate but surreptitious materiel support to Mexicans fighting to overthrow Emperor Maximilian in Mexico. Faced with a significant surplus of Civil War arms and munitions, General Phillip Sheridan deliberately arranged for large quantities of arms and ammunitions to be transferred to liberal forces opposing imperialist rule. Sheridan even expressed concern that many of his men wanted to join the cause of liberation and help the Mexicans defeat the Emperor of Mexico (Clendenen, 1970; Sheridan, 1888, pp. 404–411; H. Jones, 2010).¹¹

As American power grew in the 1880s and 1890s, the country once again began to see signs of the filibustering traditions grow. In Hawaii, Cuba, and Nicaragua, as well as the isthmian district of Colombia that became Panama, political turmoil and revolt led to private quests for political and military support for regime change from within. Instead of settlement and territorial expansion, there grew a “New Manifest Destiny” of expanded commerce and naval power. Key U.S. leaders such as Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt advocated American power in “every quarter of the globe” (Brown, 1980, p. 465; McCullough, 1977; Morgan, 2011).

Unlike the other dominant cultures of war in America, the idea of supporting foreign insurgencies that might be supportive of the United States remained in the shadows. It was a way of war for private adventurers and for business leaders who had the funds and the international interests to lend their support where necessary and often mixed with political action and agitation tactics. The War Department focused on the western frontier and the frequent suppression of rebellion in Latin America. Yet one individual American with a keen sense of adventure represented this continuing legacy of filibustering better than any other: After trying his hand at other professions, a young Frederick Funston signed up for a “filibustering expedition” to help the Cuban junta that was fighting Spanish forces and sought to gain Cuban independence once and for all (Funston, 1911).

Frederick Funston’s memoirs provide great insight into the enduring counterculture of American war. In 1896, Funston, seeking adventure as much as fulfilling any desire to be part of a righteous cause, joined a privately financed filibustering expedition to Cuba. He and other American, British, and Canadian volunteers saw themselves as would-be Lafayettes or Von Steubens to the Cuban cause. All of Funston’s experiences in the war occurred before the United States officially went to war with Spain. He fought exclusively as an insurgent artillery officer and learned his trade by practicing with privately purchased artillery pieces designated for the expedition as he and others awaited transportation out of New York City. By the time the United States entered the war as part of its greater war with Spain, Funston had returned to his home in

Kansas and was delighting neighbors and politicians with his filibustering adventures. Once the war was underway, the governor of Kansas, having heard his stories of battle in Cuba, appointed Funston as a colonel of one of three regiments the state was forming to support the war (Funston, 1911). The quintessential individual of the recently dormant counterculture of war was instantly a senior ranking officer in the organization that considered his way of war an abomination.

It is an interesting coincidence that this amateur soldier and adventurer would go on to serve during the Philippine Insurrection as one of the Army's most effective commanders. Funston's approach to counterinsurgency warfare in the Philippines was much more in tune with an understanding of the local political dynamics. Although this time Funston found himself fighting on the side of the counterinsurgency, he seemed to quickly grasp the dynamic of the operational environment and understand the human factors of warfare and the local population. He did not attempt to strongly force civic action or foreign imposed local government structures; instead, he focused on intelligence, conciliated local tribal and ethnic leaders, and effectively struck guerilla elements without significant collateral damage to the civilian population (Funston, 1911, pp. 336–383; Linn, 1989, pp. 85–86).

Following the Philippine War, Funston would prove himself again in counterinsurgency and stability operations when he led the occupation of Vera Cruz just prior to World War I. Yet that mission itself provides a valuable contrast with the more dominant cultures of war and strategic culture than with the counterculture represented by the young Funston. As the Mexican revolution wore on in 1914, the Wilson administration refused to recognize the government of General Huerta. Rather than providing support to the opposition forces, however, the administration decided at first to stay out of the conflict and then to intervene directly with military force after the Tampico Affair, and to do so again in direct response to the incursions of rebel leader Pancho Villa. While these direct interventions did little to change the situation in Mexico, they did alienate and anger most Mexicans whether they supported Huerta or Governor Carranza and the other rebel factions (Clendenen, 1970). Direct intervention with conventional force, well within the American culture of war, was the way of choice; this was a limited direct intervention, rather than supporting the insurgent group that most closely shared U.S. interests or had the most legitimate claim to power.

A DORMANT COUNTERCULTURE: WORLD WAR I AND THE INTERWAR YEARS

The counterculture of war during and after World War I was part of the discourse on foreign policy and America's place in the world. The combination of values and interests synthesized in Wilson's Fourteen Points provided a new and powerful ideological foundation for the central idea of America's counterculture of war. Wilson, still hurting politically from his decision to directly intervene in Mexico, wanted to make Funston the commander of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Funston's untimely death, however, forced Wilson to choose John Pershing, a leader much more in tune with America's dominant culture of war, though with a record of service in the Philippines (Coffman, 1986). It is a profound irony that one of America's most esteemed general officers started his career as a foreign fighter, deliberately and boastfully violating the Neutrality Act.

Even though there was popular support for the concepts of national self-determination and anticolonialism, America in general still held on to its aversion to social revolutions and its persistent belief in a racial hierarchy. The threat of Communism and its association with wars of national liberation would repress any desires of interwar administrations from undertaking anything other than direct military interventions in order to stabilize states in the western hemisphere that were threatened by internal unrest or insurgency. U.S. leadership saw no reason to support such insurgencies, as they might threaten commercial interests.

There seems to be very little in existing literature concerning U.S.-led unconventional warfare in World War I.¹² The British, however, provided perhaps the most famous and legendary example of this kind of warfare. T. E. Lawrence, perhaps more than any other figure in modern history, came to symbolize the counterculture of war. Lawrence provided materiel and personal influence to indigenous Arab tribal organizations in order to fight a common enemy. His experiences, his strategy, and the tactics used represent the most important principles that can be found in America's counterculture of war. In the postwar years and in the period immediately leading up to World War II, Lawrence's writings, originally published in 1922, and his example provided the inspiration for the British and eventually the Americans to create organizations and agencies of government dedicated to the employment of unconventional warfare (Waller, 2011, p. 55; Lawrence, 2012).

One example of the survival of the counterculture of war in America occurred during the Spanish Civil War with the establishment of the Lincoln Brigade. As Peter N. Carroll (1994) explains, the Lincoln Brigade, as it is now known, consisted of American volunteers. Most of these private volunteers were members of the U.S. Communist Party who held a deep-seated opposition to fascism. Though its members might object to their legacy being directly tied to the history of American filibusters who were driven by imperialist motivations, the Lincoln Brigade represents another private effort to support a war of liberation. In the case of the Spanish Civil War, however, one must note that the Lincoln Brigade technically was fighting for the legitimate, elected government and against a coup that maintained the loyalty of most of the Army. Unlike the filibusters of the previous century, Lincoln Brigade volunteers were motivated more often by ideology rather than any patriotic duty to the United States or prospects of expanding its territory or influence. As the United States approached the threshold of war in 1940–1941, many Americans who a few years before may have disparaged the Lincoln Brigade and advocated the prosecution of its members quickly began to see them as the first antifascist fighters. The OSS would eventually hire some members of the unit. The most famous of these was the Lincoln Brigade's last commander, Milton Wolff (Carroll, 1994).

A SANCTIONED COUNTERCULTURE: THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES AND WORLD WAR II

In 1942, after the onset of World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt established the OSS under the direction of William Donovan. The establishment of the OSS marked the first time in U.S. history that an agency of government had been given responsibility and authority to undertake the core task of supporting foreign insurgent movements. For America's counterculture of war it was a clear turning point. The central idea of supporting insurgencies as an approach to warfare was legitimated and had a voice in the discourse of strategic culture and operational art.

Much has been written about the OSS and the character of William Donovan. Most histories of U.S. Special Operations, covert operations, or sanctioned unconventional warfare start with Donovan and the OSS. Both the CIA and the U.S. Army's special forces attach their lineage to the OSS. Prior to the OSS, the counterculture of war was the way of would-be warriors who existed outside the legitimate institutions of government. The counterculture of war was now an official part of the government apparatus. While expanding upon the activities of the OSS is beyond the scope of this article, we can easily identify some key aspects of the OSS that demonstrate the continuity of America's counterculture of war.

When Donovan founded the OSS, he did so against the grain of entrenched bureaucratic interests in the military establishment. The history of the OSS is littered with Donovan's many struggles for power and acceptance by other branches of government including the Army, State Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). One can readily say that this friction demonstrates a clash of organizational cultures and opposing ways of war.

To fight the established interests and counter the dominant cultures, Donovan had to rely heavily on the support of an influential and powerful president. The history of the OSS is also peppered with instances where Donovan was able to operate and break through the resistance of entrenched military organization only through the direct intervention of President Roosevelt.

The military distrusted Donovan's organization not only because of the nature of the activities they sought to undertake but also because of the people Donovan brought into the organization and the way in which they were recruited, selected, and hired. Much like the filibusters of the past, Donovan tapped the seeds of America's latent counterculture of war, hiring an eclectic group of adventurers that included intellectuals, businesspersons, and even Communists, such as Milton Wolff (Waller, 2011). Such odd characters were given immediate commissions into the military, much to the annoyance of the establishment.

Tasked with both intelligence activities and subversive work behind enemy lines, the OSS quickly moved to support local resistance organizations dedicated to the defeat of the Axis powers. These included missions in France, North Africa, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Burma (Tierney, 2007; D. Jones, 2006; Waller, 2011). In each location, Donovan's organization demonstrated some success and made a clear contribution to the war effort. This was an impressive feat for an organization that had to be built from the ground up. Yet despite its marked accomplishments and its proven utility, by the end of the war Donovan had lost his sponsor and protector with the death of President Roosevelt. Sabotaged partly by his own personality, but also by the same bureaucratic rivalries that he had fought throughout the war, Donovan witnessed the sad disestablishment of the OSS immediately following the war. President Harry Truman was convinced that the United States would no longer require such an organization in peacetime. It would take less than two years for Truman and his administration to see the folly of their decision, as the U.S. government would quickly find the need for centralized intelligence activity and an organization that could assist in winning countries to the side of the "free world" in the Cold War quest to contain Sino-Soviet Communist domination.

COUNTERCULTURE RISING: THE COLD WAR ASCENSION

The Cold War is probably the most significant period for the careful analysis and further understanding of the development of the counterculture of war. For the first time, the U.S.

government established permanent organizations dedicated in principle and organizational design to supporting foreign insurgencies for the purpose of “liberating” populations. No longer would the counterculture of war be the exclusive to the efforts of those outside of the official institutions of war. Yet these institutions, though inspired by and charged with the legacy of the liberation narrative, would find themselves still plagued by the ideological precepts defined by Michael Hunt. Caution toward social revolutions and a persistent belief in racial hierarchy would help steer policymakers toward decisions to support despots and dictators in the dual hope that these foreign despots would reject Soviet and Chinese Communism and reform at a pace commensurate with their societies’ abilities to handle the responsibilities and develop the institutions of civil society necessary for liberal democracy. Simply put, the CIA became primarily involved in propping up friendly regimes or instigating coups from within, while the Army special forces trained indigenous troops primarily in counterinsurgency rather than in unconventional warfare and supporting successful insurgencies. These two organizations were born from the OSS and they inherited the same legacy of the counterculture of war. But that was not all that they inherited; both organizations inherited much more, some of which did not coincide with the concepts of the counterculture of war.

While the missions of the Cold War deserve a deeper study from the perspective of the counterculture of war, that deep dive is beyond the scope of this article. Instead, it is important to identify the cultural continuities and the manifestations of the missions that aligned with the counterculture of war.

The U.S. Army special forces was founded in 1951 after the Cold War had effectively begun and the Army recognized that it would benefit from a tool that could replicate the way the OSS had supported resistance and liberation movements behind axis lines. Their motto, *De oppresso liber*, is generally translated as “Free the oppressed,” and unconventional warfare, in other words, the support to insurgency has always been seen as central to their organizational essence and their primary purpose. Yet like the CIA, which held the mission to facilitate special forces’ access to resistance movements in wartime, the special forces would often find themselves using their same skill sets to support friendly governments in fighting insurgencies rather than supporting them.

There is no shortage to the list of CIA and special forces activities that aligned with the countercultural definition of unconventional warfare. It is known that the CIA sponsored resistance movements in Eastern Europe, Korea, Tibet, Cuba, Indonesia, and Laos. In the later part of the Cold War, the organization would do the same in Nicaragua, Angola, and in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan. As John Prados (2006) points out, success of some of these missions can be difficult to judge. Some, such as Afghanistan in the 1980s, were clearly successful in achieving their stated objectives, while others were abysmal failures. Operation Pluto, also known as the Bay of Pigs invasion, bore an uncanny similarity to the filibuster missions of the previous century as it counted on the false hope that the desire for liberation was so strong that armies of citizens would rise up. Special forces also contributed to many of these same missions but, for the most part, despite their training and preparation for unconventional warfare, spent more time doing foreign internal defensive missions where counterinsurgency was key (Paddock, 2012; D. Jones, 2006, pp. 73–115). Much like the OSS, U.S. Army special forces had to rely upon the support of a president from the Democratic Party to force the leaders of the military and security establishment to accept this organizational representation of the counterculture of war into their ranks. It was President Kennedy who authorized their distinctive headgear (the green beret) and

insisted that the Army expand their capabilities (Paddock, 2012, pp. 39, 156–159). Yet even under Kennedy special forces helped fight insurgencies far more than they assisted them. Though support to foreign insurgencies happened throughout the Cold War, the dominant paradigm was U.S. support for non-Communist governments against Soviet-backed insurgencies. It was in the 1980s when this seemed to shift and the U.S. support for anti-Communist insurgencies, such as in Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua, became more common. This change in policy coincided with the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union and its allied regimes around the world, lending some credibility (only by association) to the counterculture of war. For Army special forces, the redemption of their many years of keeping alive the counterculture of war in their organizational essence would occur 10 years after the end of the Cold War as green berets supported the Northern Alliance and defeated the Taliban in Afghanistan.

JOINING THE DISCOURSE AND BETTER STRATEGY

While this exploration of the counterculture of war demands more attention and study, one can conclude that in the Post-Cold War and post-9/11 world several factors have led to the emergence of the counterculture as part of the discourse on war. The Syrian Civil War, Russian subversion and support to rebels in eastern Ukraine, and Iranian support to non-state armed groups around the world are forcing further reconsideration of unconventional war as a legitimate and practical tool of U.S. foreign policy. In addition, the successful support to resistance movements in Afghanistan and Iraq, coupled with the prominent display of capability and the U.S. special forces and other SOF are increasing the amount and the nature of the support for U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Over the past 10 years, U.S. special operations forces (SOF) have more than doubled in size. At the present time, while conventional forces are facing cuts to troop strength and budgets, SOF are expected to grow (Robinson, 2013).

In addition to the confidence gained from recent operations and a new trust in revolutions, a second ideological shift has occurred over time and had its most notable shift during the Cold War. The belief in a racial hierarchy has remained a persistent ideological influence on U.S. foreign policy. There is logical evidence that in the past century this ideological characteristic has kept the counterculture of war out of the discourse on war. However, the civil rights movement and changes in American perceptions of race over the course of the past 50 years probably have had some effect on the acceptance of the central idea of supporting insurgencies.

Adversaries of the United States are not strangers to the ideas of unconventional warfare. Vladimir Putin has successfully combined covert political action with unconventional warfare to achieve his aims in the Crimea and now provides capacity and advice to rebels using combined arms maneuver. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps has made unconventional warfare dominant in the Iranian discourse and culture of war as they support the Houthi rebellion in Yemen, Hezbollah, and Hamas. The undeniable evidence of the use of unconventional warfare by adversaries is currently affecting the discourse within the United States.

Fundamentally, those throughout U.S. history who were part of this counterculture of war had to make the human domain their critical medium of battle. They could not be concerned exclusively or even primarily with destroying the enemies' forces or attacking their center of gravity. Instead, this counterculture of war generally had to focus on politics, the population, and

the will of the adversary. Unlike those who were part of the predominant American culture of war, they could not avoid politics, for their form of warfare was little more than armed politics.

