

# **Lost Unconventional Warfare Lessons from the Yugoslav Front**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **ABSTRACT**

LOST UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE LESSONS FROM THE YUGOSLAV FRONT,  
by Major Michael Herman Adorjan, 49 pages.

During the early years of the Cold War, the United States Army developed the new doctrine of Unconventional Warfare. This doctrine focused on U.S. soldiers working through and with indigenous guerrilla units to achieve tactical successes in support of the larger theater campaign. The early doctrine writers failed to incorporate three key lessons from the guerrilla war fought in Yugoslavia (1941-1945). The lessons were the selection and employment of the right people as advisors, the effective employment of guerrillas (who have a different agenda) and setting the conditions for effective demobilization of the guerrilla force. These overlooked lessons offered a more comprehensive approach in terms of advising, employing and then demobilizing the guerrilla units in support of U.S. military objectives. The lost lessons provided valuable planning considerations for future advisory units. Through these lessons, U.S. advisors can prepare to work with robust guerrilla organizations that are not solely dependent on U.S. logistical, moral or political support.

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## Introduction

The first two decades of the Cold War saw the United States (U.S) in fear of the Communist Block and its aggressive takeover of the free world. In response to this fear the U.S. government decided to adopt two approaches. The initial approach was the positioning of large numbers of conventional forces to deter and contain the communists in places like Europe or Korea. Another approach called for working amongst indigenous people to deny or even subvert communist authority in developing or crisis states. This desire to subvert or depose a communist regime gave rise to a doctrine of Unconventional Warfare (UW). The Kennedy administration's Secretary of the Army, Elvis J. Stahr Jr., defined UW as, "primarily encompassed by Guerrilla operations and subversion to be carried out within enemy or enemy-controlled territory by indigenous personnel, supported and directed by US forces."<sup>1</sup> The definition changed little in its base composition from its first draft in the mid 1950's to its present form used by United States Special Operations Command.<sup>2</sup>

The early and contemporary UW doctrine pointed to the use of American soldiers as advisors to liaison with, mentor and guide insurgents or guerrillas to set the conditions for a conventional force invasion of denied or enemy occupied territory. Examples of this relationship existed in the experiences of U.S. actions with resistance forces aiding in the invasions of occupied France (1944) and the Philippine Islands (1945). There was an alternative reason for sending American advisors to assist guerrillas. That reason was to simply facilitate the defeat or overthrow of an opposing force, without the use of conventional forces ever coming into the equation. Such was the case in the Balkan Peninsula during the Second World War.

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Department of the Army, *Training Circular 18-01 Special Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: 30 November 2010), 1-1. UW defined as, "activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area."

Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-20 U.S. Army Special Forces Group (Airborne)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, AUG 1955), 2.

This monograph points out major inadequacies from the early days of the U.S.'s UW doctrine (1950-60's). It uses the case study of the Yugoslav experience as a vehicle to examine tenets not originally found in the doctrine, but which would become pivotal to later UW theory. The document describes three important lessons based on experiences by U.S. advisors to the Yugoslav guerrillas during the Second World War. These three overlooked areas consist of selecting and employing the right people to be advisors to the guerrillas, effectively employing *an existing guerrilla force* that has combat experience and its own agenda, and setting the proper conditions to effect demobilization of that guerrilla force. The initial authors of the UW doctrine did not include these three areas of contention. This was primarily due to their experiential points of view and their successful conduct of combat operations with guerrilla forces. These three deficiencies, in the doctrine, failed to address vital components that could help to avert future problems in the execution of UW for the U.S.'s strategic goals.

The first section of this monograph presents details regarding the authors of the UW doctrine. The authors were experienced practitioners of guerrilla warfare, the likes of Brigadier General McClure and Colonels Volckmann and Bank. Their experiences in (the Second World War in the Italian, French and the Filipino Campaigns) orchestrating resistance movements' subversive activities enabled them to articulate the first ideas of UW into doctrine. They wrote valid and pertinent concepts, in the initial manuals, but failed in other areas. They did not incorporate concepts or lessons from outside their personal prevue.

The second section offers the reader a brief, but important, understanding of the operational environment that was the war in Yugoslavia. An Unconventional Warfare environment is a complex and multiple layered problem with numerous competing players, each espousing an agenda. The Yugoslav campaign offers an exceptionally complex environment to use as a case study. This section documents the multiple players (Četniks, Partisans, Germans, the puppet allies of the Axis Powers, the Special Operations Executive {U.K.}, and the Office of

Strategic Services {U.S.}) in the theater of operations. The section further elaborates on each of these players' goals, the disintegration of alliances and collaboration amongst the rivals. It offers an understanding of how the main participants interacted and wove a befuddled quilt of treachery and parochial agendas into the Yugoslav theater of operations. These multiple factions, collaboration, infighting between guerrilla groups and the interplay of other allies' interests (USSR and UK) were variables not seen in the French or Filipino Campaigns. Thus, the doctrine authors missed key lessons by not incorporating the Yugoslav experience.

The third section lays out the three major conceptual themes which the early writers of the UW doctrine failed to articulate. These three areas include the selection and employment of the right people to be advisors to the guerrillas, the effective employment of *an existing guerrilla force* that has combat experience and its own agendas, and setting the proper conditions to effect demobilization of that guerrilla force, when it no longer adheres to the external supporting powers.

Rhetoric used in official government documents and speeches illustrated the United States government's concerns regarding fear of communist aggression during the Cold War. A 1962 Department of the Army Pamphlet stated the fear up front that the, "inadequacy of the U.S. countermeasures to the communist...world wide program of cold war aggression."<sup>3</sup> One of the debates on opposing the communists looked at conventional military means. However, the United States knew that it could not match the communist powers in terms of manpower. A conventional style conflict was not a viable option as both sides would meet a shared destruction, through their use of nuclear weapons.

The United States looked to other means for combating, containing and preventing communist aggression. A war by proxy was advantageous to the U.S. This type of proxy conflict,

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<sup>3</sup> Department of the Army, *Concept of Employment of U.S. Army Forces in Paramilitary Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 02 JAN 1962), 1.

high or low in its intensity, involved the use of surrogate forces and allowed for engagement with an indirect approach. The previously cited U.S. Army document detailed, “The Army’s approach to paramilitary operations...is to optimize the overall capability of the indigenous forces to insure internal defense throughout the spectrum of sub limited war situations.”<sup>4</sup> President John F. Kennedy warned the graduating class of West Point, in June 1962, that future conflicts would be fought amongst the people and the U.S. military must become advisors and teachers to assist foreign forces in the fight against communist subversion.<sup>5</sup>

With the U.S. government’s decision to conduct proxy wars through surrogates and defend allies from subversive activities, it needed to create a doctrine by which its military could organize, train, equip and fight this form of war. It drew from historical experiences and American service members who conducted these types of missions in the Second World War. During the Second World War, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) worked primarily behind the front lines in occupied Europe and the Far East, with local resistance movements.

The OSS received its operational charter from a U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive, 155/4D, 23 December 1942, assigning it responsibility for guerrilla warfare. OSS personnel serve as the ‘organizers, fomenters, and operational nuclei for guerrilla units’<sup>6</sup>

OSS operatives remained within the employment of the U.S. Army and assisted in the creation of units and a doctrine to execute these assistance activities with guerrilla forces. These men forged this new doctrine, of UW, through the codification of terminology, operations, tactics, techniques and procedures. They collected past experiences and evaluated which of these experiences best supported the U.S. Army’s interests and objectives in supporting surrogate

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 06 JUN 1962 JFK Speech. “This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin—war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins, war by ambush instead of by combat; by infiltration, instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of engaging him. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=8695#axzz1welAvaKd> (accessed on 17 JUL 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, COIN, and Counterterrorism, 1940-1990 (Toward a Doctrine of Special Warfare: Cold War and Covert Action: From OSS to CIA)*. 2002.

partners in fighting the communist threat. The doctrine evolved and included more techniques and considerations for the employment and interaction with resistance or guerrilla forces from multiple theaters during World War II.

This research document describes the development of that new unconventional warfare doctrine through the lens of one of the most brutal and successful insurgent/guerrilla conflicts of the modern era, the Yugoslav Resistance against the Axis Powers from 1941-1945. The U.S. employed members of its OSS to assist the Yugoslav resistance forces in this conflict from 1943 until the end of the war. The overall success of the resistance movement and the strategic hindrances the guerrillas played against the Axis war effort made this theater a crucial period to examine and draw lessons from in order to formulate UW doctrine for the early Cold War era. The Yugoslav resistance forces presented units which produced a greater attrition on and diverted more Axis forces and resources from the major conventional theaters, than any other behind the lines resistance movement in the war (European and Pacific theaters included). One record placed the resistance movements totaling over 145,000 native Yugoslavs, throughout the duration of the war.<sup>7</sup> The Axis Powers used over 46 divisions consisting 700,000 troops to occupy, safe ground facilities (vital to war production), combat the guerrilla forces and keep open their lines of communications throughout Yugoslavia.<sup>8</sup> It was from this venue, that the U.S. Army should have took the tactics, techniques and procedure to construct its doctrinal references on the future conduct of UW in the Cold War.

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<sup>7</sup> Center of Military History, "German Antiguerilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944) Publication 104-18" <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/antiguer-ops/AG-BALKAN.HTM> (accessed FEB 2010). The Communist Partisans totaled 90,000 and the Četniks totaled 45,000.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. and Robert M. Kennedy, *Hold the Balkans: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944)* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 2000), 47. The CMH documents detailed 32 Italian divisions ≈ 300,000, 14 German divisions ≈ 700,000. This did not count the Serb puppet regime under General Neditch (10,000) and Croat puppet government of Ante Pavelić of Ustaša (13,000).

## Doctrinal Heritage

It is important to begin at the lowest level and progress in complexity when speaking of UW. The definition of ‘guerrilla’ was not altered much in U.S. military doctrine. Field Manuals (FM) that espoused assisting or countering guerrilla forces referred to guerrillas as an, “irregular force, organized on a military basis, supported by sympathetic elements of the population, and operating against established civil and military authority. Guerrillas may receive support from a foreign government.”<sup>9</sup> Doctrine defined Guerrilla Warfare as a part of UW, “conducted by relatively small groups employing offensive tactics to reduce enemy combat effectiveness, industrial capacity, and morale. Operations normally conducted in enemy-controlled territory by units organized on a military basis.”<sup>10</sup> Resistance movements were bodies that “consisted of discontented or hostile elements of a population against established civil and military authority by various hidden and open methods. Members held together by common sympathies and interests. May ally to external force/ government if aims are similar to their.”<sup>11</sup> The 1955 edition of FM 31-21 *Guerrilla Warfare* defined UW as, “operations conducted in time of war behind enemy lines by predominately indigenous personnel responsible in varying degrees to friendly control or direction in furtherance of military and political objectives. It consists of interrelated fields if Guerrilla Warfare, evasion and escape and subversion against hostile states.”<sup>12</sup>

The UW doctrine modified over the early Cold War period primarily in terms of expanding the definitions for guerrilla units, guerrilla warfare and resistance movements. It took a closer look at the roles of advisors (Special Forces) and what other activities (i.e. area

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<sup>9</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Organization and Conduct of Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, OCT 1951), 2. NOTE: In this monograph, FM 31-21 has five different publications over the span of fifteen years. It is important to look at the publication date to differentiate between the publications.