Developing ideas of the American way of war are less valuable without a deep discussion of the discourse that went on both inside and outside of military communities. This is the great value of Linn's (2007) contribution in *Echo of Battle*. Yet that discourse is a bit narrow because it is limited to the discourse within, and on the close periphery, of the official institutions of war. But there are layers of discourse and separate discourses that continue and perpetuate. Perhaps Linn's framework should be modified with the addition of "liberators" to his three schools of thought. In addition to heroes, managers, and guardians, liberators have risen. In the case of the counterculture of war, the liberators have remained largely separate from the main discourse covered by Linn. The liberators have crossed into the mainstream discourse.

This may be a positive development for strategic thinking in the United States, especially among military and civilian leaders. With so many competing cultures and traditions, with so many possible approaches, this could act as a forcing function to develop strategies that are not constrained by the narrow thinking of preconceived notions about how wars should be fought. Instead, different approaches can be applied in comprehensive campaigns that are conceived based upon strategic objectives, national interests, and appropriate levels of risk.

NOTES

1. Joint Publication 1-02 *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 2010. This is the definition still maintained by the Joint Staff as the official military definition. The U.S. Army has chosen not to define the term at all in its new dictionary of military terms, *Terms and Military Symbols* (ADRP 1-02; Department of the Army, 2015).
2. Emile Simpson (2012) uses the term *armed politics* when discussing the nature of warfare in the modern age, focusing on the concept of armed politics and the importance of strategic narrative.
3. Lynn (2003) presents the idea of an ongoing discourse on war; Linn (2007) attempts to frame that discourse within the United States by providing a typology of the continuities in various schools of thought that contributed to the discourse in the United States.
4. Borstelmann (2001) quotes from Romulo (1956), *The Meaning of Bandung*, p. 95.
5. Also see Gilbert (1961).
6. This specific passage quoted from <http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/uscode/18/1/45/960>.
7. While most Americans are familiar with the term *filibustering* as a political tool within the U.S. Senate, the term comes from the practice described in this article. It is a derivative of *free booter*, which in the 17th through 19th centuries was synonymous with *pirate*. See <http://www.etymology.com>.
8. The comparison to special forces training is based on the author's 15 years' experience as a U.S. special forces officer.
9. Both Edwards (1968) and Rodd (1932) provide examples of this from Eaton's frequent disagreements and arguments with senior Navy officers and a public controversy that took place after the war.
10. The Neutrality Act of 1818 actually expanded the punishment for such activities.
11. There may be evidence of much greater U.S. involvement in Mexico at this time through the practice of unconventional warfare. Sheridan's intelligence operations were very deliberate and involved agents embedded with the Juarez forces. See http://www.jessiescouts.com/JS_MexOPS_FrenchCable.html.
12. One could add the support to the White Russian forces who were fighting the Bolsheviks. Clearly the allies involved themselves in a civil war. There is a difference between intervention in a civil war and support to an insurgency, but these are differences in the character of a conflict that need to be examined more thoroughly.

REFERENCES

- Boot, Max. (2002). *Savage wars of peace: Small wars and the rise of American power*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Boot, Max. (2013). *Invisible armies: An Epic history of guerilla warfare from ancient times to the present*. New York, NY: Liveright.
- Borstelmann, Thomas. (2001). *The Cold War and the color line*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Brown, Charles H. (1980). *Agents of manifest destiny: The lives and times of the filibusters*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Carroll, Peter N. (1994). *The odyssey of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade: Americans in the Spanish Civil War*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Clendenen, Clarence C. (1970). *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and Mexican irregulars*. London, England: Collier-MacMillan Ltd.
- Coffman, Edward M. (1986). *The war to end all wars: The American military experience in World War I*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Department of the Army. (2015, February). *Terms and military symbols* (Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02). Retrieved from http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp1_02.pdf
- Edwards, Samuel. (1968). *Barbary General: The life of William H. Eaton*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Expedition against a friendly nation. 18 U.S.C. § 960 (1976).
- Funston, Frederick. (1911). *Memories of two wars: Cuban and Philippine experiences*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Gilbert, Felix. (1961). *To the farewell address: Ideas of early American foreign policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gray, Colin S. (2006). *Strategy and history: Essays on theory and practice*. London, England: Routledge.
- Grenier, John. (2008). *The first way of war: American war making on the frontier*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Grdovic, Mark. (2010). Developing a common understanding of unconventional warfare. *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 2nd Qtr (57), 136.
- Hietala, Thomas R. (2002). *Manifest design: American exceptionalism and empire*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Hunt, Michael. (1987). *Ideology and U.S. foreign policy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2010). *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Joint Publication 1-02).
- Joint Chiefs of Staff. (2014). *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Joint Publication 1-02). Retrieved from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf
- Jones, Derek. (2006). *Ending the debate: Unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, and why words matter*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College.
- Jones, Howard. (2010). *Blue and gray diplomacy: A history of Union and Confederate foreign relations*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Knott, Stephen F. (1996). *Secret and sanctioned: Covert operations and the American presidency*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Lambert, Frank. (2005). *The Barbary Wars: American independence in the Atlantic world*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang.
- Lawrence, T. E. (2012). *Seven pillars of wisdom: A triumph*. Blacksburg, VA: Wilder.
- Lewis, Adrian. (2006). *The American culture of war: The history of US military force from World War II to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Linn, Brian Mcalister. (1989). *The U.S. Army and counterinsurgency in the Philippine War 1899-1902*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Linn, Brian Mcalister. (2007). *The echo of battle: The Army's way of war*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lobel, Jules. (1983). The rise and decline of the Neutrality Act: Sovereignty and congressional war powers in United States foreign policy. *Harvard International Law Journal*, 24(Summer), 1.
- Lujan, Fernando M. (2013). *Light footprints: The future of American military intervention*. Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security.
- Lynn, John A. (2003). *Battle: A history of combat and culture*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- May, Robert E. (2002). *Manifest destiny's underworld: Filibustering in antebellum America*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- McCullough, David. (1977). *The path between the seas: The creation of the Panama Canal 1870–1914*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Morgan, William Michael. (2011). *Pacific Gibraltar: US-Japanese rivalry over the Annexation of Hawaii 1885–1898*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press.
- Paddock, Alfred H. (2012). *U.S. Army special warfare: Its origins*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.
- Prados, John. (2006). *Safe for democracy: The secret wars of the CIA*. Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee.
- Robinson, Linda. (2013). *The future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*. Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Rodd, Francis Rennell. (1932). *General William Eaton: The failure of an idea*. New York, NY: Minton, Balch.
- Romulo, Carlos P. (1956). *The meaning of Bandung*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Roszak, Theodore. (1968). *The making of a counterculture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Senior, Hereward. (1991). *The last invasion of Canada: The Fenian raids 1866–1870*. Toronto, Canada: Dundurn Press.
- Sheridan, Philip H. (1888). *The personal memoirs of P. H. Sheridan*. New York, NY: Dacapo Press.
- Simpson, Emile. (2012). *War from the ground up: Twenty-first century combat as politics*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Tierney, John. (2007). *Chasing ghosts: Unconventional warfare in American history*. Washington, DC: Potomac Books.
- USSOCOM Public Affairs. (2012). *United States Special Operations Command Fact Book*. Washington, DC: USSOCOM.
- Waller, Douglass. (2011). *Wild Bill Donovan: The spymaster who created the OSS and modern American espionage*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Weigley, Russell Frank. (1973). *The American way of war: A history of United States military strategy and policy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

The Origins of Chinese Special Forces, 1922–1935

Martin Andrew

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Special forces elements have been part of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) well before the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (Red Army) was founded. Selected party members were involved in enforcing party discipline and killing counterrevolutionaries, while the latter, with the formation of the Red Army were traditional long-range reconnaissance forces capable of operating behind enemy lines and as elite light infantry. This article looks at the origin and early days of Chinese Special Forces, focusing on the period of 1922 to 1935, where its fortunes and operations mirrored the success of the party as a whole. Zhou Enlai himself resurrecting the Red Brigades, as the civilian special operations elements became known as after the 'White Terror' almost destroyed the party as the defection of Zhou's successor almost did in 1931.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army (Red Army), the predecessor of the People's Liberation Army, have had special forces elements from their beginnings. The former were charged with enforcing discipline and killing counterrevolutionaries, while the latter were traditional long-range reconnaissance forces capable of operating behind enemy lines and as elite light infantry. This article looks at the origin and early days of Chinese Special Forces, focusing on the period of 1922 to 1935, with some commentary on the People's Liberation Army Special Forces.

Keywords: special forces, People's Liberation Army, Worker's and Peasant's Red Army, Chinese Communist Party

BACKGROUND

When Mao Zedong wrote "Power comes through the barrel of a gun, but the gun must always be under the control of the Party" there were several special forces elements under the party's control. (Mao, 1983, p. 512). The background and origins of these special forces groups is important in understanding the structure of the CCP and the People's Liberation Army today. The background of these groups is important to understand as it relates to the structure of the CCP and the People's Liberation Army today. "Power comes through the barrel of a gun, but the gun must always be under the control of the Party" (Mao, 1983, p. 512).

Shanghai in 1919 included the International Settlement and Zhabei; these two areas together were the manufacturing, banking, and fashion powerhouse of China from 1918 to 1937. In 1919 Communist International (Comintern) sent agents to China to identify prospective leaders and labor activists, and in 1921 these agents assisted in setting up the CCP in Shanghai (see Pantsov, 2000, pp. 30–70). The CCP, upon its formation, consisted of 53 members in seven groups in China

and one in Japan (Zhongguo Gongchandang, 1995, p. 9). It was not until the Second Congress in July 1922 that party organization became stable (p. 247). Beginning in April 1922 Comintern started to pressure the CCP to join Guomindang (GMD). It was believed that the best possibility to lead China into revolution was through partnership with the GMD—even though the group was not necessarily Communist in ideology and did not agree with the Comintern’s aims.

The Second Congress agreed to work with the GMD but balked at joining the group. This reluctance changed after the CCP realized the need “for armed action to aid the revolution after the 7 February 1923 incident,” where three warlords previously sympathetic to workers, attacked railway laborers who were in the process of forming the General Union of the Beijing-Hankou Railway (for a detailed account see Pantsov, 2000, pp. 30–70). This incident revealed the weakness of the nascent Chinese labor movement, and thus the CCP needed Sun Yat-sen’s—and GMD’s—support.

Thus on June 25, 1923, the Central Committee of the CCP, after its Third Congress, signed a communication to Sun Yat-sen declaring that “to oppose and overcome ‘feudal warlords’, the Guomindang must establish a new-style ‘centralised national-revolutionary’ army to fight them. (Schram, ed., 1992)” Known as the United Front, this new group is regarded as the true start of the People’s Liberation Army.

In May 1926, the GMD, now under Chiang Kai-shek, suppressed the CCP’s influence in the organization but was unable to stop its growth in China, and especially in Zhabei, a suburb of Shanghai. A raid on the Soviet Embassy in Beijing on April 6, 1927, yielded documents that revealed the extent of Communist subversion in the GMD and the Soviet Union’s influence over the CCP (Wilbur & How, 1989, pp. 606–607). Matters came to a head when the Workers Picket Corps (the armed wing of the CCP), under instruction from the CCP, took over Zhabei on March 21, 1927, enabling Chiang’s Northern Expedition to take over Shanghai the next day.

URBAN-BASED INSURRECTION

There were two problems with the Communists in nominal control of Shanghai. The municipal authorities in the French and International Settlements did not want the Communists next door, and Chiang Kai-shek did not want to share power with a rival. To destroy their power, and purge Shanghai of “undesirable elements,” the GMD with the assistance of the Green Gang secret society, and the tacit support of the French and International Concessions, attacked the Communists on the morning of April 12, 1927. The Shanghai Municipal Police (SMP) were not involved in this action except to allow the armed Green Gang members to pass through the settlement quietly and unhindered (Martin, 1989, pp. 104–105). The Workers Picket Corps was brought down, and 20 machine guns, 3,000 rifles, and 200 Mauser pistols, along with one million rounds of ammunition seized (Shanghai Municipal Council, 1928, p. 53). Any Communists handed over to the GMD were executed.

What became known as the White Terror became GMD policy, spreading across the cities of China and destroying the Communists’ city power bases, effectively destroying any chance there was of an urban-based Marxist revolution. This policy, known later as *Annei Rangwai*, came at the expense of defeating the Japanese military forces in China and continuing to allow the extraterritoriality rights enjoyed by foreign powers in the treaty ports.¹ The CCP’s realization that a worker-led revolution was not possible without a military force saw GMD troops under Zhu De mutiny at Nanchang on August 1, 1927.

This act was the beginning of a proper army, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, which eventually became the People's Liberation Army.

At the August 7, 1927, emergency meeting of the CCP, party secretary Chen Duxiu was denounced as a "rightist opportunist" and a policy of revolution against the GMD White Terror was adopted. This meant plans to occupy major industrial cities where workers would rise up and then turn them into "soviet" cities (Klein and Clark, 1971, p. 993). Unfortunately for the Communists, the uprising of the workers and peasants did not occur and led to the situation in late February and early March 1928 at Haifeng and Lufeng where "many of the best revolutionary cadres were sacrificed" (p. 349).

MILITARY SPECIAL OPERATIONS

There were two groups involved in special operations. One group operated under the Central Committee of the CCP inside the cities, particularly Shanghai, and the other under the Red, and were considered separate even when by early 1933 were almost all were located in the Jiangxi Soviet. The group under the CCP moved between the Jiangxi Soviet and cities, especially Shanghai and inside the Jiangxi Soviet were involved solely in political policing. The Red Army reconnaissance teams, and to a lesser extent the Special Companies, became what would be known today as special forces.

The failure of all the various Red Army forces in 1927 and 1928 in their attacks on the cities saw them eventually retreat to the Jinggangshan (Jinggang Mountains), where in April 1928 Mao Zedong had formed the first soviet base area. Here, the formalized structure of the Red Army was established, with special operations personnel in the regimental structure (Schram, 1995, p. 125; Collier & Lai, 1969, p. 186). Known as the special task company, which was established for protection of the group's headquarters, it was also used for other tasks with select personnel, for behind-the-lines reconnaissance, and to assist the CCP in the cities, if required.

In September 1930, after a series of failures in trying to foment uprising in the cities, known as the Li Lisan Line, the remnants of the Red Army's First and Third Army groups then headed to Central Jiangxi to establish the Jiangxi Soviet base area, where much of the area was already under effective Communist control (Schram, 1995, pp. 594–655). The city of Jian was taken on October 4, 1930, with the Jiangxi Soviet officially established there on October 7, 1930 (pp. 552–553). Abandoned six weeks later, the Communists did not try to occupy another major city until 1947 (p. 691). Mao, now controlling the Red Army, was able to pursue his grand strategy of a peasant-based revolution using guerrilla warfare.

The GMD conducted five Encirclement Campaigns on the Jiangxi Soviet. The first four were failures, but the fifth resulted in the Long March, which commenced in June 1934. The Red Army employed long-range reconnaissance teams to identify and report on the movements of GMD forces prior to and during the campaigns. These reconnaissance teams allowed Mao's forces to outmaneuver, isolate, and destroy attacking GMD units—or to slip away if the enemy forces were too strong. The Fifth Encirclement Campaign defeated this strategy by using block houses to secure captured areas, denying Red Army units freedom of movement.

The success and ability of these reconnaissance teams and special companies was noted in the structure of the 1934 division (Braun, 1982, p. 38). There was a divisional reconnaissance team of 40 personnel; each regiment had a team of 18, and each battalion had a team of six. They wore civilian clothes and carried pistols and grenades (Collier & Lai, 1969, p. 186).

Even when Mao Zedong and Lin Biao were pushing the benefits of the People's War doctrine in 1961, the bulk of the operational training budget of the People's Liberation Army went to the special companies in the regiments. These companies later became the reconnaissance elements of the regiments, being the best trained and receiving the newest equipment (Cheng, 1966, p. 218). These reconnaissance elements were heavily involved in the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War being equipped with suppressed and shortened weapons for close combat ("Yuhuo zhongsheng," 2014, pp. 14–20).