<sup>10</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 08 MAY 1958), 3-4.

<sup>11</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Organization and Conduct of Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, OCT 1951), 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 23 MAR 1955), 2.

assessments) fell into the purview of UW. The experiences and information garnered from different OSS agents helped to develop a broader based picture of what guerrilla warfare looked like from the varied environments of the war. More experiences from different OSS agents and the incorporation of the numerous guerrilla conflicts added to the research conducted at Ft. Bragg, under BG Robert McClure (Commander Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare).<sup>13</sup> He obtained files on 3,500 former OSS agents. McClure influenced the U.S. Army's call back to active duty of over 1,500 former agents to help with his study.<sup>14</sup> The combined efforts of these veterans helped to initiate the creation and actualization of a doctrine for the U.S. military's support to indigenous populations against a controlling power (native or foreign).

### **Early Ideas of Unconventional Warfare**

In the late 1940's, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) played with the notion of how to coordinate guerrilla forces to support a future conventional U.S. military war. The JCS envisioned that the U.S. Army should exercise "primary responsibility for all guerrilla warfare functions."<sup>15</sup> The JCS believed that in times of war, the theater commanders should control the guerrilla warfare within their area of operation. This idea fell easily into the operational art construct of the theater commander possessing not only control of all the conventional assets to wage war but also directing insurgent or allied resources against the enemy in a coordinated effort for strategic success.

The JCS were not alone in proposing that there was a need for a UW capability in the U.S. military. Frank Wisner, a former OSS operator (with experience in the Balkans) turned Central Intelligence Agent (CIA) agent, wrote a memorandum to Colonel Yeaton, of the JCS, on

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<sup>13</sup> Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 119-120.

<sup>14</sup> Michael McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft*. Two OSS agents, who were advisors in Yugoslavia, Charles Thayer and Franklin Lindsay proposed creating a "Guerrilla Warfare school and a Guerrilla Warfare corps" under DoD to fight Soviets in the subversive realm.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 70.

01 August 1949. Wisner advised that a specialized military unit, with the capabilities to advise indigenous forces in denied territory, should be organized and built.<sup>16</sup> BG McClure supported Wisner's opinion and emphasized that the CIA should not take the lead in the UW arena.<sup>17</sup> These three events caused the JCS, in June 1948, to form a Guerrilla Warfare Subcommittee to prepare a study on guerrilla warfare.<sup>18</sup> The next step was for the U.S. Army to assign a group of men with experience in this 'guerrilla warfare' field to investigate and formulate ideas/concepts for employment. The Army looked to its previous psychological warfare contacts in World War II for opinions and ideas. This fell to BG McClure and his staff of UW experienced practitioners.

The doctrinal writers failed to capture three key subjects, due in large part to their restricted experiences and views of conducting UW. These missing topics included the choosing the right people as advisors, effectively employing the guerrillas (that are non-cooperative) and overcoming the refusal of the guerrillas to demobilization. In the French experience, the resistance welcomed the American operators most amicably. The two cultures were more similar than different; republics born from revolutions, western Christian ideals, and an easier task of learning French, over say a Slavic tongue, for English speakers. The American military was a common everyday occurrence in the Filipino life, since 1898. The Filipino guerrillas gladly followed U.S. Army officer leadership, due again to shared goals of throwing off Japanese occupation. This was not the case in Yugoslavia. The guerrillas and American advisors had so many cultural, social, religious and political differences.

The UW doctrinal references from the early Cold War era revealed that the U.S. Army's UW doctrine stemmed from the OSS experiences in World War II. However, the Yugoslav experience was not one of these venues. This was surprising, since, "Yugoslavia was the first and foremost Allied supported guerrilla campaign on the European continent, eclipsed in relative

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

importance only by work...in the liberation of France.”<sup>19</sup> The Yugoslav experience had numerous factors affecting the development of the guerrilla movement. The 1955 edition, of FM 31-21, laid the key factors/characteristics required of an insurgency. The factors were abstract in nature and corresponded directly to the Yugoslav experience.<sup>20</sup> Some of these characteristics, put forward by a CIA analyst, included concepts found true to the Yugoslav experience: a home sponsored insurgency with a government in exile, a hardy population accustomed to struggling against foreigners, the ability for a few guerrillas to tie up large numbers of occupation troops, charismatic leaders to mobilize the population and a large landmass with mountains, a sea coast and underdeveloped infrastructure to bedevil counterinsurgent forces.<sup>21</sup> The doctrine spoke to these characteristics and many others. The Yugoslav experience also had some traits that did not fit nicely into doctrine but nonetheless were key topics in need of discussion, examination and implementation to better prepare for realistic future of UW campaigns. These overlooked concepts included that of competing insurgent factions, disunited population (along ethnic lines), puppet regimes with security forces to combat the insurgents and outside powers all with their own agendas for the region (United States, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union).<sup>22</sup>

The U.S. Army overlooked the possibility of using UW as a method to employ guerrillas solely as the combatant force in an economy of force role. Instead, the Army looked at UW singly as a means to set the conditions for the forcible entry of future conventional forces into a denied area. This was due in part to doctrinal authors’ experiences. The authors constructed the doctrine based on their exposures to guerrilla campaigns in World War II. In their experiences, the

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<sup>19</sup> Jay Jakub, *Spies & Saboteurs: Anglo-American Collaboration and Rivalry in Human Intelligence Collection and Special Operations, 1940-45* (UK: MacMillan Press LTD., 1999), 111.

<sup>20</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 23 MAR 1955), 10-15.

<sup>21</sup> Jay Jakub, *Spies & Saboteurs: Anglo-American Collaboration and Rivalry in Human Intelligence Collection and Special Operations, 1940-45* (UK: MacMillan Press LTD., 1999), 111-112.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 112-113.

guerrillas played a significant role in supporting U.S. amphibious assault into occupied enemy territory.

## **First Generation of UW Authors**

Colonel Russell Volckmann had firsthand experience in organizing, leading and employing indigenous forces in a guerrilla campaign against the Japanese occupiers from 1942-1945.<sup>23</sup> The U.S. Army's leadership looked favorably upon his actions in the Philippines, and thus turned to him in the early Cold War era to assist in writing doctrine. Chief of Staff of the Army, General Eisenhower tasked Volckmann in 1948 to write the first official U.S. Army counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine.<sup>24</sup> This was in response to problems seen in defeating communist insurgents in Greece at the time.

Volckmann completed FM 31-20 *Operations Against Guerrilla Forces* in September of 1950. He looked at how his guerrilla forces fought and survived in the Philippines and simply reversed engineered the concepts and tactics to develop a COIN doctrine. Two basic truths from FM 31-20 became cornerstones in the future UW doctrine: irregular forces conduct operations to change the socio-political order with external help and these same irregular forces work with regular forces as a phase of normal warfare.<sup>25</sup>

As the Korea Conflict settled into a static war, this breathed life into the ideas for UW. The U.S. Army turned to Volckmann for assistance in helping to penetrate North Korean lines and conduct some form of subversive or guerrilla warfare.<sup>26</sup> The situation on the Korean Peninsula also influenced the U.S. Army to officially recognize the Office of the Chief of

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<sup>23</sup> Mike Guardia, *American Guerrilla* (Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2010), 101-115.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

Psychological Warfare, on 15 January 1951.<sup>27</sup> As mentioned in the introduction of this monograph, BG McClure was commander of this unit and put together a team of former OSS operators. McClure gathered the likes of Volckmann, Aaron Bank, Wendell Fertig and others at his office. McClure, Bank and Volckmann sat down with GEN J. Lawton Collins (Army Chief of Staff) and received his approval to form a unit to develop training and planning in the conduct of special operations, with one of the emphasis on the organization and conduct of Guerrilla Warfare.<sup>28</sup>

That same year, McClure led these men on a fact finding mission to Korea to develop a UW capability behind the communist lines. At the conclusion of this mission in Korea, Volckmann took the lead of these salty guerrilla veterans and together they composed FM 31-21 *Organization and Conduct of Guerilla Warfare* in the autumn of 1951.<sup>29</sup> This became the seminal work that spawned the future UW doctrine.

Bank and Volckmann had their own agenda in terms of standing up an operational unit that would go beyond the Psychological Warfare Center and its policies. They wanted a unit built solely with the mission to work with guerrillas and conduct UW. It was basically a marriage of convenience between McClure and Bank/Volckmann. McClure needed their help in organizing the former OSS operatives and the like to work at the Psychological Warfare Center, and they needed McClure's rank and trust inside the Pentagon to get their unit created.<sup>30</sup> That summer of 1952 saw the founding of the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, NC. The unit's mission

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<sup>27</sup> Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 94.

<sup>28</sup> Mike Guardia, *American Guerrilla* (Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2010), 172-173. The meeting was in Fort Benning in April 1951. The other five areas of concentration included: Sabotage & Subversion activities, Evasion & Escape activities, Long Range Reconnaissance, Ranger type Raids and Psychological Warfare. Paddock cited that Volckmann commanded over 5,000 guerrillas on Luzon and Fertig consolidated over 37,000 guerrillas and support personnel on Mindanao by 1945.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-105. These men set conditions the following year for the establishment of the Psychological Warfare Center and 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group in 1952.

<sup>30</sup> Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 149-150.

statement was, “to infiltrate its component organizational groups to designated areas within the enemy’s sphere of influence and organize the indigenous guerrilla potential on a military basis for tactical and strategic exploitation in conjunction with our land, sea and air forces.”<sup>31</sup> Fast forward forty years to when the U.S. Army founded its ideas regarding operational art, one sees how the Special Forces were forerunner with linking tactical actions, through coordinating multiple assets (U.S., allied and indigenous) to bring about a strategic result.

### **FM 31-21**

The Department of the Army’s FM 31-21 missed key components in its initial composition. The three overlooked concepts areas manifested themselves in the Yugoslav experience of World War II. The doctrine assumed away the possibility that the resistance may have a different agenda than that espoused by the U.S. advisors. Each of the manuals from 1951-1961 delineated the eight steps by which the advisory unit was to proceed with demobilization. Again, the doctrine assumed away the too true reality of a guerrilla force that does not wish to join the new state or relinquish the power that it possesses.<sup>32</sup>

The FM 31-21 changed four times over the span of its first fifteen years. Each subsequent modification provided more details on the organization and conduct of UW. The manuals went into laborious detail on the area assessments, conduct of offensive and defensive tactics, techniques and procedures for the employment of guerrilla forces in support of major conventional forces operations in war. However, none of the manuals devoted serious emphasis on the composition of the selection of the advisory team’s members, concepts on how to properly

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>32</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Organization and Conduct of Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, OCT 1951), 228-229. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 23 MAR 1955), 43. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 08 MAY 1958), 131-134. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 29 SEP 1961), 17-182.

supervise and employ guerrilla units with less than desirable circumstances and how to manage the guerrilla force that do not wish to demobilization.