URBAN-BASED OPERATIONS

In 1928 the Central Committee still operated out of Shanghai, where it was under constant attack. CCP propaganda now was against the foreigners in their concessions as well as the GMD. The SMP played its part in suppressing Communism in the International Settlement, prosecuting 185 people for offenses related to Communism, including rioting and the dissemination of literature, along with having 14 headquarters of "the agitators" closed down (Shanghai Municipal Council, 1928, p. 53). To protect the Central Committee, support underground work, enforce CCP discipline, and attack the GMD, Zhou Enlai created the Special Services Unit, or Hongdui (Red Brigade) (Wakeman, 1995, pp. 139–142). This involved providing "safe houses, documents, weapons and even food and clothing," as well as surveying party loyalty and disciplining those who strayed. This meant death for any members who defected (Wakeman, 1995, pp. 139, 168; see also "Communist Graveyard," 1931, p. 276). These attacks on counterrevolutionary elements and the purging of unwanted elements of the CCP led to increasing attacks against the Communist Party by the SMP. One group that came to the attention of the SMP, the Pootoo Road Assassination Gang, was responsible for 17 murders in the International Settlement from August 25, 1926, to March 27, 1928 (Shanghai Municipal Council, 1928, p. 59).

The SMP broke up this gang in March and April 1928, making 22 arrests. In all, 13 members of the gang were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment; seven were handed over to the GMD on charges of Communism; and two were acquitted. The SMP continued its attacks on the CCP, handing over 76 Communists to the GMD that year (Shanghai Municipal Council, 1928, p. 59).

The policy of *Annei Rangwei* brought together some strange bedfellows. The security services of the International and French Settlements, and by association the imperial security networks of the British and French, worked with the GMD's Public Security Bureau (PSB) to defeat the Communists. Two incidents in the first half of 1931 destroyed the influence of the CCP in the cities of China and drove it underground. This had a lasting effect, as the CCP was to remain ineffectual in the cities for many years.

The SMP's Special Branch and the British Army were working together in the International Settlement to defeat the CCP. The role of Brig. L. F. Field, the intelligence officer attached to the British Forces in Shanghai, was to remove the Comintern from Shanghai. His work resulted in the removal of the Comintern's operations from North and Southeast Asia for several years (Field, 1970, pp. 37–42).

The SMP and British Intelligence were not averse to using the Green Gang in disposing of problem Communists. In his memoirs, Field (1970) mentions an English-speaking Chinese Communist who held American citizenship. This man, despite numerous beatings and a threat published in Chinese newspapers that he was to leave Shanghai or be killed, continued to spread Communist propaganda among the rank-and-file British and U.S. forces stationed there. Field asked Sgt. Wong of the SMP Special Branch to organize his disappearance, which likely involved the man being thrown from a boat (i.e., a *sampan*) into the Huangpo River on his way to a Communist meeting. Field had already been told by the superintendent of the SMP's Special Branch that his disappearance would not be looked into "very hard" (Field, 1970, pp. 50–53).

The other action that led to the severe disruption of the party apparatus around China, and especially Shanghai, occurred in April 1931 when Gu Shunzhang, the leader of the Hongdui, was arrested in Hankou. He was also a senior member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP (Wakeman, 1995, pp. 139, 168; see also "Communist Graveyard," 1931, p. 276). When the CCP found out that he had defected to the GMD in June, they kidnapped and murdered his wife and in-laws in the French Concession in retaliation ("Communist Graveyard," 1931, p. 276). Upon learning of the death of his family, Gu acted with ruthlessness. He knew many of the underground cells in Chinese cities, and in the three-month period from June to August 1931 the French Security Service estimated that the number of Communists executed due to Gu's defection was "several thousand (Wakeman, 1995, p. 155, 375)". Many of those who survived fled to the Jiangxi Soviet.

Further, the Japanese attack on the Chinese areas of Shanghai from January 28 to March 2, 1932, severely disrupted CCP operations against the GMD, as did 16 major joint operations between the police forces of the International Settlement, French Concession, and GMD from May 1932 to October 1933 (Wakeman, 1995, p. 222). Cadres from the Political Bureau of the CCP Provisional Central Leadership started to leave for the Jiangxi Soviet, where Mao Zedong had set up a base area (Sullivan, 1985, pp. 95–96). The last members of the Central Committee had left by early 1933 (Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, 1991, p. 84). Finally, the Central Committee and the Red Army were together. This caused friction between the two groups, however, which lasted for many years.

Despite all of this, operations in the International Settlement continued in 1933. Between November 1932 and September 1933, members of the CCP's Communist "Dog Beating Corps"—as the CCP's Red Brigade was commonly called—conducted four assassinations of GMD officials inside the settlement. Eventually, six suspects were arrested and a large quantity of weapons and ammunition was seized (Shanghai Municipal Council, 1934, pp. 111–112).

The success of the Fifth Encirclement Campaign and the subsequent Long March by the Red Army and the Central Committee of the CCP meant that the party members in the cities were isolated and trying to continue the fight but were under constant attack. The killings did not stop, however, as the CCP carried out "purification" of the party in 1934, including killing GMD agents in and around Shanghai (Shanghai Municipal Council, 1935, p. 70). In March 1934 GMD security services raided the Jiangsu Party Headquarters of the CCP, completely disrupting Communist activities in Shanghai and the surrounding countryside (Sullivan, 1985, p. 96).

CCP operatives went completely underground until the Xi'an incident in December 1936 and the creation of the Second United Front, after which it was no longer a crime to be a Communist in China. Communist Party members in Shanghai and elsewhere surfaced again. In Shanghai their

freedom of action was cut short by Japanese occupation of the city after bitter fighting at the start of the Sino-Japanese War. The GMD Secret Service now took to assassinating Chinese who were aiding the Japanese, using the safety of the International Settlement as their base of operations.

CONCLUSION

Civilian special operations in the early days of the Chinese Communist Party were intertwined with its fortunes. Many senior party members, notably Zhou Enlai, were active members. They fought a vicious war in the cities where the only certainty was death. The special companies and reconnaissance teams are the heirs of the People's Liberation Army's elite light infantry and special forces of today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author has yet to find material on reconnaissance personnel and operations for the period 1937 to 1961 and would be interested in any information for that period.

NOTE

1. *Annei Rangwai* translates as "first subjugate the internal enemy, then expel the external enemy" (Wakeman, 1995, p. 193).

REFERENCES

- Braun, O. (1982). *A Comintern agent in China 1932–1939*. St Lucia, Queensland, Australia: Queensland University Press.
- Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. (1991). *History of the Chinese Communist Party: A chronology of events (1919–1990)*. Beijing, China: Foreign Languages Press.
- Cheng, C. J. (Ed.). (1966). *The politics of the Chinese Red Army: A translation of the Bulletin of Activities of the People's Liberation Army*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution of War, Revolution, and Peace.
- Collier, H. H., & Lai, P. C.-C. (1969). *Organizational changes in the Chinese Army 1895–1950*. Taipei, Taiwan: Office of the Military Historian.
- "Communist Graveyard Remains of Nine Victories Discovered in Secret Cemetery." (1931, November 24). *North China Herald*, p. 276.
- Field, L. F. (1970). "That's the Way It Was." Imperial War Museum Catalogue Reference LFF/1, pp. 37–42.
- Klein, D. W., & Clark, A. B. (1971). *Biographic dictionary of Chinese Communism 1921–1965*. 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mao Zedong. (1983). *Zhan zheng he zhan lue wen ti: Vol 2. Mao Zedong xuan ji*. Beijing, China: Renmin chubanshe.
- Martin, B. G. (1989). "'The Pact With the Devil': The Relationship Between the Green Gang and the French Concession Authorities 1925–1935." *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 39 (March), 93–125.
- Pantsov, A. (2000). *The Bolsheviks and the Chinese Revolution 1919–1927*. Surrey, UK: Curzon Press.
- Schram, S. R. (1995). *Mao's road to power: Revolutionary writings 1912–1949: Vol. 3. From the Jinggangshan to the establishment of the Jiangxi Soviets July 1927–December 1930*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Shanghai Municipal Council. (1928). *Annual report of the Shanghai Municipal Council, 1927*. Shanghai: Shanghai Municipal Council.

- Shanghai Municipal Council. (1934). *Annual report of the Shanghai Municipal Council, 1933*. Shanghai: Shanghai Municipal Council.
- Shanghai Municipal Council. (1935). *Annual report of the Shanghai Municipal Council, 1934*. Shanghai: Shanghai Municipal Council.
- Sullivan, L. R. (1985). “Reconstruction and rectification of the Chinese Communist Party in the Shanghai Underground, 1931–34.” *China Quarterly*, 101 (March), 92–93.
- Wakeman, F. (1995). *Policing Shanghai*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Wilbur, C. Martin, & How, Julie Lien-ying. (1989). *Missionaries of revolution: Soviet advisors and Nationalist China 1920–1927*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- “Yuhuo zhongsheng—dui yue ziwei fanjizhan dui wuguo qingwuqi fazhan de yingxiong.” (2014). *Qing Bingqi*, Niandi, 7 (shang) Qi, Zhongdi 418.
- Zhongguo Gongchandang. (1995). *Zhongguo gongchandang zuzhi shi zilao huiban: Lingdao jigao yange he chengyuan*. Beijing, China: Zhonggong Zhongyang dangxiao chubanshe.

Small States' Special Operations Forces in Preemptive Strategic Development Operations: Proposed Doctrine for Estonian Special Operations Forces

Rene Toomse

Tallinn University, Estonia

This study looks at the practical implementation of the theory of preemptive strategic development operations. The key actors in these operations could be small states with their unique capabilities and their modified special operations forces (SOF) units. The small states' SOF could be the physical doer and could literally apply the correct and needed soft push in the most difficult environments and circumstances. However, the preparations, methods, and approaches will likely differ greatly from the majority of tasks such entities currently conduct. Although the study focuses on small states' SOF, and on Estonia's particularly, the specific focus does not matter on a conceptual level. The approach, if proved feasible, could be a basis for any state's thoughts on the development of more effective strategic approaches that could be undertaken in prevention of armed conflicts.

Keywords: warfare, small states, special operations, strategy, conflict management, Estonia

And you know that in the changing world the one wins who walks alongside the world, walks a bit faster than the world, gets ahead of it and is able to see the problems, questions and solutions that life imposes to him.

—Lennart Meri, Estonian president, 1992–2001, addressing the beginning of 2001 school year

THE NEED FOR A BETTER APPROACH

Today's wars are long; they are costly in terms of human life and economics; and they are often ill-defined in scope, with no quantifiable end state. Emerging nonstate actors are entities with low structure, but their ideologies make responses by states' armed forces more difficult to determine and less productive in execution. Western societies need to reexamine how to help resolve emerging conflicts.

Could special operations forces (SOF) act in the prevention of armed conflict? The tools to preempt some wars are present today but, for many reasons, may not be used effectively. Because major nations have difficulties changing their complex systems in time, smaller nations might show an ability to adapt more quickly to changes in world affairs. One of the most successful approaches for using SOF is to support local forces, especially in training and professionalizing them. But this support is not enough. In such situations, local forces often

become the supporters, not the drivers, of the desired developments in those states. More work needs to be done to improve Western response.

In 2012 my thoughts on the concept of preemptive strategic development operations were published in the *Baltic Security and Defence Review* (Toomse, 2012). By studying the possible root causes of insurgencies I synthesized a concept that could possibly diminish at least some armed conflicts before they arise. Usually the shift toward conflict starts for economic and political reasons. These can be mismanagement of resources or processes, corruption, or other similar factors. The bottom line is that the causes stem from somewhere outside the military, so the fix and aid need to address and be conceived from where the symptoms started. Sending money or humanitarian aid alone is not an answer. There needs to be well-coordinated moral and physical oversight and mentoring on the use of all available assets.

While being general in approach in the mentioned study, I concluded that for such operations additional systems need to be created at the political level. The main idea is the need to create national strategic development groups that will act beyond the concerns of daily politics and instead pursue the long-term goals of the nation. However, such goals should always be adjusted to account for the common interests of allies and therefore be well coordinated within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Planning is important, but it is worth little if there is no force available to execute the plans. Therefore, the previous study argues that the states' SOF should broaden their approach to include more civilian expertise and be present at all times in potential hotspots. Their role is not the classic one, as SOF is seen today; instead, they would shoulder the usual tasks of civilian experts in locations where civilian specialists do not want to go or might not be willing to risk their lives.

Upgraded SOF, in my opinion, could be the best physical asset in conflict prevention operations. To diminish or prevent the causes of future crises demands an understanding of the problems as well as an ability and will to apply the most effective ways and means in time to affect the root causes. The larger the state the more difficult it will be to adopt new models. Therefore here, in preemptive strategic development operations, smaller democratic nations may have an upper hand.

According to Jeanne Hey, small states are often less complex and more streamlined in their internal and organizational systems, and thus can often be more flexible and creative in their ability to induce internal changes (2003, p. 4). This is also logical because in small states there are usually fewer bodies to coordinate; therefore, decisions can thus be made faster than in larger states, where there are numerous agencies and offices that must affirm and agree to the coordination effort. As small units have faster reaction and readiness circles, smaller countries have faster response times at the strategic level. Decision makers of small states could make rapid and sound decisions to act on complex problems alongside adaptive military organizations that could respond as a part of the solution. This would mitigate future threats to the state and the alliance, as well as increase the political credibility of the state in the international arena.

How could small states contribute to prevention strategies exactly? What approach could their SOF take to support those strategies? In this study I use the Republic of Estonia as a hypothetical model to answer these questions. I look into national settings and strengths that could be used to support the greater idea of the previously described operations.

Today, Estonia does not take advantage of its full capabilities in employing an effective strategy in world affairs. Currently Estonia contributes mainly conventional forces units to

ongoing conflicts. One could argue that a small state with a population of less than 1.3 million people does not have an option to take the initiative in world affairs, but that would not be entirely true. There can be some good opportunities for Estonia in prevention of conflicts, as this study tries to show.

As mentioned, for small states, engaging in sound and proactive activities in prevention of conflicts could offer possibilities to increase their influence in the international arena. Being smaller often means also being more flexible. Small nations usually are often more appreciative of the diversity of cultures, as they have greatly depended on their neighbors' behaviors, economies, and policies. Smartly utilizing the cooperation of nations and within alliances, a small state could likely even lead strategic development operations without exhausting its own national resources.

Although this study focuses on Estonia particularly, such specifics do not matter on the conceptual level. The approach, if proved feasible, could be the basis for any state's thoughts on the development of more effective strategic approaches. The main idea is that each nation, large or small, could offer its best national qualities and expertise to the larger programs.

OVERVIEW ON REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA AND PROPOSALS ON STRATEGIC LEVEL SYSTEMS

Facts, Activities, and Ambitions

Estonia is a small state geographically (with an area of 17,462 square miles, or 45,226 square kilometers) with a population of about 1.3 million, located in the Eastern Europe region on the shore of the Baltic Sea and neighboring with Finland in the north, Sweden in the northwest, Latvia in the south, and Russia in the east. In modern history, after being an independent state from 1918 to 1940, the outcome of World War II included Estonia suffering a decades-long occupation by the Soviet Union. Estonia regained its independence on August 20, 1991.

Since then Estonians have made great progress in developments in such fields as economics, education, and science (Landler, 2005). Estonia became a member of NATO and the European Union (EU) in 2004. Having small professional armed forces numbering close to 3,800 personnel (Estonian Defence Forces, 2015), Estonia has participated in international military operations since 1995, with more than 2,500 soldiers supporting its allies. On the front lines during Allied operations, Estonia contributes mainly with conventional military capabilities, such as armored infantry, mortar teams, and logistics divisions (Estonian Ministry of Defence, 2015).

However, the thinking in terms of comprehensiveness has been evolving in state-level documents for some time. The latest Estonian security concept was amended in May 2010, and it is aimed at preventing threats as well as responding to them in a swift and flexible manner. According to the document, Estonia's security is ensured through coordinated foreign and domestic policy measures (National Security Concept of Estonia, 2010, p. 4). That concept is undoubtedly a qualitative step forward from its previous version; however, the policy seems to lack clear implementation guidance.

The document promises general guidelines for an integrated approach, where foreign policy, defense policy, and internal security policy, as well as the cohesion and resilience of society,

should be employed for the purpose of achieving the security policy goals for the country as a whole (National Security Concept of Estonia, 2010, p. 3). In the end it seems to make the government responsible for the implementation of the integration without further guidance on how to do it (p. 21). Such a policy again leads to unanswered questions: Who has the task to prepare the whole state-integrated security system and lead the development? Who has the authority to keep the real developments in line with the spirit of the concept to ensure its independence from daily politics and populist promises?