The World War II historical context section, of the FM 31-21(1951), made no mention of the U.S. military's assistance to operations in Yugoslavia. The section presented details on U.S. advisory roles in Nazi occupied France, the Low Countries and Norway and the Philippine Islands.<sup>33</sup> The 1958 edition, actually, provided the most specific guidance on the conduct of training, prior to deployment to work with a guerrilla force.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, this edition failed to articulate what type of advisor and what specific skills were requirements. The paragraph only focused on what empirical data should the team members study. By this rationale, anyone could fill the capacity of advisor, with just hard work and a comprehensive study plan of language, history and culture. None of the manuals identified topics or considerations for advisors on how to address reluctant or flagrant uncooperative guerrilla formations.

These three shortfalls manifested themselves in the Yugoslav Campaign. The OSS advisors made quick decisions on how to deal with Partisans and Četniks unwilling to follow recommendations from their advisors and allies. This was due in large part to the complex and ambiguous situation found in this theater. It was plainly obvious how the French and Filipino experiences did make their way into the doctrine.

## **French and Philippine Experiences**

The evidence, in manuals, biographies and research papers, pointed to OSS actions in occupied France and an abundant amount of information from the American/Filipino resistance movement, against the Japanese, as the vehicles in the construct of the UW doctrine. Colonel Russell Volckmann, with assistance from OSS members like Colonel Aaron Bank, was the

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<sup>33</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Organization and Conduct of Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, OCT 1951), 4-7.

<sup>34</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 08 MAY 1958), 33.

primary author and creator of the UW doctrine from 1951-1962. These soldiers' and OSS operatives' experiences of fighting with indigenous resistance movements in France, Italy, Burma and the Philippine Islands composed the preponderance of the material placed into the doctrine.

In the case of the Philippines, the American officers organized, trained and led different units within the Filipino guerrilla movement. They were professional army officers that went to ground, rather than surrender to the invading Japanese forces in 1942.<sup>35</sup> Men like Volckmann, Blackburn and Fertig sought refuge in the mountains, forests and jungles of the Philippine Islands. They understood and wrote into the doctrine the imperatives of the guerrillas to require a sanctuary in harsh /rugged / inaccessible terrain in which to organize and train. Their experiences of coordinating the efforts of indigenous fighters (guerrillas), intelligence collectors, support personnel (auxiliary) and local leaders (underground) were vital to mission success. They also sought out and received assistance from external logistical support from the conventional U.S. military. This logistical and moral assistance paid dividends upon General MacArthur's return to the Philippines in 1944-45. The Filipino guerrillas effectively coordinated and supported the U.S. conventional forces' invasion and seizure of the islands by providing valuable intelligence, securing terrain and attacks isolating Japanese forces in order to deny their massing against the invasion force.<sup>36</sup>

The OSS operations in Western Europe fell into the category of providing advice, training, logistical support and coordination to the French Resistance. The OSS operators were small three man Jedburgh teams (designed to collect intelligence and coordinate resistance actions) or the more robust Operational Groups (OG) of twelve to fifteen men. The OGs were to, "organize resistance groups into effective guerrilla units, equip them with weapons and supplies, and lead them into attacks against enemy targets in concert with orders from the theater

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<sup>35</sup> Mike Guardia, *American Guerrilla* (Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2010), 38-40, 171.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 123, 125, 129-130,

commander.”<sup>37</sup> These advisors set the conditions to enable the passage and conventional forces on the battlefield and prepared the way for the invasions of Europe in 1943-44. Their work provided tangible effects for the Allies. General Eisenhower stated that the French Resistance’s work in cutting enemy lines of communication in support of the Normandy landings was worth a force of fifteen divisions on the continent.<sup>38</sup> This was a much appreciated compliment for OSS coordination of tactical guerrilla actions in support of the strategic objective of gaining a foothold on the continent.

The OSS advisors’ and officers’ in the actions in the Philippines and France paled in comparison to the damage done to the German forces in the Balkans, by the Partisans and Četniks. The quantity of attacks and the potential for another southern invasion front in Europe forced the Axis to commit over 100,000 troops to occupation and counter-guerrilla operational duties. One requires a though familiarity with the Balkan situation to visualize just how degrading the guerrilla war was between all the participants. A brief history of the conflict’s evolution and the various warring factions’ military objectives and political interests allows the reader a quick comprehensive understanding of the case study.

## **Guerrilla Warfare in Yugoslavia (1941-45)**

A study of guerrilla warfare operations in Yugoslavia provided an excellent example of comprehensive UW doctrinal tenets. It was comprehensive because the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States saw this as an economy of force war to utilize the indigenous armed Yugoslavs to support their conflict against the Axis. A few advisors and equipment expended to advise and assist indigenous forces helped to reap a disproportional amount of havoc upon the enemy. The competing guerrilla factions did not accept easily their ‘allied partners’ as advisors

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<sup>37</sup> Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 28.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

due in large part to culture and conflicting agendas. The advisors found their ability to influence, direct and employ the guerrillas against mutually advantageous targets not as effortless as their peers in places like France. The advisors ran into roadblocks when the Yugoslav guerrillas continued to prosecute their own militant agendas after major combat operations and dispatch with prejudice their advisors and opposing resistance movements.

Just as the advisory role was complex, so too was the comprehension of how the different warring factions came into being and with whom they were aligned. Depending upon who was fighting, the armed conflict in Yugoslavia from 1941-45 had different names, adversaries and themes. The Axis Powers of Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria invaded Yugoslavia on 06 April 1941. The initial war was a conventional one for less than a fortnight, until the Yugoslav government went into exile and the vast majority of the military surrendered to the Axis Powers.<sup>39</sup> The Axis occupiers viewed the succeeding conflict in terms of a guerrilla war against bands of nationalists, communists or just outlaw brigands. The Četnik Serb nationalists and the Communist Partisans saw this primarily as a civil war amongst themselves and secondly a guerrilla war against the Axis invaders and their puppet cronies. Serbian and Croatian collaborative regimes viewed the conflict in terms of settling old ethnic blood feuds and maximizing support from their patrons (Germany/Italy).

## Četniks

The first guerrilla organization that stood up after the capitulation of the Yugoslav military was that led by army Colonel (later General) Draža Mihailović.<sup>40</sup> His guerilla organization took their name from the previous historic ethnic Serb freedom fighters, Četniks.<sup>41</sup> This insurgent group was predominantly a homogenous body of Serbs or those people that

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<sup>39</sup> Ronald H. Baily and the editors of Time-Life Books, *Partisans and Guerrillas* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books Inc., 1978), 27.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>41</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 20. *Četa* means armed band in Serbian. This was the name of 19<sup>th</sup> Century freedom fighters campaigning against the Turks.

supported a Serb dominated leadership in Yugoslavia. During the summer of 1941, the Četniks retreated to the mountainous region of Serbia.<sup>42</sup> They engaged German occupation and Croat/Serb collaboration units in ambushes and raids to stockpile weapons and needed supplies. At the onset, Mihailović enjoyed the support of the outside world and the Allies. The Yugoslav government in exile recognized Mihailović as their legitimate arm inside the Balkans to continue the resistance against Axis occupation.<sup>43</sup> As the war dragged on, Mihailović sought British and later American support. The rural areas, mountains and forests of Serbia offered sanctuary for the Četniks. The Četniks placed survival over armed conflict against the occupying powers. Their strategic goal was to keep the fires of rebellion alive and re-establish the exiled Yugoslavian regime at the conclusion of the war and retreat of the Axis armies.

## Partisans

The second guerrilla organization in Yugoslavia was that led by an ethnic Croat with ties to the Communist International, Josip Broz 'Tito'.<sup>44</sup> His group of guerrillas went by the title of Partisans. They were a heterogeneous body that welcomed in anyone, regardless of the ethnic or religious background.<sup>45</sup> This multi-ethnic position helped Tito to raise almost 15,000 Partisans by the autumn of 1941.<sup>46</sup> Tito created a supreme staff and headquarters that organized and led the Partisans. The Partisan 'communist' goal was after the defeat of the occupiers was the overthrow of the old regime and the creation of a new social and political structure in Yugoslavia, under the communists.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Jozef Tomasevich, *The Chetniks: War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 124.

<sup>43</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 22.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>45</sup> Fitzroy MacLean, *Disputed Barricade: The Life and Times of Josip Broz Tito, Marshal of Yugoslavia* (London: Alder Press, 1957), 148. Brigadier Fitzroy MacLean was British mission lead to Tito through the war from 1942-1945, inside Yugoslavia

<sup>46</sup> John Arquilla, *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, INC., 2011), 205.

<sup>47</sup> Jürg Gschwendtner, *Deutsche Anti-Partisanenkriegführung* (Frauenfeld, Switzerland: Huber & Co. AG, 1986), III.

Tito understood that in order to create maximum effectiveness with his Partisans and achieve the strategic goal of a socialist Yugoslavia, he had to eventually transition to a conventional form of war. To do this, he needed to wait for conventional support. This support took the form of UK and USA advisors, supplies and moral support from 1942-1944. By October 1944 – May 1945 this meant the Red Army's mechanized forces.<sup>48</sup> The Western Allies were that 'external support/sponsoring power' who provided moral and logistical assistance, mentioned in the 1955 UW doctrine.<sup>49</sup> This further nested with the concept of the guerrilla forces acting as a shaping operation for the eventual conventional transition to culminate the win the war.

Tito established a Partisan unit in each of Yugoslavia's provinces.<sup>50</sup> The initial attacks by the Partisans were against the puppet Serb forces of Nedić. The objectives were to liberate Yugoslav soldiers/communists and secure weapons and ammunition for the coming campaign.<sup>51</sup> The Partisans began their guerrilla war from the urban centers like Belgrade, but gradually were chased to the mountains and forests as the Germans, Italians and their puppet cronies held power in the urban areas. By the late autumn of 1941, both guerrilla groups (Partisans and Četniks) established their support bases among the rural population and exercised freedom of movement in rugged terrain. These two facts coincide directly with the 1951 doctrinal template as two fundamental principles in the UW doctrine. It is a necessity for the guerrillas to have popular support and conceal themselves in the severely restricted terrain.<sup>52</sup> Both had another doctrinal maxim of possessing a, "strong leader to unite the population and troops."<sup>53</sup> Tito and Mihailović filled such roles.

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<sup>48</sup> Otto Hellbrunn, *Partisan Warfare* (NY: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1962), 49.

<sup>49</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-20 U.S. Army Special Forces Group (Airborne)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, AUG 1955), 10.

<sup>50</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 26.

<sup>51</sup> Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *Krieg auf dem Balkan 1940-1945* (München, DEU: Südwest Verlag GmbH & Co., 1984), 138-139.

<sup>52</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Organization and Conduct of Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, OCT 1951), 13-14.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

## Guerrilla Divorce

The Partisans and Četniks attempted to combine their efforts against the occupiers. They executed a few tactical actions against the Germans and the collaborator forces in the summer and autumn of 1941. The best examples of this were the coordinated attacks, in western Serbia (August-September 1941) by Četnik Major Dragoslav Račić's attack at Šabac and the Partisan Colonel Mišić's attack at Loznica.<sup>54</sup> The Germans dealt out reprisals against the local population that forced the hand of Mihailović to cease operations for a while and go to ground. He would not sacrifice innocent civilian lives for reprisals against his troops' attacks on the occupiers.<sup>55</sup> The Četnik bands were composed from local civilians. They were tied to defending specific areas and their families. The Partisans, on the other hand, comprised large mobile forces that had the capability to mass large numbers of troops and retreat from contested or embattled villages. The Partisans were not worried about Axis reprisals upon the local populous, as they would relocate and not have to share the same burdens as the Četniks.<sup>56</sup> This coupled with the fact that the two sides did not trust one another led to a formal split by late November 1941, with the Partisans retreating south into Italian held Bosnian territory and the Četniks moving into the western Serbian mountains.<sup>57</sup> This event marked the beginning of the civil war between the two factions. They would fight against the Axis forces, but their primary enemy was each other. They viewed it essential to destroy the other faction first, as they saw the Axis powers as a temporary foe.

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<sup>54</sup> Paul N. Hehn, *The German Struggle Against Yugoslav Guerrillas in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 5.

<sup>55</sup> Ronald H. Baily and the editors of Time-Life Books, *Partisans and Guerrillas* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books Inc., 1978), 78-79. Hitler decreed that for every German soldier killed a reprisal of one hundred civilians were to be executed. On two events alone, 20-21 October 1941, four thousand civilians were executed (German records). The Serbs placed the number at near thirteen thousand.

<sup>56</sup> Center of Military History, "German Antiguerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944) Publication 104-18" <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/antiguerr-ops/AG-BALKAN.HTM> (accessed FEB 2010).

<sup>57</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 37.

## German Anti-Guerrilla Doctrine and Tactics

Both German and Allied records showed, that in the greater context, that their Anti-Guerrilla units did not have the materials or manpower to destroy the guerrilla units in Yugoslavia. They ventured into the guerrilla controlled areas only to conduct retaliation missions, keep the insurgents off-balance (interdict supplies and recruits) or regain lost territory vital to LOC sustainment.<sup>58</sup> The Germans did not see Yugoslavia as a future territory of the Reich and thus were content to extract or defend only what they needed for the war's strategic and economic conduct. This prompted the German commanders in Yugoslavia to take a different approach than in other areas of occupied Europe.

Colonel-General Wilhelm von List built the German strategy for securing the Balkans against guerrillas. He concentrated his forces on the lines of communications (LOC), cities, industrial installations, mines, key roads and rail lines, because these were the vital hubs and arteries which provided the resources for the German economy and allowed for a coordinated defense of the Balkans against an Allied invasion. This was the *Stützpunkte* Strategy.<sup>59</sup> This translated into a strategy of leaving the guerrilla groups alone until they interfered with German control of the LOCs or key resources.

Initially in 1941-1942, the Germans viewed the Četnik force as their primary nemesis and emphasized combating them. German headquarters in the Balkans saw this Serb organization, with a professional officer corps, as vehicle that could build and employ an effective resistance force to thwart their control of the area. This idea of Četnik power and lethality, to mobilize large

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<sup>58</sup> Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night: With the OSS and Tito's Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 210.

<sup>59</sup> Center of Military History, "German Antiguerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944) Publication 104-18" <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/antiguerr-ops/AG-BALKAN.HTM> (accessed FEB 2010). He was commander of German occupation forces in Yugoslavia from 09 June 1941-July 1942. The vital resources required for the Reich's economy were copper, iron, bauxite, etc.

numbers of resistance fighters proved false. It was the Partisans that could and did recruit, sustain and employ large numbers of locals into their ranks.<sup>60</sup>

The Germans employed Serb, Croat and even Bosnian collaborating troops to assist in their anti-guerrilla campaigns. The Croatian puppet state under Prime Minister (dictator) Ante Pavelić utilized a security force, the Ustaša, which fulfilled the role of the GESTAPO and the *Allgemeine SS*. This unit “was inclined to massacre anybody they could catch who was not both Croat by race and Roman Catholic by faith.”<sup>61</sup> The Ustaša stance became a deterrent to later anti-guerrilla operations for the Germans. The Ustaša turned military missions into purges to ethnically cleanse Croatian lands of Serbs or Bosnian Muslims. By 1944, the Germans quite often did not bring these Croat units in to help with their operations, because the Ustaša drove Serbs and Bosnians into the hands of the Partisans or Četniks.<sup>62</sup>

The next stage of German Anti-Guerrilla strategy was that of conducting limited provincial encirclements and then destruction missions within those encircled areas. Unilaterally or combined with allies, the Germans organized over seven major named operations from December 1941 – May 1944 to find, fix and destroy guerrilla groups. Most of these operations were against the Partisans and occurred in the mountains of Bosnia-Herzegovina, western Serbia or rural mountainous sectors of Croatia and Slavonia. For these carefully planned operations, the Germans brought in well-trained, equipped and veteran units.<sup>63</sup> These units would descend into

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<sup>60</sup> Paul N. Hehn, *The German Struggle Against Yugoslav Guerrillas in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 13.

<sup>61</sup> M.R.D. Foot, *SOE: An Outline History of the Special Operation Executive 1940-1946* (USA: University Publications of America, Inc., 1986), 153.

<sup>62</sup> Ben Shepard and Juliette Pattinson eds., *War in a Twilight World: Partisan & Anti-Partisan Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1939-1945* (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 211. The Germans saw the Ustaša actions as early as 1941. The worst Ustaša massacre was in August-September 1942 at the town of Sirmia.

<sup>63</sup> Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *Krieg auf dem Balkan 1940-1945* (München, DEU: Südwest Verlag GmbH & Co., 1984), 144-7. The first German offensive (28 September 1941) saw the 113<sup>th</sup> and 342<sup>nd</sup> take over for the 700 series divisions. The 700 series were from the Replacement Army. They were “destined for service in the Balkan region and was designed as an occupation and security unit to meet those needs....like the others of the 700-designations, was populated with at least half its ranks consisting of

valleys and rural mountainous regions. They conducted search and destroy missions. Subsequent operations saw the Germans creating a blocking/fixing force, to deny the Partisans an escape route, and an assault force to kill or capture Partisan men, weapons and equipment.<sup>64</sup> Italian and Ustaša units failed numerous times in these blocking force roles. The Partisans knew that the Italian and Croat troops were lacking in sufficient equipment, motivation and leadership, as compared to their German allies.<sup>65</sup> The overall objectives were to keep the LOCs clear of guerrillas and deny them the ability to mass forces.

By 1942, the Germans altered the manner in which they conducted anti-guerrilla operations. They still held to garrisoning the LOCs and vital sites which provided economic resources. The change was in the form of specialized troops with anti-guerrilla (counterinsurgent) skill sets. Selected *Waffen-SS* and *Jagdkommando* units deployed into occupied Yugoslavia. Their missions consisted of hunting and then eliminating the Partisan threat.

The *Jagdkommando* units were specially selected troops that were young, hardy veterans, physically fit and organized in platoon and company sized units. These ‘hunters’ infiltrated via foot (many wearing civilian clothes) into guerrilla held territory. They identified and fixed the guerrilla units so that larger German forces could complete the encirclement and destruction of these cut off guerrilla bands. The *Jagdkommando*’s hardiness and field craft allowed them to remain in the mountains and forests for extended periods of time to find the Partisans. These units

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over-aged men with little experience. Many of the officers only had experience from WWI! The unit also consisted of two regiments instead of three as with most Infanterie-Divisionen of the period, and it was lacking its share of motorized vehicles and heavy weapons. <http://www.feldgrau.com/InfDiv.php?ID=311>

<sup>64</sup> Center of Military History, “German Antiguerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944) Publication 104-18” <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/antiguer-ops/AG-BALKAN.HTM> (accessed FEB 2010).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

were not in large enough numbers to effectively turn the tide and eliminate the Partisans entirely.<sup>66</sup>

The German Army Group E's principle unit to conduct anti-guerrilla operations was the 7<sup>th</sup> SS *Freiwilligen Gebirgsdivision 'Prinz Eugen.'* It was made up of ethnic Germans from the Balkans, who had experience working in the mountainous terrain and an understanding of the region's history, cultures and politics. They executed two named operations, *Case Weiss* and *Case Schwarz* and numerous smaller missions to clear Yugoslavia, from the coast to the borders of Romania and Hungary, of guerrillas. The Partisans feared the '*Prinz Eugen*' soldiers, "primarily due to their brutality and utter ruthlessness."<sup>67</sup>

These two specialized units, along with increased training, equipment and new offensive missions for the 700 series divisions, to hunt guerrillas meant a change in the operational environment by 1943. The most significant change in the conduct of operations from 1943 onward was that the German units employed more brutal and terror techniques against the Partisans and the local population to break their will to fight.<sup>68</sup> By the beginning of 1944, the Germans alone had over seven hundred thousand troops occupied with securing LOCs and conducting anti-guerrilla operations.<sup>69</sup>

The German anti-guerrilla operations had a significant effect on the Partisan and Četnik operations and their freedom of movement/action. The guerrilla bands had to remain light logistically and mobile. If they became too robust or tied to amenities, the Germans would exploit their lack of mobility and force decisive battles upon them. In total, the seven major named

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<sup>66</sup> Robert M. Kennedy, *Hold the Balkans: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944)* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 2000), 46-47.

<sup>67</sup> Chris Bishop, *Hitler's Foreign Divisions: Foreign Volunteers in the Waffen-SS 1940-1945* (Staplehurst, UK: Spellmount, 2005), 122-123.

<sup>68</sup> Jürg Gschwendtner, *Deutsche Anti-Partisanenkriegführung* (Frauenfeld, Switzerland: Huber & Co. AG, 1986), 36.