There is often no continuity between agreed-upon policies and promises made at elections. This discrepancy could probably be diminished by establishing and giving an advisory role to a strategic development group (see concept in Toomse, 2012, pp. 125–126) that would be responsible for providing analysis on these types of shortcomings to the parliament to allow them to exercise constitutional control over the government. As long as analyses are conducted by individual parties and within single ministries on their own, true comprehensiveness is not likely to be reached.

The current approach, which does not enforce the agreed-upon principles, might be a serious obstacle in the way of implementing a nationwide comprehensive approach that should lead to the successful fulfillment of the main objective of the Republic of Estonia as defined in its Constitution, which proclaims that all state efforts “shall guarantee the preservation of the Estonian nation, language and culture through the ages” (Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, 1992). This objective is the very reason the state exists. Therefore, the government should implement the philosophy of comprehensiveness, as it is stated within the National Defence Strategy (2010, pp. 8–10), and focus on the nation’s strengths. Estonia, for instance, is reasonably well developed in the information technology field (e-Estonia, 2015). Estonians are proud of that fact, but there is a risk of losing this position due to increasing difficulties in exporting this capability (Estonian Development Fund, 2009, pp. 17–19). There are only two options: Sit and watch Estonia’s technological successes diminish or get creative and take innovative steps forward to maintain this accomplishment.

Cyber Operations Capability

Estonia accommodates the NATO-certified Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE, 2015), which could effectively be put to use to execute the previously mentioned approach. A widening of the mission statement, which is currently focused on cyber defense, into a more comprehensive one could provide a solid platform for establishing networks and systems in remote areas in cooperation with private companies, as well as for providing cyber protection and necessary cyber network attack capabilities (Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, 2009, p. 46) to hinder their adversaries’ information operations.¹

Also, in 2011, Estonia officially created a paramilitary cyber defense capability called Estonian Defence League’s Cyber Unit (EDL CU). The unit’s purposes are listed here:

- Development of cooperation among qualified volunteer information technology (IT) specialists
- Raising the level of cyber security for critical information infrastructure through the dissemination of knowledge and training

- Creation of a network that facilitates public/private partnership and enhances preparedness in operating during a crisis situation
- Education and training in information security
- Participation in international cyber security training events (Estonian Defence League's Cyber Unit, 2015).

This unit is officially a part of Kaitseliit, which is a voluntary, militarily organized, national defense organization operating under the government's Ministry of Defence. It has more than 23,000 active volunteers out of the country's noted population of about 1.3 million (Estonian Defence League, 2015).

Few know what the EDL CU is doing, because the organization's actions tend to take place in the world that common computer users rarely see or recognize. Having some friends in this unit, I have learned that the EDL CU provides support to and also conducts cyber security penetration tests for Defence Forces and Defence League exercises. From time to time, this unit is forced to cease its activities during training events to allow the rest of the systems to work. Allegedly, the EDL CU is very good in the cyber domain and is capable of doing more than it is tasked to do at the moment. EDL CU could be a great asset to strategic development operations in shaping cyber avenues of approach to target audiences, and much more.

Following is an example of how a small nation could contribute to the alliance's agreed-upon strategies. Each nation has developed its own unique capabilities, and the possible use of all of those capabilities should be analyzed and synchronized, taking strategy into account, in order to achieve the desired alliance end state.

One of the means to achieve these goals could be the "Internetization" of potential crisis areas to allow the alliance to exercise indirect influence with the aim of preventing crisis. The strategic development group, along with its allied partners, would study and create programs that are most effective for the target audience. Then the action teams would be physically deployed to set up networks, deliver the computers and equipment, and teach the basics of their use. Another partner within the same operation could be responsible for building or repairing the electric power infrastructure where needed.

Estonia has considerable competence in the information systems security measures necessary to combat serious cyberattacks (Cyber Security Strategy Committee, 2008, p. 16). Similarly, the state should step forward to interdict the attacks and to take the offensive position, where needed and agreed, as well to focus on development and required control of the systems in third-world countries.

In this light, the announcement by the minister of economic affairs and communications in 2010 that Estonian IT companies were looking forward to developing IT infrastructure in Iraq was a push in the right direction (Raus, 2010). However, that course of action did have a number of issues that were not solvable by the Estonian civil sector alone. Iraq was and still is an unstable country with a high risk of physical harm to travelers there. To send civilian IT experts there on their own is probably not an acceptable risk. The project never materialized.

The questions remain: What would help balance the risks that are obstacles to these possible strategic gains for a small state? Who could do the needed fieldwork? Would it be feasible to integrate civilian IT knowledge and Estonian SOF to increase national strength and to enter a market where it is desperately needed but not yet a priority for other suppliers? Some conceptual changes are needed to develop such a capability in the special operations entity.

PROPOSED DOCTRINAL CONCEPT OF ESTONIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN SUPPORT OF PREEMPTIVE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS

This section describes the proposed main approach of establishing small states' SOF using Estonian Special Operations Forces (ESTSOF) as an example and model. By adopting these principles, ESTSOF could probably produce great benefit to Estonian strategic goals. The concept keeps in mind that during wartime there are additional possible tasks compared to operations during peace.

Historical Overview of Estonian Special Operations Forces

Estonia, as a member state of NATO since 2004, participated actively in a series of common capacity development programs before becoming a member state, which included the creation and integration of national SOF (Special Operations, Estonian Defence Forces, 2014). In the beginning, the request from NATO was based solely on Allied operational needs, and the role of this force for national needs had to be defined by Estonian policymakers. However, in 2003, when the actual organization and idea started to develop on the unit level, there was still a significant knowledge gap at the highest military headquarters and in the Ministry of Defense.² The situation led to a series of problems and delays in development of this capability and to a possible waste of time and resources due to lack of strategic and operational guidance.

In 2003, only a few decision-makers understood the capabilities and uses of SOF as an asset. For others, ESTSOF looked dangerous, and they were not sure how to use it for Estonian defense or for other purposes. Many leaders thought in terms of a small team of operators being able to destroy large enemy forces.³ Reading the 2007 draft of NATO's *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations* (AJP-3.5) did not give a comprehensive picture of such a unit's utilization, because it described SOF in terms of NATO's needs, which are mostly tactical roles and effects. There was no official reference for policymakers that could help them understand the strategic options for national use of special operations. That was a common problem of many countries and not just specific to Estonia (NATO's Special Operations Coordination Center [NSCC], 2008, p. 21).

Because of the "Hollywood image" of this type of force and the disgraceful ending of the Estonian Special Operations Group (SOG) in 1999, the midlevel decision makers felt that they needed to have firm control over every move of ESTSOF (Pöld, 1999; Oolo, 1999).⁴ This diminished the initiative of the unit. However, SOF without an initiative is no longer SOF. Understanding of SOF theory was enhanced, thanks to involvement of NATO SOF Coordination Center (NSCC) led by Admiral William McRaven in person in 2006. However, there is arguably still a lack of a true strategic guidance for development of the national SOF.

Current state-level development plans seem to envision an elite infantry unit being developed, but not much more than that. There is still no comprehensive political direction in accordance with the changing security situation in the world. Recently, the push was for a classic kinetic approach.⁵ Now the unit seems to be shifting more to classic military assistance, and the first unit members have conducted missions in Afghanistan since summer 2012 (Ühtegi, 2013).

The National Defence Development Plan for 2013–2022 (n.d.) supports the idea that Estonian SOF will be restricted to operating within Estonia's borders in case of war against Estonia (see point 14). This seems like a self-induced restriction that should have no place in such a high-level document. Special operations need to produce strategic effects, and most likely the needed actions to achieve the effects in the favor of Estonia in case of war will not be conducted on Estonian soil.

Lieutenant Colonel Scott Moore (2004) has expressed doubt that even U.S. SOF, however successful today, may not be adequately prepared for the new types of missions and challenges that they will encounter in the future (p. 171). There is a suggestion that new SOF entities, such as ESTSOF, should focus on new possible directions immediately upon organization, before they become entrapped in classical military culture. This is a most difficult thing to change later on (Hart, 1943, p. 115). Estonia is still at the beginning of the development of SOF capability, and this task should be approached comprehensively and innovatively from the start.

For a long time there was no direct representation of SOF in the general staff. The small entity was subordinated to the Military Intelligence Battalion. This created some difficulties in manning and budgeting. It is good to see the recent development wherein the commander of Special Operations has directly been subordinated to the chief of Defence Forces (Defence Forces Special Operations Forces Statute, 2013). The current commander, whom I have personally known for many years, is undoubtedly the best possible person for this position, having the necessary values, understanding, and experience.

However, it seems that a clear and bold doctrinal concept is still missing. The current public explanation for the purpose of the ESTSOF reads: "The primary objective of the Special Operations Force, in terms of Estonia's national defense, is the development of capabilities for unconventional warfare. In addition to that, the tasks of the unit include special reconnaissance, military assistance and direct action" (Special Operations, 2014). This definition is likely not enough, as this purpose does not really address the strategic needs of the state. Therefore, the following sections are provided as proposals of additional ways of thinking about and further developing not only ESTSOF but any small state SOF.

Purpose and Proposed Ambitions

The purpose of ESTSOF is to conduct strategic operations in the interests of the Republic of Estonia and to contribute to the national strategic ambitions. Therefore, ESTSOF should aim to understand these goals and plan for upcoming missions utilizing the full range of options available.

The National Security Concept of Estonia (2010) defines the main threats to Estonia as follows:

1. The impact of distorted information that the development of information and communication technology and the media are facilitating
2. The amplification and rapid proliferation of local and regional crises and tensions over natural resources
3. Failed states that threaten regional and wider international security by allowing terrorist organizations and organized crime to gain a foothold in states with weak or nonexistent governments

4. Coordinated cyberattacks, the sources of which are difficult to identify, causing significant damage to society; abuse of cyberspace, including by terrorist groups and organized crime, growing
5. Military attacks against Estonia unlikely in the present and near future; nevertheless, one cannot exclude this possibility in the long term (pp. 5, 6).

The ambition of ESTSOF should be comprehensive and bold on identification of precise threats that are outside the reach of any other national capabilities. The SOf should plan and prepare a strategic offensive against the problems and challenges that endanger Estonia's security.

Comprehensiveness

ESTSOF should have direct access to other national intelligence organizations and common training with police special units, as well as with selected units of Defense Forces and Kaitseliit. The direct liaisons of the SOf should be present in the Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Economic Affairs and Infrastructure, as well as in other significant state actors. This positioning would ensure rapid action in any scenario where the capabilities of the unit may be needed. Special operations planning takes time due to the risky nature of its tasks and goals, and direct links could shorten time for planning. ESTSOF liaisons need a permanent seat in a national strategic development group to provide advice on the capabilities and limitations of the unit when the strategic development group is considering initiation of an operation.

The operators of the unit should be rotated purposefully through other state intelligence and counterintelligence agencies, and also the Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, for the purposes of better understanding other systems to facilitate the enhancement of cooperation. Along the same lines, the staff of partner organizations could serve in ESTSOF on a rotational basis. The rotation of operators should include service in Estonian embassies and other representative bodies, particularly in current or potential areas of interest. While serving there the operators could be useful in security matters. However, the primary role of operators should be gaining knowledge about countries of interest and identification of possible networks, influence areas, and themes in case the strategic development group decides to launch a strategic development operation.

ESTSOF should also maintain permanent contacts with NATO SOf headquarters and relevant institutions in the EU, as well as with allied SOf units. The units and the staff element should participate in common exercises to display the high quality and unique capabilities they possess, as well as study the approach to allies and find opportunities for cooperation.

The approach of ESTSOF in Strategic Development Operations should emphasize soft power⁶ rather than military power—in other words, the tools and knowledge on social, economy, diplomatic, and informational fields. The operators, with necessary background, will need to attend respective civilian conferences, workshops, and so on, to learn and identify new ideas to be elaborated in areas of operations. In addition, those events are probably the best pools for building relationships and recruiting the supporting staff members for planned and ongoing missions.

Organization

Solely militarily oriented special operations units cannot likely produce the effects desired that are mainly outside the military domain. Therefore, a combination of “shooters” and “assisters” must be developed. It is important that embedded assisters have the same basic operator skills that shooters possess. They must be physically and mentally fit, highly qualified, and trained in tandem with the shooters. Of course, these embedded assisters are not expected to take the lead in direct military action as forced entry, but they must be capable of performing competently in firefights. There should be no members in the unit who cannot protect themselves or their teammates (Brief of Amici Curiae, 2009, p. 25).

Shooters are to be trained according to classical SOF standards. They should be experts on reconnaissance and surveillance and direct action tactics, as well as mentoring other military forces on conventional and unconventional modes of operations (military assistance). They should be trained in depth in such specialty skills as communications, engineering, weapons, and medicine (Department of the Army, 2001, pp. 3–29, 3–30).

Assisters are the personnel who have specific civilian education and skills that are essential for applying soft power to the designated target system. Assisters should focus on vital civilian fields that would be the best leverage in prevention of crisis. These areas include but are not limited to information technology, energy industry, health care, local governance, political science, law, media, economics, and psychological operations. Extensive analysis is required to determine the exact civil expertise and its extent needed that would make the best contribution to prevention of conflict. In essence the assisters are the true operators in target areas who apply the nonkinetic means, usually via indirect lines of operational/strategic approach with careful calculation of possible effects. Their approach is mainly face-to-face with key leaders or their advisers.

The unit’s staff is to be composed like the operational teams by completely integrating sophisticated military and civilian knowledge to ensure the best understanding and planning for upcoming operations. The staff is to keep liaison with respective partners at their level, organize training and courses for whole unit, monitor the development of capabilities, and command and coordinate unit actions. The staff also acts as a link between higher staff and the strategic development group while advising and reporting on actions the units take. The staff personnel should comprise former operators who have extensive experience that makes them most suitable in their positions. The staff structure could be set by following the new NATO operational staff layout that comprises three main divisions: knowledge development, operations, and resources (Comprehensive Operational, 2010, pp. 4–5, 4–7).

The Knowledge Development Division should maintain a constant overview of the situation in areas of interest, collecting information from all sources and cooperating with partners in that matter. In addition, the division is the primary hub of directing the needs for training, education, and developments for the future.

The Operations Division’s primary function is to lead planning of operations and provide constant monitoring and assessment of ongoing missions. This division is to offer immediate support for action teams in terms of finding and providing the necessary highly sophisticated subject matter expertise to the action units in the field, and so on.

The Resources Division will cover all personnel, logistics, and financial issues. This division should seek recruits, build operators development and plan careers. In logistics, they organize transportation, supplies, infrastructure, and necessary finances for all ESTSOF needs.

Flexibility to form a planning group, which will consist of necessary experts from all divisions, should be ensured at any given time.

The Command Group could comprise of Commander and Chief of Staff who are the most experienced officers to ensure the best understanding and quality of decisions (NSCC, 2008, p. B1). The command system is described in the last section.

Operational Domains

By taking into account the current and possible future security environment and analyzing it together with local environment and conditions, ESTSOF should be able to operate in two major directions: *national needs* and *NATO/EU/Allied operations*. There are possible conflicts involving purposes, tasks, and equipment that need to be solved. Again, this is difficult as long as Estonia has not defined the long-term national needs and ambitions for fulfilling its constitutional purpose. In the broad sense there are three different domains for ESTSOF to operate in to counter national threats: (1) *international support*; (2) *peacetime support to the homeland*; and (3) *wartime operations to defend the homeland*.

International support comprises NATO Article 5 and non-Article 5 operations with the aim of supporting the common goals of a coalition. These operations can be conducted in bilateral, NATO, EU, or UN frameworks, and outside Estonia. The emphasis may be on SOF military tasks as described in NATO SOF doctrine, or on methods of conducting strategic development. For Estonia, as for any other small state, it is important to employ the strategic development type operations as these are likely to contribute more to the state's strategic aims and also to facilitate national economics and raise the participating nation's profile in the international community. Purely preemptive operations, without a declared crisis but warning signs of one forthcoming, are the most beneficial for this operational line. In this situation, the physical threat is not as high and the mix of ESTSOF and real civilian experts can contribute the best for strategic aims.

Peacetime support to the homeland is an operations set that will carry a solely national purpose. These operations can be conducted inside the country as support to law enforcement in case of emergency, or abroad to fulfill the variety of tasks with strategic importance to the state. The operations outside Estonia can include strategic development operations to pursue national interests in a variety of areas. This can include prevention of conflicts that might influence Estonia directly such as planned terror attacks prepared outside of Estonian borders. Those operations can also include certain operations in a third country at the request of an ally whose vital interests are in danger but who does not possess the access or capability to act. Other types of operations in this set can be the national requirement to protect and save national citizens in the case of an emergency in another country. The noncombatant recovery and rescue of own nationals and, upon request, allies from manmade or natural emergencies, as well hostage rescue operations from conflict zones are to be in this operations set.

Wartime operations to defend the homeland commence once the direct military threat toward Estonia is identified and confirmed. As for conventional military units it begins with the declaration of mobilization by the president of Estonia (Estonian Wartime Law, 1994). ESTSOF should be close to their respective targets on the enemy's territory as early as possible.

Here, the main tasks should be the direct interdiction of the opponent's high-level command and communications, disruption of strategic and operational transport networks and weaponry that will cause friction in the enemy's systems, and create favorable strategic conditions for Estonia to receive reinforcements by allies. Where appropriate and according the rules of war, disruption of civil infrastructure that supports the enemy's forces should not be ruled out.

However, the true art is to combine the men, training, weapons, equipment, and, most important, to create the long-term development plan to perform in these operational domains. That is not to be done in isolation of the strategic picture, nor without having all necessary subject-matter experts developing sophisticated concepts. It is crucial to understand that ESTSOF are not a given capability by themselves, but their capabilities will be created only according to national needs.

One of the national needs is to support allies with ESTSOF in operations that can be very tactical in nature. Estonia needs to clearly define the national goals and end states to maximize the strategic effects of this small entity in international arena despite the possible tactical tasks and purposes of deployment. The goals, in the long run, should focus on raising the national flag higher and higher by creating reliance within the coalition to entrust Estonia to take the lead in certain operations.

Missions and Essential Tasks

Following are the main missions to be defined for ESTSOF that support the national ambitions and are also in line with today's NATO SOF doctrinal missions (AJP 3.5, 2009, pp. 2–1–2-3):

1. *Civil and military assistance (CMA)* is the main effort of strategic development operations. Here the operators will build relationships with key leaders to advise and assist them to produce the desired effects that have been planned according to a development strategy in the full spectrum of political, economic, military, social, informational, and infrastructural aspects (PEMSII). Human handling and influencing skills, as well mastery in psychological and information operations, are the most important requirements to succeed in this task. In addition, the availability of proper finances and materiel resources in control of operators must be guaranteed, be that weapons to arm regular or irregular forces or generators and Internet routers to district. In addition, no matter to what level the operation is agreed upon among alliances, using the contribution of Estonian industries and private companies is a must, as it creates outputs for the Estonian economy. National strategic aims include these operations contributing to the state budget, so it is important to make the best use of opportunities to develop national industry whenever possible.
2. *Strategic and operational reconnaissance (SOR)* is to be conducted prior to, during, and after every operation that ESTSOF is tasked with. This is focused on eyes-on and operators' presence in the area of operation and can be conducted using a variety of methods. The operators should be prepared to perform different types of reconnaissance and surveillance tasks, such as covert observation; pursuit; human intelligence (HUMINT); electronic intelligence (ELINT); imagery intelligence (IMINT); local open sources analysis (OSINT); sensitive site exploitation (SSE); environmental assessments; chemical-biological-radiological-nuclear (CBRN) materiel detection, and so on. The

essence is to collect data that cannot be obtained from a distance and contribute to a comprehensive assessment of the target area, including the full spectrum of PEMSII.

3. *Cyber network operations* (CNO) are aimed at accessing and operating an adversary's closed networks. This is to be done when access from a distance is not possible, but monitoring or interdiction has strategic value. Here the operator needs to possess advanced hacking skills and knowledge of network infrastructures. These types of operations may be conducted to disrupt the adversary's decision cycle or take control over the strategic weapon systems. As more and more systems rely on cyber networks, any vulnerabilities that can be discovered become more critical. The operators, with a mastery of these operations and able to survive in proximity of proper access point, could potentially disrupt the whole war.
4. *Direct action* (DA) missions are to be conducted in support of assistance operations and cyber network operations, or to disrupt strategically or operationally important adversary means. Usually direct action is limited in duration and scope and is aimed at an actor posing a vital threat. Direct action missions can be carried out by conducting ambushes, raids, sniping, emplacing and detonating explosives, and so on—activities that require close range proximity of the operator. From a safer distance most deniable methods include the use of terminal guidance munitions and proxy forces to undertake destruction events.
5. *Personnel and materiel recovery* (PMR) is often similar to raids in the direct action category. However, the risk of injuring or killing the personnel under rescue may often be higher. Another reason to put this in a separate category is the frequent lack of planning and preparation time. This mission type puts the operation at greater risk than does any other deliberately planned operation. In a third country, where the rescue is usually needed, supporting networks are often nonexistent. These are emergency tasks, and there are no other suitable units to conduct the mission. Such missions could be Estonian citizens trapped in a natural disaster or conflict zone, taken hostage, or crash landed outside the reach of normal search-and-rescue units; these tasks are likely to be handed to ESTSOF.

The missions and tasks listed here are not exhaustive. As analyses develop and new threats emerge, modification is definitely needed. For all these and upcoming missions ESTSOF must maintain the initiative and flexibility to adjust to whatever strategic effect is required. There should be no limitations other than legal and national strategic constraints.

Main Principles, Methods, Support, and Limitations

To create a force that can operate in the fields described, a few principles should be applied. The main focus should be on a nonkinetic approach in accordance with scientific developments in the civilian education and research sector that are prioritized in a respective national strategy. In Estonia these are currently defined Information and Communication Technology (ICT); health technologies and services; and more effective use of resources (Estonian RDI Strategy, 2014–2020, 2014, p. 12). The same approach and focus could be enforced in future strategic operations of the nation. The principle here is to amplify national strength via a comprehensive approach.

This focus could have a twofold effect: It would add the necessary uniqueness and influence to ESTSOF and create an output for Estonian scientists and businesses. On the strategic level it will

strengthen the country's position in the international arena. Smart application of this integrated capability will add to Estonia's protection against new threats and old types of threats that still exist.

Strategic development operations, while assisting forces, interact with vital actors in a low-visibility mode; the shooters operate as a "shadow force" to provide security for the assistance group and to produce kinetic effects as needed. However, they are required to be able to help the assistants as well, having basic knowledge of a particular topic. Such education helps to keep the force small to avoid unnecessary attention, while at the same time maximizing the number of subject-matter experts deployed. Flexibility is a keyword when organizing the unit for a specific mission. The best ratio of shooters to assistants and their optimal qualifications must be determined during the planning phase.

Sophisticated intelligence collection and analysis systems are a must. While ESTSOF should use its own intelligence analysts in the first instance, cooperation with all other national and allied systems is also needed. ESTSOF should have its own situation center to monitor and predict the situations that may require the involvement of ESTSOF all around the world. Parallel planning for time-sensitive operations must be conducted continuously to shorten preparation time for possible actions.

Freedom of action and mission orders approach must be endorsed within the force, allowing and encouraging initiative and thinking outside the box. This means training and educating people how to think, not just what to think (Schoomaker, 2004, p. 167). It might be difficult to achieve in a situation where control is so strict that it can restrict the creative achievement of assigned missions. That is something to be left up to the ESTSOF commander, higher command, and the political leadership to determine on a case-by-case basis. No classical rules or procedures should be enforced only because they are standard practice within the Estonian Defence Forces, with the exception of the agreed-upon legal framework.

Language proficiency and cultural awareness of the area of operations are rudimentary to most operational teams. Therefore, identification and study of the possible areas of operations should start as early as possible. As mastering language takes much effort and time, the languages of interest should be divided reasonably among the operators.

Planning capability and assessment of developments must be possessed at the lowest levels that will allow the operational teams to adapt rapidly to the changing conditions and make sound strategic decisions on the spot when needed.

In addition to previously mentioned support and comprehensive cooperation, it is advisable to have agreements with national privately owned aviation companies for emergency strategic airlift possibilities. These agreements are necessary in case of emergency personnel or materiel recovery.

Last but not least, all of the previously described SOF mission assessment criteria and classical SOF truths (see concepts in Toomse, 2012, pp. 126–134) should be followed.

Development and Sustainment

Constant development of knowledge, education, training, and equipment is key for a successful force to be ahead of threats and in readiness to act properly at any given task. The ability to adapt quickly to rapidly changing conditions and environments should become a norm (NSCC, 2008, p. 21).

Education at the highest level is the key to success (Grice, 2009). Thereby, the operators should complete a variety of civilian courses to gain knowledge on topics that have to be used in operations. Extensive cooperation with national science and education institutions should be agreed upon among proper authorities to ensure their cooperation with minimum bureaucracy.

The procurement system for ESTSOF will likely be different from the common and standardized approach within the defense forces. The allocation of funds to procure and modify equipment and weapons should be granted. It will be the responsibility of SOF to understand their needs, while always keeping in mind that the purpose of technology is to equip the man, not man the equipment (Schoomaker, 2004, p. 167).

As the operators are the most vital asset, a sophisticated and long-term career system must be built for every operator. An internal career system should provide the shooters an option to move to the assistants' league when proven sufficiently mature and willing to acquire an optimal educational background. The force should develop the next generation of staff members, the commander, and also the permanent advisors and decision makers for higher echelons.

The size of the force is to be decided based on strategic analyses according to national strategic goals. The pool of resources (human, finances, etc.) sets the limits. The most important principle to keep in mind is the need to create and sustain an adequate motivation system for people to avoid the loss of high-cost investments.

Support Requirements

A comprehensive national support system to the force must be created via analysis. Some components are needed to be organic to the unit and some can be outsourced. As mentioned, the links to national and allied intelligence organizations should constantly provide the most updated data to the force (NSCC, 2008, pp. A6, A7).

To enable units to conduct the most effective operations, strategic communication and reach-back systems to the supporting staff in the homeland need to be established. This may require satellite communications over encrypted networks with data transmission capabilities. Advice and more sophisticated subject-matter expertise guidance should be constantly available to the operational team in action. Financial resources and appropriate equipment should be available in accordance with the plan in assessed quantities. Here the use of national equipment and technologies should be prioritized. Logistics and administration in the homeland can be shared with a larger unit to minimize nonoperational issues. The oversight and guidance of these matters remain under the control of Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the unit where the qualified experts should also be located (NSCC, 2008, pp. A8, A9).

With national and partners' support, the need for a professional and open-minded analysis is required for long-term plans as well as for emergency tasks. The requirements are to be tested via war games to determine the best organizational layouts in support of the missions to ensure the best applicability in variety of operations. There are no ready answers or set rules. It all depends on the mission and resources available.

Command and Control

To be able to act quickly in required tasks, as well to lose as little information and time as possible due to communications, SOCOM was created under Defence Forces general staff (Defence Forces Statute, 2008). However, the command line must be dual: Special operations sits beside the other components (Land, Air, and Maritime) in general staff, but straight communication to highest political level is also an absolute necessity (NSCC, 2008, p. B1).

If a national strategic development group is created, then the unit's liaison must be presented accordingly. If the group is not in force, the respective strategic operations adviser/liaison should be embedded in the Ministry of Defence. Eventually, it is the political level that decides the use of ESTSOF, taking into consideration all political risks and effects. Military leadership chiefly acts in a supporting role and is responsible for providing assets and facilities needed for SOF sustainment and development.

ESTSOF does not belong to the usual military culture, because more extensive freedom of action is needed that allows SOF to focus on mission accomplishment with the most strategic impact. Of course, higher military commanders would still be in command, ensuring that a proper path to and correct and legal use of force is followed. This responsibility and its extent must be clearly defined to ensure the minimum loss of desired effectiveness to strategic demands.

SOCOM responsibility is to exercise direct command and control over ESTSOF and to coordinate, oversee, and integrate various powers; advise and inform higher military and political leadership on the proper use of ESTSOF; and establish a resourcing strategy that links together policy, doctrine, organization, training, education, partnering, and procurement to execute operations effectively in the field (NSCC, 2008, p. 20). Naturally, those in SOCOM should also have extensive knowledge of and experience in the strategic operations field.

CONCLUSIONS

To be effective in strategic development operations, Western nations need to combine and integrate civilian and military entities, adjust the cultures and policies of those organizations to develop common understanding, planning, operational philosophy, and procedures. It is essential that Western societies as a whole act in third-world countries for a common goal: to prevent negative interference in their own societies. It does not mean necessarily exporting democratic values if this approach is not likely to fulfill that goal. A feasible end state and the strategies to meet the end are needed at all levels, from single nations up to NATO and the EU. There is a role and place for all the members in this approach to secure an acceptable future for Western nations.

This is not the responsibility of major powers alone. Under this approach small states may have more flexibility in different fields where they are the strong, such as information technology, economics, and local governance. These should be utilized, taking account of the capabilities and advantages of these nations. Alliances (e.g., EU and NATO in cooperation) should be platforms for planning, coordinating, and connecting all members' respective capabilities for that one purpose: to diminish future threats to Western societies by using a full range of assets (diplomatic, informational, military, social, and economic) in concert, while keeping Western values in mind.

For small states, strategic development operations are the best possibility to improve their position and increase their influence on the international arena. They likely have greater flexibility to change their systems quickly, as well as reorient and come to compromises among themselves more quickly than larger nations can. And speed is vital to be able not just to react to but be ahead of negative actions. In addition, small states can also benefit from this approach by creating business opportunities for national industry and technology that would facilitate economic growth in the nation.

Estonia, for instance, could seriously assess the development options in informational-technological fields and foster the penetration of the Internet in third-world countries, while at the same time detecting and interrupting an adversary's cyber information operations. This approach would contribute to Western campaign plans by bringing desired images and values into the homes and minds of local people without creating the friction that follows a presentation of overwhelming armed force. Physically, it could be established, in cooperation with the Estonian-based Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, to develop an Estonian Special Operations Forces entity that is still lacking a true strategic purpose. It could be directed to focus on the preemptive strategic development operations approach with the aim of contributing to national strategic ends and not just await activation for military operations. A full range of open-minded options should be discussed at the highest levels and an action plan put together to implement the best possible approaches by maximizing the advantages of the whole nation and alliances.

Estonia has a unique advantage in the situation by not yet having SOF traditions or a strong community that would be difficult to change. Traditional systems in place could make such a transformation a slower and more arduous process. However, this article does not mean to suggest that ESTSOF should dismiss the classical approach of special operations. The key is to find the best balance of traditional SOF tasks and contemporary or even future duties. Such revision may require a change in current traditional military culture, organization, and even command system. This concept and the main principles for implementing it have been proposed in this study.

Sometimes less is more. Preemptive strategic development operations conducted by smart and capable special operations forces could be the best option for a small state that wants to do something really useful while not exhausting its limited resources. One could look at it as a new approach to warfare that differs from previous incarnations in many of its features. This approach would exert not as much physical as social influence. The aim would be to prevent physical warfare in the first place and thereby contribute to the future of Western security in a more effective manner. For small states, it carries the opportunity to improve their position and acquire more respect and acknowledgment in the international arena that could improve economic conditions and thereby survivability options for a nation. Every nation is as strong it wants to be.

NOTES

1. The mission of the CCDCOE: "Our mission is to enhance the capability, cooperation and information sharing among NATO, NATO nations and partners in cyber defence by virtue of education, research and development, lessons learned and consultation." See <https://ccdcoe.org/our-work.html>.
2. In 2003, when I was appointed the commander of ESTSOF, I started choosing soldiers for the unit and educating us all on the essence of special operations. It took several years to understand what we were really dealing with. In that sense there can be no blame: How could they know about this one issue while having hundreds of other problems to solve at the same time?