<sup>69</sup> Robert M. Kennedy, *Hold the Balkans: German Anti-guerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944)* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 2000), 47. The principle problem for the 700 series divisions was their reliance on old, broken and obsolete equipment/weapons.

operations netted the Germans 40,000 casualties inflicted upon the Partisans and Četniks.<sup>70</sup> On numerous occasions, Tito himself almost fell into German hands. The closest call was during *Unternehmen Rösselsprung* on 25 May 1944. The *SS-Fallschirmjägerbatalion 500* conducted a parachute and glider assault into the valley near Drvar, Bosnia to capture Tito and his entire group level headquarters.<sup>71</sup> Tito narrowly escaped. He actually left the Balkan Peninsula and used the island of Vis, in the Adriatic Sea, from June-October 1944 as his headquarters.<sup>72</sup>

As illustrated above, the German anti-guerrilla campaign in Yugoslavia was not a concentrated or persistent operation. It resembled more of a live and let live persona at times. However, the Germans expressed considerable concern over the Allied advisor elements to the guerrillas. These advisors could provide resources and facilitate the opening of the region to an Allied amphibious invasion from the Mediterranean Sea.

### **Special Operations Executive Involvement**

The SOE established advisory teams / missions first with Mihailović's headquarters and then later with Partisan units in Yugoslavia. Steadily over three years, the SOE aligned themselves more and more with the Partisans because of Tito's ability to put more resistance troops in the field, conduct more frequent operations against the Axis Powers and illustrate the lack of action and sometime collaboration that the Četniks had with the occupying fascist forces.

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<sup>70</sup> Center of Military History, "German Antiguerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944). Publication 104-18" <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/antiguerr-ops/AG-BALKAN.HTM> (accessed FEB 2010). German General Böhme's mission, in mid-December 1941, netted 2,000 casualties. General Kuntze's 15-26 January 1942 mission resulted in 4,000 casualties. General Bader's 20 April-03 May 1942 mission caused 1,300 guerrilla losses. General Lüter's numerous parts of *Case Weiss* (February 1943) bled the Partisans for 8,500 dead and 2,000 taken as prisoners. Case Schwarz caused 4,000 Četnik casualties in Herzegovina and Montenegro (May-June 1943). Three operations in late 1943 (Kugelblitz = 9,000, Schneesturm = 2,000 and Herbstgewitter = 1,000) kept the Partisans from consolidating control on in western Croatia/Dalmatia. Generalfeldmarshall von Weichs' *Unternehmen Rösselsprung* caused the combat ineffectiveness of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Partisan Divisions (6,000 casualties).

<sup>71</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Wayne D. Eyre, *Operation Rösselsprung and the elimination of Tito, 25 May 1944: A failure in planning and intelligence support* (Quantico, VA: USMC Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2002), 17-23.

<sup>72</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 228, 239-40. The western Allies provided the air, sea and land security to the Partisan headquarters on Vis.

The British government decided after its expulsion from the Europe, in June 1940, that it needed a way to influence actions and resist the Nazis in an indirect manner. Under the direction of Winston Churchill, the Special Operations Executive (SOE) maintained contact with and provided support to resistance groups operating in occupied Europe.<sup>73</sup> This body conducted intelligence and sabotage operations within enemy and neutral areas. Churchill's goal was to "set Europe ablaze."<sup>74</sup> After Germany conquered Yugoslavia, the SOE dispatched an agent to assess the situation and determine what Britain could do in terms of assistance to a resistance movement there.<sup>75</sup>

The SOE saw their role in Yugoslavia to provide intelligence on Axis unit movements, provide logistical support to guerrilla forces (so that these groups may conduct sabotage missions against the enemy) and establish contacts inside the region to balance Soviet influence in the Slavic Balkan states at the conclusion of the war.<sup>76</sup> These actions supported the para-military and intelligence oriented field that pertained to the SOE's efforts and operating directives.<sup>77</sup>

An unwritten agreement existed between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill regarding which of their respective intelligence organizations held the lead position in the different theaters of war. The Balkans fell under the prevue of the SOE. The U.S. operators worked under the British command and control system while deployed inside and in support of all operations with Yugoslav guerrillas (except intelligence collection).<sup>78</sup> This meant that OSS

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<sup>73</sup> James D. Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy: From World War II to the War on Terror* (NY: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), 93.

<sup>74</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 13.

<sup>75</sup> Ronald H. Baily and the editors of Time-Life Books, *Partisans and Guerrillas* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books Inc., 1978), 78. Captain D.T. Bill Hudson was the British agent inserted in September 1941.

<sup>76</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 240-243.

<sup>77</sup> James D. Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy: From World War II to the War on Terror* (NY: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), 94.

<sup>78</sup> Kirk Ford, Jr., *OSS and the Yugoslav Resistance, 1943-1945* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 12.

agents needed permission to enter/depart theater, conduct sabotage missions with the guerrillas (Brigadier MacLean, British mission chief to the Partisans, forbade OSS agents from speaking with Tito without him being present) and even allowed the British officers to read their radio communiqués to OSS headquarters in Cairo or Bari, Italy.<sup>79</sup> Needless to say, this created a stressed relationship between the U.S. and the British.

The SOE were not advisors as much as commandos and spies. They viewed the different guerrilla organizations in a different light than their American counterparts. The SOE would work with and through the guerrillas but never truly embrace the ideas of enabling surrogate forces in the same way as the OSS.

## **OSS Involvement**

The OSS had two purposes to achieve in Yugoslavia. It was to work through the guerrillas in order to tie up as many German divisions in Yugoslavia, so that these units could not take part against Allied armies in Italy or the USSR. The second purpose was to provide intelligence on the resistance groups, the German order of battle and regional political / economic information.<sup>80</sup>

The first Americans arrived in Yugoslavia in August of 1943. Officers infiltrated and linked up with the SOE mission to the Četniks.<sup>81</sup> That same summer, MAJ Farish parachuted into Partisan territory and met with Marshal Tito.<sup>82</sup> The Americans reported back to their superiors that each guerrilla band needed and requested U.S. support. Unlike the British, the American operators wanted to cultivate relationships with both sides (Partisan and Četnik), in order to keep

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<sup>79</sup> Nigel West, *Secret War: The Story of SOE, Britain's Wartime Sabotage Organization* (UK: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1992), 189.

<sup>80</sup> Kermit Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services)* Vol. 2. (Washington, D.C.: Carrollton Press, Inc., 1976), 127.

<sup>81</sup> Jay Jakub, *Spies & Saboteurs: Anglo-American Collaboration and Rivalry in Human Intelligence Collection and Special Operations, 1940-45* (UK: MacMillan Press LTD., 1999.), 125. CPT Melvin Benson from the U.S. Army and LT Walter Mansfield (USMC) arrived in Yugoslavia on 22 and 18 AUG 1943, respectively.

<sup>82</sup> Louis Adamic, *The Eagle and the Roots* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1952), 483.

options open for post-war positioning and not alienate a potential victor. There was a problem to this American strategy of wanting to play both sides. The British were still the lead mission in Yugoslavia and they exercised operational control over the OSS operators. Any access these operators had to the guerrilla leadership came through the SOE mission chiefs.

The OSS had several advantages to exploit in getting around this British blockade. The Americans possessed operators with linguistic and ethnic expertise who built excellent rapport with the different groups. The OSS recruited men with Yugoslav backgrounds.<sup>83</sup> These men were themselves immigrants or first generation U.S. citizens from the region. This meant a perfect understanding of customs, culture, language and jargon. The OSS operators did not need local interpreters or guerrillas to translate for them. There was less misunderstanding of what were on the minds of the guerrillas or civilians for the OSS operators.

The OSS also provided more supplies than the British did to the guerrillas. MAJ Louis Huot coordinated and led a seaborne insertion of the Dalmatian coast in September of 1943. He delivered to the Partisans over three thousand tons of supplies (all classes of supply).<sup>84</sup> His mission provided more in one day than what the British supplied to the Partisans in six months.<sup>85</sup>

The OSS performed admirably in the Yugoslav theater. However, their actions were overshadowed by the SOE's lead in the Balkans and the successes of other OSS or guerrilla advisors annotated in U.S. Army documents in places like France, Italy and the Philippines. Initially, these linguistic and cultural assets were traits not captured into the early UW doctrine. They manifested themselves at periodic times in the history of U.S. Special Operations but never vigorously embraced and capitalized.

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<sup>83</sup> Kirk Ford, Jr., *OSS and the Yugoslav Resistance, 1943-1945* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), ix. The OSS deployed officers and NCOs with names like Wuchinich, Musulin, Sujdovic, Lalich, Vujnovich, Milodragovich and Rajacich to name just a few.

<sup>84</sup> Headquarters Army Air Forces, *Special Operations: AAF Aid to European Resistance Movement 1943-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Army Air Force Historical Office, 1947), 82.

<sup>85</sup> Jay Jakub, *Spies & Saboteurs: Anglo-American Collaboration and Rivalry in Human Intelligence Collection and Special Operations, 1940-45* (UK: MacMillan Press LTD., 1999.), 133-4.

20 October 1944 marked the end of the guerrilla war and the beginning of a conventional war of maneuver in Yugoslavia, by the Yugoslav Peoples Liberation Army (under The Hague Convention concepts).<sup>86</sup> The Partisans literally came out of the forest, with the help of the Red Army, engaged the retreating Germans in a manner similar to a conventional force. The Partisan divisions fought in uniforms and maneuvered to seize and retain territory from the Germans. The following day, 21 October 1944, saw Tito leave his secure headquarters on the Adriatic island of Vis and fly to link up with the Soviets outside of Belgrade.<sup>87</sup> The Germans and their collaborating friends were in full retreat on their LOCs to reach the Reich and safety therein. U.S. and British air forces assisted in the endeavor to disrupt and destroy as many German units as possible. The OSS operators tried to motivate the different guerrilla groups to interdict the Germans in conjunction with the Allied air and Soviet land components. These efforts failed, as the majority of the Partisans and Četniks had more interest in repaying old blood debts and trying to consolidate power in the scramble for power.<sup>88</sup>

This period ended with the departure or capture of all Germans, their collaborating allies, the occupation of the original Yugoslav borders by the Partisans forces and the consolidation of power for Tito and his followers. In regards to this final condition, the partisans rounded up of all those parties, groups and individuals that did not support Tito's communist movement. These groups and individuals were summarily eliminated into prisons or shallow graves. The Partisans isolated, reduced the freedom of movement and minimized the importance of the OSS and SOE agents in Yugoslavia. The Partisans confined the agents to major cities and away from any of the fronts. The OSS agents failed to develop a method to keep themselves relevant to the guerrillas

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<sup>86</sup> Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *Krieg auf dem Balkan 1940-1945* (München, DEU: Südwest Verlag GmbH & Co., 1984), 284.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night: With the OSS and Tito's Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 139-140, 142. This time period of US, UK and USSR help to conduct direct combat missions against the Germans was known as Operation RATWEEK to the western Allies. The Allies flew hundreds of sorties to interdict German movements during the first week of September 1944.

once the insurgency turned into a conventional war and then when the hostilities were over. This was just one of the areas from which the U.S. Army could have learned from when it began formulating its UW doctrine.

### **Three Vital Lessons Lost**

The Yugoslav experience showcased three distinct doctrinal tenets, which doctrinal writers failed to include into the UW manuals. These were the selection and deployment of the right people as advisors into the appropriate environment, the proper employment of the guerrilla forces when the goals or objectives are not similar to those of the advisors and a through method of how to demobilize the guerrilla force at the end of the conflict.

These three areas took on a greater meaning in the context of the guerrilla warfare operations as being the sole means of combating the enemy. The U.K. and U.S. did not entertain the idea of deploying conventional ground forces into the Yugoslav theater of operations. The guerrillas remained Allied effort in the Balkans. This broke from the basic operational approach of UW. The doctrine espoused that advisors assisted the guerrilla forces in paving the way for the decisive operation of the conventional forces entry into the area of operation. In Yugoslavia, the advisors assisted and augmented the resistance knowing that no such conventional help was forthcoming. This meant that the advisors required the right skills and knowledge to achieve their objectives, because they were the decisive and only operation in this theater.

The ability to communicate and understand the cultural nuances of an indigenous population is just one part of the repertoire needed by the advisor. Just as important, the advisors needed to possess the abilities of self-reliance, innovativeness, and courageous while comprehending the overall operation and strategic objective. The UW doctrine of the early Cold War never specified these characteristics. The Yugoslav case showed that all of these skills were viable and pertinent to the success of advising guerrilla forces.

## The Right People

Linguist skills, cultural awareness / understanding, the ability to build rapport and garner trust with guerrillas were essential for any advisor. Just as key were the ability to display initiative, self-reliance, innovativeness and envision the greater operation and strategic objectives to effectively work with guerrillas. The UW doctrine of the 1950s-1960s never articulated nor advocated for the recruitment, assessment and then the training of Americans, with those certain intangible skills that made them prime candidates for employment in an UW mission. The U.S. satisfied itself with military volunteers who wished to work with indigenous people.

The 1951, 1955, 1961 and 1965 editions of FM 31-21 did not mention or discuss anything regarding the ethnic composition of the U.S. advisors in the event of future advisors roles to guerrilla units. The 1958 edition of FM 31-21 spoke only of the advisors learning languages, culture, religious beliefs and the history of their targeted population, during their mission preparation.<sup>89</sup> Ethnic similarities to the target population were and are not the singular imperative to being a proficient guerrilla advisor. However, the large multi-ethnic population of the U.S. offered the military a deep resource of human talent. The OSS recruited and employed many Americans with diverse ethnic backgrounds during the war. A large proportion of OSS agents in leadership positions, in Yugoslavia, were of Yugoslavian extraction (immigrants or sons of immigrants).<sup>90</sup> The OSS Special Operations FM No. 4 required that operators dealing with resistance groups “should be fluent in the local language and be a native of a nationality acceptable to the authorities and population of the area.”<sup>91</sup>

On numerous occasions, the American OSS advisors of Yugoslav extract provided understanding, communication and rapport building skills that saved the lives of Allied service

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<sup>89</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 08 MAY 1958), 33.

<sup>90</sup> R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 135.

<sup>91</sup> Office of Strategic Services, *Special Operations Field Manual No. 4 Strategic Services (Provisional)* (Washington, D.C.: 23 FEB 1944), Section III, 11, b, page 5.

members and guerrillas during the conflict in the Balkans. Their abilities to quickly communicate ideas /commands, sift through the cultural nuances of Balkan politics and identify the true intentions of the guerrillas and local population allowed the American advisory missions to better facilitate guerrilla missions and gather intelligence for higher headquarters.

CPT George Musulin was just one example of an American officer of Serbian extract. He built rapport with the Četnik leadership that allowed him to sit in on political and military conferences that SOE and other OSS advisors were denied access.<sup>92</sup> He provided valid and reliable intelligence on Četnik intentions and actions for almost eighteen months. CPT Nick Lalich inherited this excellent relationship, built by Musulin with Mihailović, to assist in his mission of evacuating 432 American and another 114 Allied air crew members out of Yugoslavia, from August to December 1944. Lalich worked by, with and through the Četniks to collect downed air crews, construct airfields, and then secure them against Axis attacks to execute his mission.<sup>93</sup>

SOE and OSS commanders identified that the linguistic and cultural skills of the American advisors placed them ahead of their British and in some cases even Soviet peers. Brigadier MacLean, the SOE lead advisor to Tito, stated that the only way to understand what was going on in Yugoslavia meant speaking the language and talking with the common people and guerrilla fighters in order to get the real picture of how the guerrilla war was fought.<sup>94</sup> MAJ Franklin Lindsay, an OSS officer working in Slovenia, wrote in his autobiography that the Americans lacked the technical intelligence collection skills, of their British counterparts, but

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<sup>92</sup> Jozef Tomasevich, *The Chetniks: War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 399.

<sup>93</sup> David Martin, *Ally Betrayed: The Uncensored Story of Tito and Mihailovich* (NY: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946), 245, 251.

<sup>94</sup> Jay Jakub, *Spies & Saboteurs: Anglo-American Collaboration and Rivalry in Human Intelligence Collection and Special Operations, 1940-45* (UK: MacMillan Press LTD., 1999), 132.

they more than made up for it with their linguistic, cultural and fighting skills to get more out of the guerrillas.<sup>95</sup>

One OSS mission commander to the Četniks was COL McDowell. He had intimate understanding of the Balkan peoples. His pre-war profession was that of a university professor on Balkan history at the University of Michigan.<sup>96</sup> He understood the political and social tensions that existed between the Partisans and the Četniks. He did not possess the linguistic skills of the other members of his team, but he was able to fuse together the information around him and illustrate a better picture for his superiors, back in Italy. He visualized how to use the cultural or historical concepts and leverage these things in his interactions with guerrilla leadership and in his direction of convincing the guerrillas to conduct operations in support of U.S. objectives. McDowell's innovative ideas of how to influence the Četniks paid dividends later in the conflict with regards to setting the conditions for the air crew recovery mission.

COL McDowell showed great initiative, diplomatic savvy and a comprehension of operational goals through his multiple interactions with a German diplomatic envoy in September 1944. A German diplomat in Yugoslavia, Rudi Stärker, met with McDowell in order to gain U.S. assurances that they would control the guerrilla bands as the Germans retreated from the theater and come to an agreement on the surrender of German forces to U.S. or British military advisors instead of the advancing Soviets or to the Partisans / Četniks.<sup>97</sup> Here was an America field grade officer entering into negotiations for the possible surrender of thousands of German forces, a corps size equivalent unit, and the cessation of hostilities in an entire theater of war. His actions,

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<sup>95</sup> Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night: With the OSS and Tito's Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 33.

<sup>96</sup> Marcia Christoff Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain: The Allies, the Resistance, and the Rivalries that Doomed WWII Yugoslavia* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010), 214.

<sup>97</sup> George C. Chalou, ed., *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), 205. The meetings were held in Serbian territory in the towns of Pranjani and Šabac.

in representing the U.S. government illustrated just how important the recruitment and selection of the right people have strategic level implications in an UW environment.

Another example of how innovative and creative people exemplified the difference in the assistance to the execution of UW was that of MAJ Louis Huot and his maritime logistical endeavor. MAJ Huot was a staff officer working for the OSS out of their Italian base in Bari, Italy. He saw the opportunity to transport needed military supplies and evacuate casualties from the Yugoslav mainland to Allied controlled Italy. He sailed on 15 October 1943 for the Partisan controlled island of Vis, off the Yugoslav coast. The delivery consisted of over six thousand tons of essential supplies, from arms to medical supplies. This shipment far outpaced the British advisory efforts of only 125 tons, via parachute drops since the beginning of 1943. On the return journey (26 October), he coordinated for the transport of thousands of wounded Partisans and civilians from Yugoslavia to Allied hospitals and headquarters in Italy.<sup>98</sup> This LOC remained open till the end of the war and was the major artery to supply the Partisans. His actions angered the SOE leadership and promptly led to his withdraw from the theater. This was due to jealousy and internal intrigue between the American and British intelligence services vying for rapport with the Partisans.

In the early Cold War period the U.S. Army embraced finding and employing service members with unique linguistic, cultural and motivational skills. In June of 1951, the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare (OCPW) looked at using the new recruits arriving to the U.S. Army from the Lodge Bill. This bill, later act, allowed for foreign born men, from the Communist Bloc, to enlist and receive citizenship after five years of honorable military service. These men received basic combat training, attendance to Ranger School, specialized instruction on guerrilla warfare, sabotage, clandestine communications, etc. These men would become the foundation for a regiment of Special Forces into three battalions. They worked in Europe and prepared to

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<sup>98</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 148-151.

infiltrate behind Soviet lines, in the advent of the Red Army advancing into Central Europe. These men would live amongst their ethnic peoples and raise guerrilla units in the Soviet rear areas. This was a notable attempt to try and get the right people, with the right linguist, cultural and motivational skills to conduct UW. Over half of the 2,097 first Special Forces soldiers tasked to conduct UW were Lodge Bill personnel.<sup>99</sup>

An expert on guerrilla warfare history, Robert Asprey, was critical of U.S. and U.K. advisors in Yugoslavia. He wrote that the Allies failed in assisting the Partisans better or figuring out the Partisan / Četnik issue, because the advisors sent were not the 'right people with the right skills.'<sup>100</sup> This monograph author disagreed with Asprey but sympathizes with the opinion of selecting and deploying the proper advisors with the requisite skill sets as a priority to achieving mission success. The UW doctrine of the 1950's-1960's was devoid of the U.S. military seeking and recruiting the right people, with the desired skills, to execute its mission of assisting and leading guerrilla movements. The military relied on luck and hoped that soldiers with desirable personality traits and skills came through their door. This was an obvious flaw in the doctrine and not remedied by the Special Operations community, the Army or the Department of Defense.

### **Proper Employment of Guerrillas**

One of the other shortcomings of the UW doctrine was that it failed to provide a framework for the advisors to develop plans and employ their guerrillas effectively, when the resistance leaders or fighters desired not to oblige their advisors. The doctrine erred in not delineating for advisors how to read the warnings signs when guerrillas no longer desire to follow the recommendations of their advisors. It offered no consideration for what actions or concepts constituted forcing functions in dealing with guerrillas, who blatantly conducted operations or

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<sup>99</sup> Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 124-125.

<sup>100</sup> Robert A. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History* (NY: William Morrow & Co. Inc., 1994), 352.

actions contrary to U.S. desires, rules of engagement or objectives. This was an all too realistic circumstance for advisors.