3. That is the author's perception acquired from countless meetings and briefings with higher officials throughout 2003–2008.
4. Estonia's SOG was established in 1995 initially under the counterintelligence section of the Estonian Defence League. The main tasks of the group were Defence League and Defence Forces training in reconnaissance and diversion, as well participation on international special operations competitions. More practical tasks later were to conduct close protection to visiting high-ranking officials. On May 15, 1999, one of SOG's members attempted an armed robbery using his duty weapon. After investigation, the commission under the Ministry of Defence suggested to disband the unit mainly due lack of clear tasks assigned to it. Later comments say that the unit was left on their own with a lack of guidance and funding.
5. The ESTSOF development program is a classified document and exists in Estonian Defence Forces headquarters. The author read it in 2009, and this statement is his personal opinion.
6. According to Oxford Dictionaries, „Soft power is understood as a persuasive approach to international relations, typically involving the use of economic or cultural influence/. Retrieved from http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0990350#m_en_gb0990350

REFERENCES

- Brief of Amici Curiae Special Forces Association, U.S. Army Ranger Association, etc. (2009). *In the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in support of Appellants*. Retrieved from [michaelyon-online.com, http://www.michaelyon-online.com/images/pdf/maqaleh_%20amicus_as_filed.pdf](http://www.michaelyon-online.com/images/pdf/maqaleh_%20amicus_as_filed.pdf)
- Comprehensive Operational Planning Directive (working version). (2010, November). NATO.
- Constitution of the Republic of Estonia. (1992). *Gateway to Estonia*. Retrieved from <http://www.eesti.ee/eng/riik/pohiseadus/>
- Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. (2015). <http://www.ccdcoe.org/>.
- Cyber Security Strategy Committee. (2008). Cyber security strategy [*Eesti küberjulgeoleku strateegia*]. Retrieved from http://www.kmin.ee/files/kmin/img/files/Kuberjulgeoleku_strateegia_2008-2013_ENG.pdf
- Defence Forces Special Operations Forces statute [Kaitseväe erioperatsioonide põhimäärus]. (2013). *Riigi Teataja*. RT I, 24.05. 2013, 10. Retrieved from <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/124052013010>
- Defence Forces statute [Kaitseväe põhimäärus]. (2008). *Riigi Teataja*. RT I 2008, 50, 279. Retrieved from <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/127122012006>
- Department of the Army. (2001, June). *FM 3-05.20, Special Forces Operations* (FM 3-05.20). Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army.
- e-Estonia. (2015). Retrieved from <http://estonia.eu/about-estonia/economy-a-i/e-estonia.html>
- Estonian Defence Forces. (2015). Estonian Defence Forces. Retrieved from <http://www.mil.ee/en/defence-forces>
- Estonian Defence League. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.kaitseliit.ee/en/edl>
- Estonian Defence League's Cyber Unit. (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.kaitseliit.ee/en/cyber-unit>
- Estonian Development Fund. (2009, February). *Eesti Infotehnoloogia tulevikuvaated* [Prospects of Estonian info-technology]. Retrieved from http://www.arengufond.ee/upload/Editor/EST_IT/Eesti_Infotehnoloogia_tulevikuvaa ted_Marek_Tiits_&_Kristjan_Rebane.pdf
- Estonian Ministry of Defence. (2015). Estonia participates in international peace securing operations, depending the security interests of Estonia. Retrieved from <http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/en/international-operations>
- Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy 2014-2020 “Knowledge-based Estonia.” (2014). Retrieved from https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/estonian_rdi_strategy_2014-2020_en.doc
- Estonian Wartime Law [Sõjaaja riigikaitse seadus]. (1994). *Riigi Teataja*. RT I 1994, pp. 69, 1194. Retrieved from <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/13001744>
- Grice, Michael D. (2009, December 12). Where is our Kilcullen? *Small Wars Journal*. Retrieved from <http://smallwars-journal.com/blog/where-is-our-kilcullen>
- Hart, Basil H. Liddell. (1943). *Thoughts on war*. London, UK: Faber and Faber.
- Hey, Jeanne A.K. (Ed.). (2003). *Small states in world politics: Explaining foreign policy behavior*. London, UK: Lynne Rienner.
- Landler, Mark. (2005), December 13. Hot technology for chilly streets in Estonia. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/13/technology/13skype.html?scp=1&sq=estonia%202005&st=cse>

- Moore, Scott. (2004). "Special operations forces: Visioning for the future." In Bernd Horn, J. Paul de B. Taillon, & David Last (Eds.), *Force of choice: Perspectives on special operations* (pp. 169–198). Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- National Defence Development Plan for 2013–2022. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/et/valitsus/arengukavad/kaitseministeerium/Riigikaitse_arengukava_2013-2022_avalik%20osa.pdf.
- National Defence Strategy: Estonia. (2010). Retrieved from [http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/files/kmin/img/files/KM_riigikaitse_strateegia_eng\(2\).pdf](http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/files/kmin/img/files/KM_riigikaitse_strateegia_eng(2).pdf)
- National Security Concept of Estonia. (2010). Retrieved from http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/files/kmin/img/files/National_Security_Concept_of_Estonia.pdf
- NATO's Special Operations Coordination Center. (2008). *The NATO Special Operations Forces Study*. Retrieved from <http://everyoneweb.com/WA/DataFileskorps-mariniers-forum/nscc.pdf>
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2009). *Allied joint doctrine for special operations* (AJP-3.5).
- Oolo, Anti. (1999, May 19). Eriüksusel lasti tegutseda omapäi [Special Forces was left on their own]. *Eesti Päevaleht*. Retrieved from <http://epl.delfi.ee/news/eesti/eriüksusel-lasti-tegutseda-omapai?id=50772557>
- Pöld, Andres. (1999, June 9). SOG-i hukutasid rikkumised [SOG was seduced by violations]. *Eesti Päevaleht*. Retrieved from <http://epl.delfi.ee/news/eesti/sog-i-hukutasid-rikkumised?id=50773502>
- Raus, Laura. (2010, January 26). Eesti ettevõtjad lähevad Iraaki [Estonian enterprisers going to Iraq]. *Postimees*. Retrieved from <http://majandus24.postimees.ee/216695/eesti-ettevotjad-lahevad-iraaki>
- Schoomaker, Peter J. (2004). Special operation forces: The way ahead. In Bernd Horn, J. Paul de B. Taillon, & David Last (Eds.), *Force of choice: Perspectives on special operations* (pp. 161–168). Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Special Operations, Estonian Defence Forces. (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.mil.ee/en/defence-forces/special-operations>
- Supreme Allied Commander Transformation. (2009, April). *Multiple futures project: Navigating towards 2030: Final report*. Retrieved from http://www.iris-france.org/docs/pdf/up_docs_bdd/20090511-112315.pdf
- Toomse, Rene. (2012). The concept and framework of pre-emptive strategic development operations. *Baltic Security and Defence Review*, 14(2), 102–146. Retrieved from http://www.baltdefcol.org/files/files/BSDR/BSDR_14_2.pdf
- Ühtegi, Riho. (2013, February 21). Eriväelane = sõdur + diplomaat [Special operative = soldier + diplomat]. *Riigikaitse.ee*. Retrieved from <http://riigikaitse.lehed.ee/2013/02/21/erivaelane-sodur-diplomaat/>

BOOK REVIEWS

Scahill, Jeremy. *Dirty Wars: The World Is A Battlefield*. New York, NY: Nation Books, 2013. 680 pp. \$29.99 (hardcover). ISBN-13: 978-1-56858-671-7

Reviewed by **Daniel Trifan**
Department of History and Geography
Missouri Western State University
St. Joseph, Missouri, USA

The story that unfolds in this exhaustively researched study is both familiar and disturbing, for it outlines the development and implementation of a military strategy conducted in the shadowy zone between legitimate defense and extralegal offensive operations, largely unfettered by oversight, with control vested in a handful of government officials utilizing the world's deadliest warriors to achieve objectives largely dictated by expediency rather than by clearly defined policy. It is a story defined by breathtaking arrogance and hubris, fueled by technology and power, and sustained by the belief that the end justifies the means, whatever those means might be, in the struggle against an ideology regarded as inimical to the interests of the United States.

The principal subject of *Dirty Wars* is the development of the idea of the world as a battlefield, of a global struggle against militant Islam, triggered by the simultaneous attacks in New York and Washington by al-Qaeda suicide attackers on September 11, 2001. While this was not the first time that al-Qaeda militants had targeted Americans, the scale and brutality of the 9/11 attacks galvanized the administration of George W. Bush, especially the group of neoconservative advisors around Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, into developing a worldwide rapid-response force largely under their individual control. This force would be manned by troops from the Joint Special Operations Force, consisting of elements from Delta Force, the Navy SEALs, and special operations veterans from such private military companies as Blackwater, along with associated intelligence-gathering personnel. Over the remaining years of Bush's first term, Cheney and Rumsfeld would create what was effectively a parallel military unit, systematically restricting information sharing and related oversight from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the regular military establishment, and both houses of Congress, and largely answerable to themselves and the president alone.

Scahill describes in detail the process through which Cheney and Rumsfeld set up this parallel organization, in particular the manner in which they influenced the intelligence network to conclude that a relationship existed between Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda, as well as the conclusion that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction. Both of these

conclusions were false, and were arrived at by altering some of the fundamental precepts of intelligence interpretation to reach a predetermined conclusion. Despite warnings from the intelligence community that these conclusions were not supported by existing data, the president supported the findings and mounted the attack on Iraq in 2003.

The depressing and sordid details of the Iraq occupation, marked by “enhanced interrogation” of terror suspects, the “extraordinary rendition” of suspects to third countries where even harsher methods were routinely used, the arbitrary classification of detainees as “unlawful combatants” who were protected neither by civilian laws nor military justice, all swathed in multiple layers of secrecy and deniability, are not presented here for the first time, though Scahill manages to elicit details that demonstrate the deliberate nature of this policy. For example, he demonstrates clearly that the abuse of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib facility in Iraq that came to light in 2003 was not the work of “bad apples” among the staff, as the White House claimed, but was standard procedure at facilities such as Guantanamo Bay and the Bagram facility in Afghanistan, as well as the facility at the Baghdad airport known as Camp Nama. In addition, Scahill states that even veteran CIA interrogators were withdrawn by their superiors from these facilities due to the high level of abuse directed at detainees.

These special facilities were run effectively by the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), the parallel structure created by Cheney and Rumsfeld, led at the time by Army General Stanley McChrystal. While JSOC was not a new organization, the immense power and discretionary authority given to it during the Iraq war was unprecedented, and Scahill illustrates to what degree the lack of oversight led repeatedly to acts of questionable legality and in some cases to overtly illegal actions motivated by expediency.

With the appearance of al-Qaeda-influenced or al-Qaeda-affiliated movements in Somalia, the scope of JSOC activities expanded rapidly, soon reaching the conceptual level of the world as a battlefield, where those hostile to the interests of the United States could now be confronted with lethal force in secret operations, and not always with the consent of the host government. Scahill describes in detail how political blundering by the White House and its advisors, combined with blunt-force raids by JSOC operatives that caused numerous civilian casualties, helped elevate the most dangerous of these Somali jihadist groups, al-Shabab, into a movement of national scope in Somalia.

As the Iraq occupation began winding down, the focus of JSOC activities shifted to Afghanistan, where it evolved into a targeted assassination campaign against suspected anti-American militants. Once again, the scale of raids escalated, with a similar escalation in civilian casualties, due to the methods used: large-scale night raids by JSOC operatives, the use of AC-130 gunships, and increasingly, strikes mounted by drones. According to Scahill, civilian casualties, casually referred to as “collateral damage,” numbered in the thousands over the next few years.

In his campaign for president in 2008, Senator Barack Obama criticized the excesses of the war on terror. However, after he was elected, President Obama wholeheartedly continued and escalated the targeted assassination program, retaining most of the command leadership and expanding their operations further. One particularly questionable case was the assassination by drone, on September 30, 2011, of the radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen of Yemeni descent who had returned to Yemen and become a popular spokesman for the Islamic justification of jihad. Yemen was another country where the JSOC assassination program had proliferated, with the Yemeni president playing a complex double game between the radicals and

the United States. Scahill points out that the assassination of Awlaki was a complete violation of the constitutional rights accorded to American citizens, since he had been convicted of no crime, he had no more than a tangential relationship with Yemeni militants, and he had done nothing that was not within his rights under the First Amendment, even if his views differed from those of the administration.

Dirty Wars is an comprehensively researched study, and Scahill's experience as an investigative journalist is demonstrated throughout, ranging from his ability to weave together a narrative from a blindingly complex maze of facts to his description of the 2011 raid on Osama bin Laden's complex in Abbottabad, Pakistan, which is as exciting as anything found in a Tom Clancy military technothriller. The selfless bravery shown by the warriors of SEAL Team Six, who executed this mission against the most dangerous of America's enemies, stands in stark contrast to the behavior of their civilian superiors. Those superiors used every manner of deception, evasion, specious arguments, and arrogant disregard for the rule of law to create a military force, answerable only to them, to carry out targeted killings against suspects on thin to flimsy evidence and incurring large numbers of civilian casualties in the process, justifying their conduct on the grounds of expediency despite the political havoc created as a direct result of this policy. And as always, it will be the warriors who executed these missions who will have to live with the consequences, and the memories, of what was done in the name of national security.

Simpson, Emile. *War From the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012. 256 pp. \$32.50 (hardcover). ISBN-13: 978-01-9932788-1

Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel **Jan K. Gleiman**

U.S. Army

Visiting Fellow

Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, Australia

Of all the books written about war and strategy since September 2001, how many will be remembered and studied years from now? To rise above the multitude of volumes with glossy covers, complex names, and slick marketing, a book would have to ground itself in the work of previous discourse but offer a fresh perspective on war's changing character and provide a basis for further inquiry into future strategy. By some estimates there are more than 10,000 books written about or from the Vietnam War era, yet practitioners of war and strategy routinely cite only a handful of these books, and they use fewer still as integral references for discourse and study. (Harry Summers's 1982 work, *On Strategy*, comes to mind.) Every war inspires budding authors and strategic thinkers of its generation to share their stories, reflections, and theories. This generation is no different. Since September 2001 there has been a similar harvest of written works from memoirs to histories to related commentaries on war and strategy. At this point it is difficult to predict which titles will rise to the surface and continue to provide insight and reference in the perpetual discourse. If one is trying to identify such a book and wants to place a bet, Emile Simpson's *War From the Ground Up* would give odds.

Simpson has written a deep and thought-provoking book on the nature of war and the character of modern warfare. *War From the Ground Up* combines the best aspects of a treatise

the United States. Scahill points out that the assassination of Awlaki was a complete violation of the constitutional rights accorded to American citizens, since he had been convicted of no crime, he had no more than a tangential relationship with Yemeni militants, and he had done nothing that was not within his rights under the First Amendment, even if his views differed from those of the administration.

Dirty Wars is an comprehensively researched study, and Scahill's experience as an investigative journalist is demonstrated throughout, ranging from his ability to weave together a narrative from a blindingly complex maze of facts to his description of the 2011 raid on Osama bin Laden's complex in Abbottabad, Pakistan, which is as exciting as anything found in a Tom Clancy military technothriller. The selfless bravery shown by the warriors of SEAL Team Six, who executed this mission against the most dangerous of America's enemies, stands in stark contrast to the behavior of their civilian superiors. Those superiors used every manner of deception, evasion, specious arguments, and arrogant disregard for the rule of law to create a military force, answerable only to them, to carry out targeted killings against suspects on thin to flimsy evidence and incurring large numbers of civilian casualties in the process, justifying their conduct on the grounds of expediency despite the political havoc created as a direct result of this policy. And as always, it will be the warriors who executed these missions who will have to live with the consequences, and the memories, of what was done in the name of national security.

Simpson, Emile. *War From the Ground Up: Twenty-First-Century Combat as Politics*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012. 256 pp. \$32.50 (hardcover). ISBN-13: 978-01-9932788-1

Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel **Jan K. Gleiman**

U.S. Army

Visiting Fellow

Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, Australia

Of all the books written about war and strategy since September 2001, how many will be remembered and studied years from now? To rise above the multitude of volumes with glossy covers, complex names, and slick marketing, a book would have to ground itself in the work of previous discourse but offer a fresh perspective on war's changing character and provide a basis for further inquiry into future strategy. By some estimates there are more than 10,000 books written about or from the Vietnam War era, yet practitioners of war and strategy routinely cite only a handful of these books, and they use fewer still as integral references for discourse and study. (Harry Summers's 1982 work, *On Strategy*, comes to mind.) Every war inspires budding authors and strategic thinkers of its generation to share their stories, reflections, and theories. This generation is no different. Since September 2001 there has been a similar harvest of written works from memoirs to histories to related commentaries on war and strategy. At this point it is difficult to predict which titles will rise to the surface and continue to provide insight and reference in the perpetual discourse. If one is trying to identify such a book and wants to place a bet, Emile Simpson's *War From the Ground Up* would give odds.

Simpson has written a deep and thought-provoking book on the nature of war and the character of modern warfare. *War From the Ground Up* combines the best aspects of a treatise

on strategy, artfully mixed with historical case studies, and just enough human interest in the form of personal war memoir. Simpson may be young and new in terms of his reputation, but he is here to stay. As a junior officer in the famed Ghurka Regiment with numerous tours in Afghanistan, he brings real grunt-level experience. Combine this with his Oxford education and mentorship from the likes of Hew Strachan and Daniel Marston, and you have a warrior-scholar who makes a valuable contribution to the discourse on war.

Simpson's facts are not new, but his synthesis and his approach are fresh, and the only thing more profound than his conclusions are the subsequent questions that astute readers are compelled to ask. Simpson does an effective job of incorporating the works of past military and political theorists, beginning with Clausewitz and then progressing to other theorists that one may encounter in School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) or War College curricula. Grounded in theory, Simpson weaves history and personal experience to explain the complex and frequently misunderstood relationship between war and politics. According to Simpson, modern warfare and politics are much more intimately connected at all levels than many would wish to believe, and the conception of war as a binary conflict between opposing political outcomes is too simplistic to have utility. He further explains that strategy does not begin where politics ends, but rather both must be formed as part of a continuous dialogue that occurs—not just at high strategic levels but also at the local and tactical levels. Furthermore, the formation of strategic narratives is as important as any other element of operational art.

There are many great things about this book and only a few elements that detract from its enduring qualities. Simpson's use of military theorists makes this book a great primer or basis of discussion for students of operational art and strategy. He demonstrates a firm grasp of Clausewitz, though his frequent references to the Prussian master are bound to draw fire from the folks who always seem to know more about Clausewitz than Clausewitz. He also uses fresh historical examples with which many readers may not be familiar. He explores some of the usual suspects such as Vietnam, World War II, and of course Afghanistan; but then weaves in his observations of operational art in such lesser known conflicts as Dhofar and Borneo. In each case he is careful to explain both the continuities and the specifics of context while elaborating on how they apply to politics, warfare, strategy, and policy. On the negative side, however, Simpson could have spared the reader the use of his PowerPoint slide charts, which do very little for and may even distract from his carefully written prose. Yet even here the use is rightly minimal, and many modern authors have committed graver sins.

Readers who have grown tired of the ubiquitous works on counterinsurgency (or "COIN lit") should not be discouraged by the names of reviewers on the back cover of book. While he has received glowing praise from the trinity of "COINdinistas" (Nagl, Crane, Kilcullen), the comments made by these scholars are spot on. This book is about far more than counterinsurgency as an operational approach. In fact, Simpson addresses the "COINdinstia versus COINtra" debate head-on and provides the most intelligent summary and reconciliation to date. Those military professionals who are opposed to the strategies used in Afghanistan and find fault with Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, will also greatly appreciate this book and use it to further inform the discourse on the future of our armed forces.

Simpson's analysis, synthesis, and conclusions will challenge even the most experienced practitioner and academic. Yet as he expands into his explanation of the importance of the strategic narrative, the reader may wonder: "Where is the rest?" This is because Simpson's

chapters force the reader to pose even tougher questions. If Simpson's conclusions about the nature and character of war, warfare, politics, and strategy are correct, then the implications would seem to go far beyond Simpson's well-presented reconsideration of strategic narrative. The conclusions reached in this book challenge the design of our organizations, the nature of civil–military relations, and even the very definitions of strategy and operational art used and taught by current doctrine. If Simpson is right, our military must be better prepared not just to understand but also to engage the human domain of war—including politics. It is because this book implicitly and explicitly generates these types of discussions that it is likely to rise above the morass of post-9/11 war books and be studied by practitioners who have yet to even see their first war.

This article is not subject to U.S. copyright law.

REFERENCE

Summers, Harry G. Jr. (1982). *On strategy: A critical analysis of the Vietnam war*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press.

Logevall, Fredrik. *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*. New York, NY: Random House, 2012. 864 pp. \$40.00 (hardcover). ISBN-13: 978-0-375-50442-6

Reviewed by **Hal Wert**
 Professor of History
 Liberal Arts Faculty
 Kansas City Art Institute
 Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Embers of War is a most welcome addition to the growing body of scholarship that places America's war in Vietnam in a wider context. Well written and deeply researched, especially in French sources, Logevall recognizes that part of the problem understanding America's involvement and eventual defeat depends on a much deeper understanding of the rise of Ho Chi Minh, the Viet Minh, and the various Vietnam nationalists that emerged after the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. *Embers of War* offers a detailed history of France's efforts to eliminate nationalist groups in the 1930s, and it chronicles French recolonization efforts at the conclusion of World War II that resulted in a war with the Viet Minh and ended in the Geneva Accords of 1954. Several chapters deal with the attempt after partition to build a South Vietnamese state below the 17th parallel. Yet the book is but the tip of the iceberg of Vietnamese history, and there is much to know about Vietnam's conflicted internal politics before one can fully understand how the Viet Minh defeated the opposing nationalist organizations, captured the rising forces of nationalism, and hijacked the burgeoning revolution. The reader is eager to know more about the Dai Viet, the Vietnam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD), and the role of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang in harboring and training non-Communist Vietnamese revolutionary nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s. The list goes on.

chapters force the reader to pose even tougher questions. If Simpson's conclusions about the nature and character of war, warfare, politics, and strategy are correct, then the implications would seem to go far beyond Simpson's well-presented reconsideration of strategic narrative. The conclusions reached in this book challenge the design of our organizations, the nature of civil–military relations, and even the very definitions of strategy and operational art used and taught by current doctrine. If Simpson is right, our military must be better prepared not just to understand but also to engage the human domain of war—including politics. It is because this book implicitly and explicitly generates these types of discussions that it is likely to rise above the morass of post-9/11 war books and be studied by practitioners who have yet to even see their first war.

This article is not subject to U.S. copyright law.

REFERENCE

Summers, Harry G. Jr. (1982). *On strategy: A critical analysis of the Vietnam war*. Novato, CA: Presidio Press.

Logevall, Fredrik. *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam*. New York, NY: Random House, 2012. 864 pp. \$40.00 (hardcover). ISBN-13: 978-0-375-50442-6

Reviewed by **Hal Wert**
 Professor of History
 Liberal Arts Faculty
 Kansas City Art Institute
 Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Embers of War is a most welcome addition to the growing body of scholarship that places America's war in Vietnam in a wider context. Well written and deeply researched, especially in French sources, Logevall recognizes that part of the problem understanding America's involvement and eventual defeat depends on a much deeper understanding of the rise of Ho Chi Minh, the Viet Minh, and the various Vietnam nationalists that emerged after the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. *Embers of War* offers a detailed history of France's efforts to eliminate nationalist groups in the 1930s, and it chronicles French recolonization efforts at the conclusion of World War II that resulted in a war with the Viet Minh and ended in the Geneva Accords of 1954. Several chapters deal with the attempt after partition to build a South Vietnamese state below the 17th parallel. Yet the book is but the tip of the iceberg of Vietnamese history, and there is much to know about Vietnam's conflicted internal politics before one can fully understand how the Viet Minh defeated the opposing nationalist organizations, captured the rising forces of nationalism, and hijacked the burgeoning revolution. The reader is eager to know more about the Dai Viet, the Vietnam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD), and the role of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang in harboring and training non-Communist Vietnamese revolutionary nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s. The list goes on.

Part of the problem is that many researchers lack language skills, while another is the severely restricted access to archival documents. However, that scholarly focus on U.S. involvement in Vietnam is set in too narrow a framework—1965 to 1972—is also an important factor. As a corrective, Logevall and fellow editor Christopher E. Goscha have overseen a series of critical monographs published by the University of California Press that includes Mark Atwood Lawrence's *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam*; Pierre Brocheux and Daniel Hémery's *Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858–1954*; Stein Tønnesson's *Vietnam 1946: How the War Began*; Eric T. Jennings's *Imperial Heights: Dalat and the Making and Undoing of French Indochina*; and Charles Keith's *Catholic Vietnam: A Church From Empire to Nation*. To this list should be added the important and recently published *Nationalists in the Viet Nam Wars: Memoirs of a Victim Turned Soldier* by Nguyễn Công Luân (Indiana University Press, 2012).

The one-sided and generally accepted octopus-like exploitive view of imperialism pitched by Lenin has been tempered by many historians. The negative aspects are not overlooked, but colonization emanating from Europe is viewed as the beginning of the worldwide modernization process that resulted in topsy-turvy creative destruction, as it had earlier in the mother countries. Modernization is a revolution. Logevall clearly understands that colonization is a two-way street and that the export of French political ideas to its colonies promised to undermine the methods by which the French ruled. Contradiction between ideals and practice was at the heart of most Western colonial systems. The French contributed much to its Southeast Asian colony in their effort at *mission civilisatrice*, and Logevall recognizes this but fails to mention the contributions of archaeologists, ethnologists, and the linguistic priest Alexandre de Rhodes who worked out the Romanization system (Quoc Ngu) in which modern Vietnamese is written.

Logevall begins the book with a prologue titled “A Vietnamese in Paris,” a sympathetic portrait of the young Ho Chi Minh, also known as Nguyen Ai Quoc, as he attempts to secure a meeting with President Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 in order to plead the Vietnamese case for independence. Wilson's Fourteen Points had set off a firestorm in all four corners of the globe, and nationalists seeking liberation from their colonial masters flocked to Paris pleading for recognition. Ho took seriously Wilson's pronouncements on self-determination and, along with a small group of fellow patriots, wrote “The Demands of the Vietnamese People.” He and all of the other hopeful aspirants from the dwindling number of European empires were turned away.

Next, Ho turned to the French socialists, but they like Wilson were primarily concerned with European affairs. When the radical left wing of the Socialist Party walked out to form the French Communist Party in 1921, Ho went with them. This is a critical point in understanding the future revolutionary leader. Ho's writings then, and in 1945 when he declared an independent Vietnam by quoting the U.S. Declaration of Independence, are filled with odes to freedom, equality, democracy. Surely before he traveled to Russia he knew of and understood that a rigid totalitarian discipline—coupled with murder and terror—was at the heart of Lenin's “success” in winning the bloody Civil War and establishing the Soviet Union. If contradiction is at the heart of colonialism, then surely contradiction is at the heart of the coming Vietnamese revolution as well, leading to the conclusion that Ho Chi Minh either was, or became, a fanatical ideologue willing to use any means necessary to achieve his goals by 1924. Indeed, membership in the Communist International (Comintern) and his attendance at the “Stalin” school of revolution is perhaps the point at which Ho crossed the Rubicon.

Ho and General Vo Nguyen Giap consciously coupled assassination and terror with a campaign of incessant upbeat propaganda hammering the theme of a better future for their country. But careful examination of the repeated atrocities committed by the Viet Minh and later by the North Vietnamese government is surely still worthy of several volumes of history. Historians need to examine the systematic assassination of village headsmen in the Red River Valley in the late 1940s, a similar operation in South Vietnam in the early 1960s—especially in the Mekong Delta, the disappearance and likely murder of the Vietnamese units that fought with the French and surrendered at Dien Bien Phu, and the murder of hundreds or possibly thousands of South Vietnamese government employees in Hue during Tet. Of course, Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* and Anne Applebaum's *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe, 1944–1956* tell part of this story as well.

Ho, in the age of excessive utopias, has a place in the pantheon of leaders of murderous regimes that include Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Kim Il-sung, and Fidel Castro—leaders that created successful cults of personality. The Vietnamese revolutionaries were totally committed to a unified Vietnam under Communism, and therefore the Geneva Accords in 1954 and the peace treaty reached with the United States on January 27, 1973, were agreements that the Communists never had any intention of honoring—agreements they construed as merely time-outs, opportunities to regroup on the way to unification. Ho knew full well that in 1945 he could not gain U.S. support for his regime, Cold War or not, but by portraying himself as a struggling nationalist and playing on the sympathies of the United States toward self-determination, he hoped to convince the United States of his legitimacy and perhaps prevent the financing and supplying of France's efforts to reestablish its authority. Ho relentlessly kept his "eyes on the prize."

Logevall explodes the prevailing myth that enticing the Viet Minh to set-piece battle at Dien Bien Phu was a serious mistake and understands, as Wellington had commented on the Battle of Waterloo, that it was a "damn close-run thing." Dien Bien Phu was not flawed strategically but tactically: The French were short on tanks, aircraft, and even ammunition. While the American hero of the Korean War, General Matthew Ridgway, counseled against aiding the French at Dien Bien Phu, the use of American B-29 bombers might have turned the tide. Viewing Vietnam through the lens of the Korean War guaranteed a distorted picture. The United States, contemptuous of the French military effort at their own peril, failed to grasp that the French Union forces had often fought well and had learned much on how to counter the Viet Minh. For these and other reasons, Logevall correctly argues that American involvement in Vietnam walked in the footsteps of and in the shadow of the French. The United States never fully grasped that the war was, as a Vietnamese participant keenly observed, "Seventy-five percent political and twenty-five percent military." The French lost only 10% of their forces in Vietnam at Dien Bien Phu, but the French government and the public were through with the war. So too, the shadow of the French hung over the Tet Offensive in 1968, and regardless of battlefield success Tet is the beginning of the end for America in Vietnam.

Nonetheless, there are numerous points during America involvement in the Vietnam war where different decisions might have produced more favorable outcomes. Logevall's detailed accounting of the Franco-American wars in Vietnam is a fine contribution that adds much to the understanding of the era. Unfortunately for the Vietnamese, the Communist victory in 1975 was the beginning of a new traumatic chapter. The repressive and exploitive French colonial masters may have been long gone, and the Americans may have been expelled, but they were only to be replaced by an even more repressive regime that imprisoned a million people in thought reform

camps, executed thousands, and caused millions more to flee the country as “boat people.” At the conclusion of this review, after nearly 70 years of war and revolution, no real freedoms are in sight for the people of Vietnam.

Robinson, Linda. *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2013. 344 pp. \$28.99 (hardcover). ISBN-13: 978-1-61039-149-8

Reviewed by **Dan G. Cox**
 School of Advanced Military Studies
 U.S. Command and General Staff College
 Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, USA

It is often instructive in examining the context of a recently published book to understand who is endorsing the work. In this case, Linda Robinson’s book *One Hundred Victories* has garnered accolades from both the recently retired U. S. Special Operations commander, Admiral William McRaven, and a former commander, Admiral Eric Olson. McRaven stated that “folks within the Special Operations community listen to Linda Robinson, and when they listen to her I listen to them.” While Olson did not mimic this endorsement, he still held Robinson’s work in high regard. This sentiment will become important later, but suffice it to say here that Robinson is a respected reporter and researcher in the special operations community.

Robinson certainly deserves this respect, and *One Hundred Victories* is further proof of her ability to embed with Special Forces operational detachments and capture their tactical endeavors with precise detail. Her writing style is engaging, making her books difficult to put down, and her ability to capture the nuanced personalities of the major players involved creates descriptions that read like a gripping novel. In this respect, her book should find a wide audience.

Insights into how special operators opted for speed and lethality, attaching heavy machine guns to dune buggies to retain maneuverability in almost impassible terrain in the hinterland of Afghanistan, is just one example of the important observations Robinson logs that are deserving of a permanent historical record. However, one is struck by how this tactical modification closely resembles the advent of technicals (jeeps equipped with 50 caliber machine guns) in Somalia in the 1990s when the country was in chaos during its civil war. Surely Robinson is correct in noting that this modification employed by special operations forces (SOF) was driven by Afghan terrain, but one may wonder if it was also equally driven by the chaos experienced in the hinterland.

The main thrust of Robinson’s book comes from her analysis of the shift in outlook that SOF went through. Robinson argues that SOF had become too heavily focused on kinetic solutions in the early stages on the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Concomitantly, she argues in her introduction that SOF missed opportunities to successfully “design a plan to put Afghanistan definitively on the road to stability” (p. xvii). But this tantalizing assertion is never explored or adequately supported, as her deep analysis of SOF operations in Afghanistan really covers only 2010 to early 2013.

What is clear from Robinson’s analysis is that SOF did change their approach in Afghanistan in this time period beginning from an initial plan to “hit enemy targets,” which quickly morphed under Brigadier General Edward Reeder’s command to an emphasis on “understanding of the tribal

camps, executed thousands, and caused millions more to flee the country as “boat people.” At the conclusion of this review, after nearly 70 years of war and revolution, no real freedoms are in sight for the people of Vietnam.