The war in Yugoslavia provided numerous occasions in which U.S. advisors were unable to influence or direct their guerrilla allies to act in accordance with mutual (advisor and guerrilla) objectives. Some of the OSS operators in Yugoslavia made decisions in the attempt to force their guerrillas to comply with the advisors' objectives. Further, the doctrine failed to address how to advise a resistance force that numbered in the hundreds of thousands, an amount not seen by the early doctrine writers' experiences.<sup>101</sup>

The doctrine failed to articulate what signals or signs advisors should be wary of concerning the guerrillas' hidden agenda or a direction of operations outside of a common purpose. This was important in order to determine the changing intentions or objectives of the resistance movement. It also foreshadowed the possibility of the guerrillas turning on their advisors and jeopardizing the mission. Some of the tell-tale signs of these agendas were the stockpiling of munitions or targeting groups other than the occupying forces. The Partisans and Četniks had post-war agendas for consolidating power and establishing each their own form of government and social structure. Each side hid war supplies in preparation for this future face-off. This resulted in the reduction of offensive operations against the Germans and their puppet collaborators. It also meant frequent and planned combat operations to reduce the strength or fighting capacity of the opposing side.<sup>102</sup>

The OSS advisors developed measures in order to compel the guerrillas to strike targets desirable to the U.S. An OSS team leader, LT Holt Green passed on a valuable lesson. He

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<sup>101</sup> Jürg Gschwendtner, *Deutsche Anti-Partisanenkriegführung* (Frauenfeld, Switzerland: Huber & Co. AG, 1986), V. This Swiss colonel estimated the Partisan and Četnik casualties to be over 700,000. The breakdown is as follows: KIA - 305,000 WIA - 425,000 WIA, POWs (guerrillas and Yugoslav Army) – 390,000.

<sup>102</sup> Kirk Ford, Jr., *OSS and the Yugoslav Resistance, 1943-1945* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 117-119. COL McDowell reported in from September-November 1944 about the Partisan attacks on the Četniks and refusing to engage German units, in Serbia. He further reported that the Partisans were making false reports about their sabotage attacks on German bases. An OSS operator by the name of Kramer reported the same occurrences in Sarajevo and Dobož.

observed that the weapons carried by the Partisans decreased in quality after three months. He determined that the guerrilla corps commander hid them in local barns for use later against the Četniks. Green confronted the commander and had the weapons passed out amongst the guerrillas, who had weapons of poorer quality.<sup>103</sup> This was a dangerous action, but a calculated one. In some measure, Green understood how to play his cards of providing benefits to the lower level fighters, while putting the guerrilla leadership in a dilemma of saving face or not accomplishing the intended mission.

The Cold War doctrine did not account for how many teams of advisors, companies, battalions or the size of the support structure needed to facilitate a guerrilla movement of the sheer manpower size over an area slightly smaller than Wyoming, which was the Yugoslav resistance movement.<sup>104</sup> The guerrilla forces in Yugoslav, throughout the duration of the conflict, totaled almost over one million people. By 31 December 1944, the Partisan headquarters accounted for around 500,000 fighters, organized into fourteen corps dispersed throughout the country.<sup>105</sup> These numbers dwarfed the guerrillas controlled by OSS operators in France and the all the guerrillas combined under the leadership of Fertig, Blackburn and Volckmann in the Philippines.

The initial FM 31-21 stressed that advisors had control over their guerrillas through the leveraging of supplies and combat assets. These supplies and military assets were, in theory, to provide the U.S. with political advantages in the conduct of the war and in the post-war environment.<sup>106</sup> This required that the U.S. become the primary source of political, financial, moral and military support to the guerrilla force. The doctrine promoted that, “the guerrillas will

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 79-80.

<sup>104</sup> Center of Military History, “German Antiguerilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944) Publication 104-18” <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/antiguer-ops/AG-BALKAN.HTM> (accessed FEB 2010).

<sup>105</sup> Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *Krieg auf dem Balkan 1940-1945* (München, DEU: Südwest Verlag GmbH & Co., 1984), 292.

<sup>106</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Organization and Conduct of Guerilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, OCT 1951), 22.

continue to rely on that source for support; this gives the special forces commander a strong lever with which to enforce compliance with his directives.”<sup>107</sup> However, the doctrine never addressed the idea of the guerrillas not being dependent on U.S. material support to achieve their goals. What other options were open the advisors? Some U.S. officers employed some unique concepts that would easier resonate with current UW practitioners.

MAJ Franklin Lindsay utilized his access to the international and local population, through the use of propaganda, to get the desired results from his guerrillas. Lindsay communicated the narrative that placed his guerrillas in a good or bad light to the radio listening community of his area of operation. The BBC broadcasted messages that either gave credit to his guerrillas, after a successful mission or made them lose face by naming another organization as being effective guerrilla warriors. In this manner, Lindsay forced the hand of his guerrilla commander counterpart. Lindsay could make his counterpart a hero or a zero with just radio traffic to OSS headquarters. In a similar manner, the guerrillas became filled with pride and would then attempt to attack more targets when their praises came over the wireless. One could see that how reporting a failed mission could also persuade the guerrillas to correct their image to their superiors or the local population.<sup>108</sup>

In a similar context, the contemporary usage of Military Information Support Operations (MISO) provides an advisor the means to target the local population. This requires altering the perceptions of the local population to perceive how successful, honorable, lazy or incompetent the guerrilla force may be. MAJ Lindsay commented, through his message traffic, how well the Slovenian Partisan group was at convincing the local Slovenian inhabitants of the unit’s and the people’s uniqueness and destiny to win the war against Germany.<sup>109</sup> An advisor can employ MISO assets to influence the population to the legitimacy of a cause or change a perception about

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>108</sup> Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night: With the OSS and Tito’s Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 112.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 241.

the conflict. These messages allow the advisor to alter his environment in a non-lethal manner and coerce the guerrillas to follow the U.S.'s objectives.

Wars of liberation and insurgency quite often include atrocities and the combatants conduct actions contrary to the accepted Rules of Engagement (ROE) for U.S. military personnel. U.S. policy requires advisors to report and if possible stop all violations of the ROE. The UW doctrine did not announce how advisors go about executing these directives and still maintaining rapport and properly employing guerrillas when they are the entities responsible for the violations. MAJ Lindsay experienced the pressure of trying to stop his guerrilla allies from massacring captive German soldiers during the summer of 1944.<sup>110</sup> These scenes of atrocities or war crimes were quite common occurrences in guerrilla wars. The future U.S. Army Special Forces included training venues in which prospective advisors experienced ROE violations similar to those experienced by MAJ Lindsay.<sup>111</sup> These examples became hallmarks of how to deal with and construct methods to deal with guerrillas.

The subsequent editions of the UW doctrine glossed over an important purpose of forcing the occupying power to expend human and material resources to combat the guerrillas.<sup>112</sup> Past and present UW doctrine empathized that guerrilla warfare was a shaping operation in support of the conventional decisive military operation. In this regard, an advisor ought to conceptualize how best to support the decisive operation. In the Yugoslav experience, this meant denying the use of 700,000 Axis forces from confronting Allied units on the conventional fronts (Italian, French, and Russian).

The early doctrine falsely stated that the, “guerrillas must do everything possible to protect the local populace from enemy reprisals and initiate retaliatory measures where

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 132-133, 135. Partisans seized German garrisons in Luce, Ljubno and Gornji Grad. The German casualties numbered near two hundred, many of which the guerrillas killed after their surrender.

<sup>111</sup> Author's experiences while attending the U.S. Army Special Warfare Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, NC, 2003.

<sup>112</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-20 U.S. Army Special Forces Group (Airborne)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, AUG 1955), 26-31.

necessary.”<sup>113</sup> This was not uniformly true in all operational environments. While the Filipino guerrillas followed this tenet, other guerrilla groups (Partisans) operated with little care regarding what reprisals befell the local Yugoslav population. The Partisans were a mobile force that only assisted the civilian population when it provided them an advantage, tactically, logistically or in terms of propaganda. The Partisans played up the propaganda machine when Axis troops hurt civilians, but the Partisans did next to nothing to protect non-combatants.<sup>114</sup> However, the Četniks were sensitive to reprisals against their Serb population support base. The Četniks refused to attack the German or puppet Serb forces because the forthcoming Axis retaliatory atrocities meted out on the civilian population.<sup>115</sup>

CPT George Musulin figured a way around this dilemma with the lack of Četnik desire to attack Germans for fear of reprisals on non-combatants. He broached the subject of not attacking German units, but rather the materials important and the Germans. The German war economy needed the antimony mines and their smelters in Lissa, Serbia, for the production of shell casings. Musulin received confirmation from a Četnik commander that this was a target he could support, as the Germans were unlikely to seek direct retribution on the Serb populous for the attack, as no Germans needed die in this raid.<sup>116</sup>

The 1961 edition of FM 31-21 stated that U.S. advisors were not to become involved in internal guerrilla political disputes or agendas.<sup>117</sup> This briefed well, but what if the guerrillas do not follow the advisors’ wishes? What if a civil and ethnic war erupts between the groups the advisors are there to assist? No interaction with the either group could mean mission failure and

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<sup>113</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 08 MAY 1958), 15.

<sup>114</sup> Center of Military History, “German Antiguerrilla Operations in the Balkans (1941-1944) Publication 104-18” <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwii/antiguerr-ops/AG-BALKAN.HTM> (accessed FEB 2010).

<sup>115</sup> Ronald H. Baily and the editors of Time-Life Books, *Partisans and Guerrillas* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books Inc., 1978), 78-79.

<sup>116</sup> Marcia Christoff Kurapovna, *Shadows on the Mountain: The Allies, the Resistance, and the Rivalries that Doomed WWII Yugoslavia* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010), 126-127.

<sup>117</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 29 SEP 1961), 70-71.

thus run the risk of larger operational or strategic implications. A forcing function may involve the advisors becoming involved, with internal issues (i.e. Partisan vs. Četnik conflict) in order to achieve U.S. objectives. This refers back to the ability of the advisors to leverage vital sources of power for the guerrillas. The doctrine focused on control of the supplies required by the guerrillas to enforce compliance. Other drastic measures could be the weakening of popular support through the use of MISO or seeking the removal of members in the guerrilla leadership. These last two options, not found in the doctrine, pose a risk to the mission and to the advisory force. But without the guerrillas, the advisors will fail in their mission. The old axioms of drastic times require drastic measures may be required.

The effective employment of guerrillas is not checklist; it is more of an interaction and experimentation in order to achieve the desired effects by the guerrillas for the U.S. advisory element. Since people are the centerpiece of this entire situation, they are the independent variable that all other aspects revolve around. The situation and the relationship between the guerrillas and the advisors evolve constantly. If the guerrillas produce the desired effects, in the conflict for the U.S., then what is the vision for the guerrilla force after the conflict? It is imperative to plan for the post-conflict status of the guerrillas. A failure to plan and adapt the guerrilla force for demobilization poses a potential for an expanded conflict not intended by the advisors' command authority.

### **Plans for Demobilization**

The demobilization concepts in the UW doctrine painted a picture of perfect conditions by which the advisors could facilitate the dismemberment of the guerrilla forces. Each edition, of the FM 31-21, had a section of the planning and execution for the demobilization of the guerrilla fighting force. It consisted of eight steps, which started with the assembling of the guerrillas and

culminated with their rehabilitation / employment back into civilian life.<sup>118</sup> The doctrine failed to address the concept of what to do if the guerrillas chose not to demobilize or formed an entity that opposed the U.S.'s interests, in the newly liberated or independent state. The Yugoslav experience offered just such an example. The French resistance forces and the Filipino guerrillas gladly melted back into the civilian lifestyle and posed no threat to U.S. interests. Tito's Partisans retained their organizational structure and opposed or threatened U.S. forces or U.S. objectives in the post-war Balkan theater. FM 31-21 did have some relevant concepts to assist in demobilization into the Cold War Era. The manuals recommended the utilization of civil affairs units to assist in facilitating job creation and the renewal of the civil society to pre-war conditions. The manuals also offered that psychological operation assets would influence and inform the guerrilla units to turn away from their combative lifestyle.<sup>119</sup>

An advisor element must prepare a plan that considers contingencies and what assets provided, hard and soft, can act as forcing functions to produce the desired end state of demobilization. The advisory element should plan for the end of hostilities and what conditions provide an advantage to the U.S. in influencing the guerrilla force, at the outset of entering the combat theater. Soft power options available include the use of popular opinion within the local population and international community. The advisors can employ MISO (previously referred to as Psychological Operations) units at the tactical and operational levels in the theater.<sup>120</sup> A viable option is the placement of advisors into the initial positions of U.S. diplomatic envoys to the newly independent or liberated state. These envoys open the official diplomatic channels, back to Washington, and offer leverage upon the leadership of the guerrilla forces. Between August-

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<sup>118</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 29 SEP 1961), 178-179.

<sup>119</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 29 JUN 1965), 170-177.

<sup>120</sup> Headquarters Army Air Forces, *Special Operations: AAF Aid to European Resistance Movement 1943-1945* (Washington, D.C.: Army Air Force Historical Office), 1947. Leaflet drops by the USAAF were very effective in Yugoslavia. The three primary purposes of these PSYOP missions were to inform population of Allied successes, counter Axis propaganda and maintain moral for the guerrillas.

September 1944, LTC Thayer moved into Belgrade as the official U.S. diplomatic envoy to the Yugoslav government.<sup>121</sup> He represented U.S. interests with the Tito regime and Soviet governments until replaced by the U.S. ambassador seven months later.<sup>122</sup> This again articulates the need to have the right people as advisors because of the significance of filling such a key role as ambassador to a new state.

Another soft power option, that requires longer preparation time, is to set the guerrilla force up with weapons that only the U.S. advisors can provide. In this manner, the guerrilla is solely dependent on the external re-supply system facilitated through the advisors. This is the most difficult and time consuming to establish due to the fact that the majority of the guerrillas weapons primarily come from the occupier's resources and what is recovered on the battlefield. This is an effective method when the guerrillas become more dependent on external supplies than on battlefield recovery.

The hard power options open to the advisor run the risk of severing the rapport built with the guerrillas. However, the advisor would not revert to these options if the guerrillas fell in line with the demobilization procedures. The first step requires the advisors to identify and then understand the indicators for the guerrillas' post-conflict operations or goals. It goes without saying, that advisors with the right linguist, cultural and tactical skills are more attuned to these indicators.

OSS operators communicated back to their headquarters numerous times that the Partisans and Četniks were preparing to fight one another in order to determine supremacy of the state after the Germans departed. In July 1944, MAJ Farish reported that the Partisans worried more about positioning their units and conducting operations against the Četniks, than against the

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<sup>121</sup> R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972), 152, 154.

<sup>122</sup> Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies 1941-1945* New Brunswick, (NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1973), 298.

Germans or their puppet allies.<sup>123</sup> Other indicators included Partisan restrictions placed on freedom of movement for the American and British advisors.<sup>124</sup> Options available to the advisors should increase in their severity in order to force a change in the guerrillas' movement to demobilization. The first option includes leveraging the access to essential life-sustaining supplies required by the guerrilla movement. These essential life-sustaining supplies include finances, food, clothing, medical supplies, *etc.* The OSS operators did just these things and went so far as to deny the evacuation of Partisan wounded on the flights or ships to Allied hospitals, in Italy.<sup>125</sup> Another course of action available to advisors is that of convening to the guerrilla force that the advisors have alternative options with other adversarial groups to support shared U.S. objectives and the desire to demobilize after the conflict. The OSS tried this very concept in Yugoslavia. Walter Donovan, chief of the OSS, wanted to support both the Partisans and the Četniks. In this manner, the U.S. wanted to hedge its bets and be in bed with whoever took control of the post-war Yugoslav state. However, Churchill convinced FDR that Tito was the sole ally in Yugoslavia for the Allies and forced the cancellation of OSS support to the Četniks.

The least desirable and the most severe alternative is that of severing the advisory relationship. The problem with this action is that the U.S. can no longer affect the guerrilla force after the cutting of the relationship. Included within this option is threatening to use lethal force against the guerrillas. The most common asset is that of a fires capability, provided through the air component. These aerial platforms provide a means to force a change in the guerrillas' actions. The conventional military units that conduct link up with the guerrilla forces also offer a hard power instrument. These forces can forcibly disarm or defeat in battle the guerrillas in order to achieve the desired end state of demobilization. In May 1945, the British forces on the

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 152-153.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 261. Tito issued an order on 23 SEP 1944 restricting all advisors to corps level headquarters. He did not wish the advisors to see what actions his forces conducted against future opponents.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

Yugoslav-Italian and Yugoslav-Austrian frontiers forced the Partisans to retreat from territory they seized.<sup>126</sup> Tito ordered his troops to stand down and return to Yugoslav territory because he realized a fight against mechanized British units spelled destruction for his force and opened the door to British occupation of Yugoslav territory.

## Conclusion

During the early stages of the Cold War, the U.S. government chose to develop a doctrine of unconventional warfare as a means of combating the communist threat in an indirect manner. This doctrine espoused the need for the U.S. military to assist in the conduct of subversive, escape/evasion and guerrilla operations by, with and through indigenous forces, within enemy controlled territory in order to further military or political objectives.<sup>127</sup> The entity that would execute this type of warfare was the Special Forces<sup>128</sup> This military formation traced its origins to the soldiers, spies, advisors, adventurers of the OSS and officers that stayed behind in the Japanese occupied Philippines. Some of these same officers and OSS operators wrote the early doctrine of UW. However, they failed to include three vital tenets which proved crucial in the development of that doctrine. These were the selection and subsequent deployment of the right people as advisors into the appropriate environment, the proper employment of the guerrilla forces when their goals or objectives are not similar to those of the advisors and a though method of how to demobilize the guerrilla force at the end of the conflict. The lack of these three tenets meant an incomplete and short sighted doctrine.

The early authors of the FM 31-21 wrote a doctrine conceived from their experiences as advisors and organizers of guerrilla forces in Western Europe and the Philippines of World War

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<sup>126</sup> James Lucas, *Last Days of the Reich* (London: Cassell Military Paperbacks, 1986), 130.

<sup>127</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-20 U.S. Army Special Forces Group (Airborne)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, AUG 1955), 2

<sup>128</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 31-21 Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 08 MAY 1958), 16. SF defined as, “highly trained troops who conduct military operations far behind enemy lines. They foster and organize indigenous resistance potential in enemy territory IOT develop and exploit G forces.” SF Mission- “develop, organize, equip, train, support and control G forces to conduct G warfare ISO conventional military operations”

II. Their work was exceptional and detailed but not all encompassing. They did not include valuable lessons acquired from OSS advisors working in the Yugoslav theater of war. The early doctrine displayed UW as a valuable shaping operation to facilitate the conventional force entry and subsequent decisive victory over an enemy force. The Yugoslav experience showcased that a guerrilla war, managed and directed by trained advisors, could achieve great strategic ends without conventional military commitment and limited resourcing. This limited commitment and high return on investment was an idea embraced by U.S. government policy makers.

Yugoslavia offered a rich tapestry for a case study of advisors working with guerrilla formations. The Partisans and Četnik bands tied up over 700,000 Germans and partnered Axis forces that could have fought on other fronts (Italian and Eastern). The Yugoslav theater offered an excellent venue to illustrate numerous tactical and operational concepts for the employment of advisors that harness the potential of indigenous forces against an occupier. The theater provided a stellar example of warring sectarian groups that competed for supremacy during and in the post-war settlement. This environment also included the intrigue of allied intelligence/advisory teams vying for influence and position in the post-war environment.

The selection and training of the right advisory cadre was a key lesson learned from the Yugoslav theater. The U.S. infiltrated skilled officers with the ability to quickly build rapport and get the Yugoslav guerrilla groups to facilitate combined objectives. This rapport stemmed from the adaptive mindset and culturally/linguist savvy advisors. The preponderance of OSS operators had some ethnic or other link to the people they worked alongside. The list of OSS advisors in Yugoslavia read like a Belgrade phonebook. These men knew how to navigate the cultural, linguistic and political minefield of their operational environment to achieve influence and success as advisors.

Another lost lesson was that of advisors needing a way to not only influence but coerce their allies to execute tasks that supported mutual objectives and goals. They did this in Yugoslavia by controlling the classes of supply and manipulating the guerrillas actions by the

amount, frequency and condition of the materials needed to conduct combat operations. Another method was to work with other groups to keep options open and provide bargaining room to influence the guerrilla bands. The implementation of MISO and other behavioral changes assets was an important part of getting compliance and cooperation amongst unwilling resistance forces.

The third lesson learned from the Yugoslav experience was that of preparing and setting conditions to demobilize the guerrilla force before it is uncontrollable by the advisor forces. This took the form of soft or hard power techniques. Control of war materials and influencing the local population were just some of the soft power options. Hard power options included severing ties to the guerrillas or the advisors using the realist threat of their state's armed forces to compel compliance.

Some of these lessons appeared in early Twenty-First Century UW conflicts with the U.S. military. The 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group employed two separate companies to work with completing Kurdish guerrilla groups in early 2003. In this manner, the advisors would work with both groups and keep the options open in the post-conflict environment. The U.S. advisors planned from the outset for methods to properly employ and then demobilize the indigenous forces. There still exists a philanthropic relationship between the Kurdish fighters and members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group.<sup>129</sup> Other lessons were still not embraced in the contemporary operating environment. The U.S. military engaged in areas, such as the Horn of Africa, West Africa, the Middle East and much of Asia for over a decade. However, the military did not seek out members from the Somali, Arabic, African or other diverse ethnic groups as potential advisors or members of the Special Operations Forces. The military relied on these types of people to seek the military out. Some lessons were still hard to learn.

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<sup>129</sup> This monograph author worked or studied under the two officers, who commanded the two 10<sup>th</sup> Special Forces companies, which fought with and advised the separate Kurdish groups. In 2010, Kurdish fighters welcomed the author into their compound upon learning that the author was a member of the same Special Forces unit.

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