Robinson, Linda. *One Hundred Victories: Special Ops and the Future of American Warfare*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2013. 344 pp. \$28.99 (hardcover). ISBN-13: 978-1-61039-149-8

Reviewed by **Dan G. Cox**
 School of Advanced Military Studies
 U.S. Command and General Staff College
 Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, USA

It is often instructive in examining the context of a recently published book to understand who is endorsing the work. In this case, Linda Robinson’s book *One Hundred Victories* has garnered accolades from both the recently retired U. S. Special Operations commander, Admiral William McRaven, and a former commander, Admiral Eric Olson. McRaven stated that “folks within the Special Operations community listen to Linda Robinson, and when they listen to her I listen to them.” While Olson did not mimic this endorsement, he still held Robinson’s work in high regard. This sentiment will become important later, but suffice it to say here that Robinson is a respected reporter and researcher in the special operations community.

Robinson certainly deserves this respect, and *One Hundred Victories* is further proof of her ability to embed with Special Forces operational detachments and capture their tactical endeavors with precise detail. Her writing style is engaging, making her books difficult to put down, and her ability to capture the nuanced personalities of the major players involved creates descriptions that read like a gripping novel. In this respect, her book should find a wide audience.

Insights into how special operators opted for speed and lethality, attaching heavy machine guns to dune buggies to retain maneuverability in almost impassible terrain in the hinterland of Afghanistan, is just one example of the important observations Robinson logs that are deserving of a permanent historical record. However, one is struck by how this tactical modification closely resembles the advent of technicals (jeeps equipped with 50 caliber machine guns) in Somalia in the 1990s when the country was in chaos during its civil war. Surely Robinson is correct in noting that this modification employed by special operations forces (SOF) was driven by Afghan terrain, but one may wonder if it was also equally driven by the chaos experienced in the hinterland.

The main thrust of Robinson’s book comes from her analysis of the shift in outlook that SOF went through. Robinson argues that SOF had become too heavily focused on kinetic solutions in the early stages on the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Concomitantly, she argues in her introduction that SOF missed opportunities to successfully “design a plan to put Afghanistan definitively on the road to stability” (p. xvii). But this tantalizing assertion is never explored or adequately supported, as her deep analysis of SOF operations in Afghanistan really covers only 2010 to early 2013.

What is clear from Robinson’s analysis is that SOF did change their approach in Afghanistan in this time period beginning from an initial plan to “hit enemy targets,” which quickly morphed under Brigadier General Edward Reeder’s command to an emphasis on “understanding of the tribal

dynamics of the country” (p. 13). Brigadier General Austin Miller continued this trend, according to Robinson, initiating a broad campaign of village stability operations. Robinson argues that the new process emphasized a “shape, build, hold, transition” construct toward stabilization but emphasized that the shape phase could carry some low-level combat operations to allow “breathing room for villagers to begin to take charge of their affairs” (p. 27). This is a very interesting observation that flies in the face of the scholarship and history of counterinsurgency and some discussion of past theorists, such as Galula, Kitson, McCuen, and others. As such, a comparison to past counterinsurgency operations would serve the reader well here. Further, because such an analysis is not undertaken, one is left wondering if the clear phase of counterinsurgency was left out simply because it had fallen into disfavor or was viewed as previously counterproductive when it was overemphasized in the early stages of the Afghan campaign and the GWOT.

The book’s premise is elucidated in the title *One Hundred Victories*. The SOF plan was to shift operations from the kinetic surgical strike, which had dominated the early years of the GWOT and the Afghan campaign, to a village stability operations program focusing on 100 specially chosen districts in Afghanistan (p. 29).

The majority of the book focuses on deep descriptions of SOF operations in only a handful of key strategic locations. This is where Robinson shines. Her detailed and engrossing descriptions of SOF operations and the local cultural intricacies of gaining trust makes for easy reading. The focus for SOF seems to be mainly on providing local and even tailored security largely through the development of locally acceptable Afghan National Police (ANP) forces. There are a few examples of cooperation with conventional forces (CF), but one is struck by the many instances in which Robinson claims that CF hindered SOF initiatives. In one instance Robinson notes that SOF handed over the recruiting, vetting, and training of a local police force, but the CF “did not spend enough time with the newly minted defenders to properly mentor them” (p. 15). The assertion here should not be read that Robinson’s claim is incorrect but simply that both the absence of CF operating in Afghanistan alongside and with SOF in her descriptions and the predominance of the mistakes of CF in the narrative are noticeable. This book does not lend much support to the notion that SOF and CF will grow increasingly interdependent as time passes.

Robinson also seems keen to perpetuate the myth of maverick SOF geniuses. A particularly striking example of this trope comes from the analysis of Captain Michael “Hutch” Hutchinson. Hutchinson had a reputation for getting into trouble at West Point, and this bucking of authority carried over into his career. On one occasion, Robinson notes that as a lieutenant Hutchinson had proposed a course of action to his company commander, which was overturned. The young lieutenant responded by kicking his desk to pieces (p. 66). While some might see such a reaction as immature, Robinson relates this act as being part and parcel of Hutch’s maverick personality. In fact, she attributes Hutch’s success as a captain in Paktika province to his unorthodox methods (p. 91).

SOF too always seem to be fighting CF leadership. Robinson argues that while General David Petraeus publicly stated he gave top priority to the SOF initiatives of village stability operations (VSO) and training the ANP, “in practice the conventional units’ combat operations always seemed to trump the special operators’ requests” (p. 102).

Robinson also presents a very interesting chapter on the role of Navy SEALs in foreign internal defense (FID) operations, which will likely draw a lot of attention, especially since Special Forces (SF) is usually the group assigned FID operations and standing up the ANP. Still, the main analysis in her text is tactically focused and only on one country—or, more fairly, part of one country. So her grand conclusions about the future of warfare seem to be drawn from a very small sample size. This

does not prevent Robinson from asserting that SOF have risen in primacy over the past decade and will continue to dominate the military landscape for the foreseeable future. She believes this will occur due to military interventions increasingly being driven by technology and a political motivation for smaller and less intrusive interventions (p. 261). This conclusion may even be correct over the short term, but perhaps not in the way Robinson envisions. The SOF campaign she expounds upon was quite large and involved a great number of land forces. If anything, the Obama administration seems to be leaning more toward surgical drone strikes and extremely limited SOF engagement, similar to what is occurring currently in Somalia.

Robinson argues too that SOF will have to get past its internal bickering for the era of SOF dominance to arise. Major General Tony Thomas attempted to unify SOF, arguing that separate specialties and branches of SOF should no longer refer to themselves as “tribes” but instead adopt the notion of a “SOF nation” (p. 242). Again, this seems to speak more toward a future of SOF/CF separation rather than the interdependence Major General Sacolick and Brigadier General Grigsby argued for in a 2012 article in *Army Magazine*.

This brings us to the importance of Robinson’s work. It is vastly important given the endorsements of Admirals McRaven and Olson as a mirror into how SOF currently perceives itself. One can conclude from Robinson’s work that SOF views itself as transitioning from tactical, surgical-strike-only capabilities to a more nuanced cultural immersion and influencing force. SOF also likely feels that it is the maverick freethinker in the room, often constrained by doctrine and CF leaders that overemphasize kinetic actions. SOF sees itself as the dominant force of choice in the future and perhaps even believes there is a need to develop a separate SOF service. Robinson’s book reminds me of a presentation at the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies in which a Special Forces lieutenant colonel explained to a major in the audience who had asked a question about Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, that “we [SOF] are under *your* doctrine as well,” and he never grasped the irony of an Army officer uttering such a statement.

REFERENCE

Sacolick, Bennet S., & Grigsby, Wayne W. Jr. (2012). Special operations/conventional forces interdependence: A critical role in “Prevent, Shape, Win.” *Army Magazine*, June, pp. 39–42.

McChrystal, Stanley. *My Share of the Task: A Memoir*. New York, NY: Portfolio/Penguin, 2013. 480 pp. \$20.00 (paperback). ISBN-13: 978-1-59184-682-6

Reviewed by **Jason Heeg**
National Guard Component Special Forces Warrant Officer
Tampa, Florida, USA

How did General Stanley McChrystal remake counterterrorism (CT) in Iraq, and what does his legacy mean for the future? His memoir, *My Share of the Task*, should be studied by scholars, special operations practitioners, military planners, and policymakers to gain insight into this

does not prevent Robinson from asserting that SOF have risen in primacy over the past decade and will continue to dominate the military landscape for the foreseeable future. She believes this will occur due to military interventions increasingly being driven by technology and a political motivation for smaller and less intrusive interventions (p. 261). This conclusion may even be correct over the short term, but perhaps not in the way Robinson envisions. The SOF campaign she expounds upon was quite large and involved a great number of land forces. If anything, the Obama administration seems to be leaning more toward surgical drone strikes and extremely limited SOF engagement, similar to what is occurring currently in Somalia.

Robinson argues too that SOF will have to get past its internal bickering for the era of SOF dominance to arise. Major General Tony Thomas attempted to unify SOF, arguing that separate specialties and branches of SOF should no longer refer to themselves as “tribes” but instead adopt the notion of a “SOF nation” (p. 242). Again, this seems to speak more toward a future of SOF/CF separation rather than the interdependence Major General Sacolick and Brigadier General Grigsby argued for in a 2012 article in *Army Magazine*.

This brings us to the importance of Robinson’s work. It is vastly important given the endorsements of Admirals McRaven and Olson as a mirror into how SOF currently perceives itself. One can conclude from Robinson’s work that SOF views itself as transitioning from tactical, surgical-strike-only capabilities to a more nuanced cultural immersion and influencing force. SOF also likely feels that it is the maverick freethinker in the room, often constrained by doctrine and CF leaders that overemphasize kinetic actions. SOF sees itself as the dominant force of choice in the future and perhaps even believes there is a need to develop a separate SOF service. Robinson’s book reminds me of a presentation at the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies in which a Special Forces lieutenant colonel explained to a major in the audience who had asked a question about Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, that “we [SOF] are under *your* doctrine as well,” and he never grasped the irony of an Army officer uttering such a statement.

REFERENCE

Sacolick, Bennet S., & Grigsby, Wayne W. Jr. (2012). Special operations/conventional forces interdependence: A critical role in “Prevent, Shape, Win.” *Army Magazine*, June, pp. 39–42.

McChrystal, Stanley. *My Share of the Task: A Memoir*. New York, NY: Portfolio/Penguin, 2013. 480 pp. \$20.00 (paperback). ISBN-13: 978-1-59184-682-6

Reviewed by **Jason Heeg**
National Guard Component Special Forces Warrant Officer
Tampa, Florida, USA

How did General Stanley McChrystal remake counterterrorism (CT) in Iraq, and what does his legacy mean for the future? His memoir, *My Share of the Task*, should be studied by scholars, special operations practitioners, military planners, and policymakers to gain insight into this

critical question. Three aspects of the book illuminate McChrystal's impact on CT: direct action operations, intelligence and targeting support to such operations, and finally military leadership as applied to special operations.

After graduating from the United States Military Academy in 1976, McChrystal was assigned as a company grade officer to the 82nd Airborne Division and 7th Special Forces Group. He had a strong desire to join the 75th Ranger Regiment, and his affinity for the Rangers permeates the book. His passion for the "Ranger way" can even be found in the title, a phrase adopted from the Ranger creed. This affinity increased while he was commander of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) in Iraq. There he developed Task Force (TF) 714 into a highly proficient CT machine. The Iraq section of the book is completely focused on CT operations, and he devotes no text to other aspects of special operations, such as psychological operations, unconventional warfare, or civil affairs, and how these elements integrate with CT. TF 714's operations captured Saddam Hussein and killed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, but these achievements required a huge amount of resources.

Several revelations show how special operations are changing. One clear example is the tracking and killing of Zarqawi, which demonstrates how far "manhunting" or "high-value individual targeting" has developed in the U.S. special operations forces (USSOF) community. McChrystal provides an in-depth look into the target development of the Zarqawi operation. He details how the targeting section of TF 714 combined human and signals intelligence, airborne surveillance platforms, and close target reconnaissance elements into an actionable target package. This level of targeting fidelity, combined with a strike force that was able to launch at a moment's notice and was unburdened by the bureaucratic process that has a stranglehold on most other special operations units, facilitated the successful operation. However, precision strikes against insurgent leaders could not ensure victory in Iraq. Despite this, TF 714's operations were effectively coordinated with the overall coalition strategy.

McChrystal honed the disparate tribes within TF 714 into a cohesive organization that was integrated with the U.S. intelligence community (IC), as well as into the intelligence services of coalition nations. This coordination represents a lasting change to special operations and serves as an example of how McChrystal re-created CT. Soon after assuming command in Iraq, he identified a bottleneck in the command and control structure, which is graphically represented in a whiteboard sketch in his memoir (see p. 106). When now Major General Scott Miller confirmed McChrystal's assessment that removing the headquarters element would not negatively impact the forward teams, McChrystal set out to fix the problem. The perception that top-heavy, higher headquarters provide no assistance to the tactical units physically fighting the war is an issue common to special operations units. However, McChrystal refused to tolerate the status quo. He details how he was able to integrate the assigned elements and bring in the best and brightest from the IC to support TF 714. Through this process he created a lasting influence or "residue of design" between USSOF and the IC that still exists. This perhaps is his greatest legacy to special operations.

The other major contribution this memoir provides to USSOF and the larger military community is the application of leadership principles. McChrystal's obsession with biography and the study of leadership began before his arrival at West Point in 1972 and has followed him into retirement. In his review of the book, John Lewis Gaddis compared McChrystal's knowledge and practice of leadership to that of Ulysses S. Grant. One of the major accomplishments of McChrystal's career—and a great example of his leadership in action—is how he overcame his lack of experience in special mission units to successfully command JSOC. The units that are subordinate to JSOC, commonly considered the best in the world in their respective narrowly

defined roles, are very insular and each has a distinct personality that is sometimes described as “tribal.” McChrystal describes how he was able to build a certain level of rapport with his assigned units and their personnel during his five years as commander. These are good examples worthy of emulation for the “generalists” (and other leaders) in and outside of the military who are charged with leading an unfamiliar organization.

Next, McChrystal describes an encounter that is instructive for military leaders of all echelons and evokes the principle of trust (p. 54). In 1991, while serving as a JSOC staff officer, McChrystal was required to prebrief JSOC Commander Major General Bill Garrison. They were then to fly to U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and brief the commanding general on a pending operation in South America. Instead of delving into the minutiae of the plan, Garrison simply asks McChrystal if the plan is good and then trusts him that it is. They then go on to discuss another topic. McChrystal concludes: “His willingness to trust was more powerful than anything else he could have said or done. I spent that conversation, the flight, and the time before the meeting hoping I wouldn’t let Bill Garrison down” (p. 54). McChrystal took this lesson to heart, which is exemplified in many instances throughout his book.

One example of his trust in his subordinates is likely responsible for the successful interdiction of Zarqawi (pp. 205–236). McChrystal notes that J.C. was the J2 of the Green squadron assigned to Baghdad in spring 2006. He was an experienced intelligence professional who held the rank of sergeant first class and worked tirelessly to find and fix Zarqawi. J.C. was convinced he was close to Zarqawi but needed additional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets to close the deal. In the hypercompetitive world of JSOC, opinions varied, but McChrystal gave the limited ISR assets to J.C., who then employed them to gather the required information to complete the targeting process. The amount of trust that a three-star general had in a sergeant first class cannot be overstated; the fact that McChrystal delegated millions of dollars in assets on J.C.’s intuition is incredible. This is surely a rare occurrence, and is clearly not common in most special operations units, let alone conventional formations.

One final example, of the many in the book, that is worthy of study is how McChrystal is shown to remain humble and use grounded wisdom upon assuming command of the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and U.S. Forces–Afghanistan. This was arguably the most high-profile four-star position in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the U.S. Department of Defense. By 2011, McChrystal had years of experience with the war in Afghanistan. However, he was able to step back and assess the situation in Afghanistan and the surrounding region prior to making sweeping changes (pp. 292–315). This aspect of command is often lost on military officers and the effects can have disastrous results. McChrystal often became perturbed by “experts” who claimed to have the silver bullet for success in Afghanistan without fully understanding the context of the larger situation. His ability to process the breadth of information allowed him to guide his staff in the formulation of a successful strategy.

These are but a few of the lessons that saturate the book and demonstrate why it should be studied by students of military leadership and special operations. General Stanley McChrystal’s *My Share of the Task* is destined to become a classic memoir. From his lifelong study of military leadership to his own examples, this work should be high on any professional military reading list.